

ISSTI

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
www.issti.ed.ac.uk

Newsletter

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As is customary, the first issue of the ISSTI Newsletter for the year includes a list of 59 publications and 10 successful PhD completions from the preceding year. Inside, we also present announcements about awards, engagement and other community activities. Though ISSTI operates primarily as a virtual research network, we meet annually for an intensive face-to-face retreat - a vibrant space to discuss ideas and share insights. We are delighted to present recordings of keynote sessions from recent retreats, now available on ISSTI's video channel - see pages 3-4 for a complete list.

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Reimagining Radical Innovation through Art-Technology Collaborations in a More-than-Human World

Jane Calvert (STIS) is part of a small project led by Piera Morlacchi (Business School) and also involving Caterina Moruzzi (Design Informatics), titled *“Reimagining Radical Innovation through Art-Technology Collaborations in a More-than-Human World”*. A workshop exploring the intersections of art, technology and nature, along with a related public event organised by the [Imagination Lab](#), will be held on 14–15 April 2026.



Image Source: Imagination Lab

Advancing Datafied Welfare Administration

Morgan Currie and Vicky Gorton are Co-Investigators, with Hayley Bennet as Principal Investigator, on the CAHSS Knowledge Exchange and Impact Grant, *“Advancing Datafied Welfare Administration”*, to develop and shape approaches to digital welfare in Scotland from 1 January to 31 July 2026.



Staging the Robot: Performing Techno-Politics of Innovation for Care Robotics in Japan

Giulia De Togni's paper, *“Staging the Robot: Performing Techno-Politics of Innovation for Care Robotics in Japan”*, has been recognised as one of two Commended Papers by the STS International Network for Engineering Studies (INES) Awards Committee. The panel highlighted the paper's insightful and critical account of socially assistive robotics, particularly its examination of the gap between techno-scientific promises and the practical uncertainties surrounding care robotics.

Image Source: *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal*

Do or Do Not: LLM Understandings of Collective vs Individual Action

Ari Stillman has won the Best Novel Use of a Digital Method award from EFI's Centre for Data, Culture & Society for the project *“Do or Do Not: LLM Understandings of Collective vs Individual Action.”*

This is the Newsletter of the Institute for the Study of Science, Technology and Innovation (ISSTI). This interdisciplinary network, founded in 2001 by Robin Williams, brings together colleagues from across the University of Edinburgh studying science, technology and innovation, and is hosted by the Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) Subject Group. Find us on our website: www.issti.ed.ac.uk.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) Subject Group at the University of Edinburgh is internationally recognised as a leading centre of research, teaching and knowledge exchange in this important interdisciplinary field. With more than 40 staff, STIS enjoys outstanding ratings for its scholarly publications and impact, sustains research intensity with a high volume of external research income, and excels in teaching through a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and programmes. For more information, see our website: www.stis.ed.ac.uk.

ISSTI Newsletter Editorial Team: Huayu Xin (Editing), Robin Williams and Matjaz Vidmar (Supervision).

ISSTI Retreat Talks Archive (2017–2025)

Robert Lynn and Matjaz Vidmar have compiled a list of published YouTube videos from the 2017, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 ISSTI retreats. The collection includes 30 talks featuring over 40 members of the ISSTI community across the past nine years. The full collection can be accessed via [@EdinburghISSTI](#); the list of talks is also provided below.

2025

- Donald MacKenzie, Addie McGowan, Judy Wajcman – *The 40th Anniversary of The Social Shaping of Technology* – <https://youtu.be/XlqllgTflHk?feature=shared>
- Donald MacKenzie, Knut H. Sørensen, Judy Wajcman – *Lend me your ears - Do we come to praise or to bury technology studies?* – <https://youtu.be/sJ5MmiXW-Pw?feature=shared>
- Knut H. Sørensen – *The multi-politics of the social shaping of technology. A major sustainability transitions challenge* – <https://youtu.be/3FbVIGGKfcw?feature=shared>
- Iñaki Goñi, Rhodri Leng, Matjaz Vidmar – *"There is nothing new under the sun!"* – <https://youtu.be/KyXFnLNeRP8?feature=shared>

2024

- JP Ascher, Michael Barany, Marion Maisonobe, Jan Vrhovski – *Information Geographies* – <https://youtu.be/rJZ5qYsqL1I?feature=shared>
- Steve Yearley – *Symmetry, impartiality and carbon sinks* – <https://youtu.be/o0HqEQtrupQ?feature=shared>
- Jamie Fleck, Vassilis Galanos, Andrey Elizondo Solao, Matjaz Vidmar – *We Have Never Been AI...* – <https://youtu.be/LfwYpPmwS6s?feature=shared>

2023

- David Bloor – *Reflections on the History of Relativism or "Hegel comes to Edinburgh"* – https://youtu.be/avs_dHnA0M
- Korneilia Konrad – *Modulating the anticipatory governance of sociotechnical futures* – <https://youtu.be/VhD0ERHrWs>
- Morgan Meyer – *Editing life: promises, politics, controversies* – <https://youtu.be/0NPYQwzYyUg>
- Yuchen Lin – *The channelling of voices: Challenges in the development of augmentative and alternative communication technologies on digital platforms* – <https://youtu.be/-H7V9LnxyNM>
- Lukas Engelmann – *The Social Contagion of Social Contagion* – <https://youtu.be/5cWuQZHbwKQ>
- Cath Montgomery, Emma Frow, Rob Smith – *Unpacking participatory and creative methods in STS* – <https://youtu.be/jBiEmvh4BFs>
- Ben Colier, Rhodri Leng – *STIS Beyond Academia* – <https://youtu.be/cen-ryWs-QU>

2022

- Brian Wynne – *Keynote* – <https://youtu.be/CoGs7FJqxS0>
- Donald MacKenzie – *Material Political Economy of Online Advertising* – <https://youtu.be/wFz4FaAy4nE>
- Morgan Currie – *Automating Universal Credit* – <https://youtu.be/t4yOrachMXY>
- Hajar Mozzafar, Robin Williams, Stuart Anderson, Xiao Yang – *Domesticating Diagnostic AI* – https://youtu.be/2rhM0nTBd_M
- Arno Verhoeven – *Grids, Panels, Batteries, and Plugs: emancipatory narratives of off-grid imaginaries that reveal the complexity of energy systems futures* – <https://youtu.be/ROOQt3WjA14>
- Benedetta Catanzariti – *Hidden Humans in the Loop* – <https://youtu.be/-slcOrdFUqY>
- Neil Pollock – *Hype Cycles of the Digital Economy* – https://youtu.be/_3KgM0qYdls
- Drew Hemment, Matjaz Vidmar – *The Case for Experiential AI* – <https://youtu.be/1BQWE9IN1a0>
- Fumi Kitagawa, Matjaz Vidmar – *Opportunity Areas Analysis Tool – Mapping Framework or Policy Intervention?* – <https://youtu.be/ln1hU-hOIGU>
- Ben Colier, Kathrin Cresswell, Mark Winskel, Robin Williams – *Policy: Between Impact and Independence. Exchanging experiences* – <https://youtu.be/cbpuRRzaee0>

2017

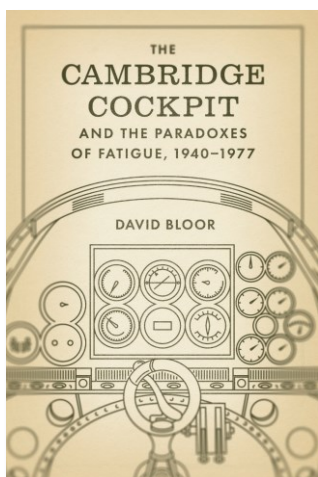
- Harro van Lente – *Promises, novelty and needs: challenging innovation studies* – https://youtu.be/nhFY_cS-RzM
- Wifak Gueddana – *Seeing' Engagement - Visualisation Beyond the Hype* – <https://youtu.be/DxdiV9kbqFg>
- Paul Dourish – *The practical lives of algorithms and data* – <https://youtu.be/oJy8ULbFngY>
- James Stewart – *Evidence Processes in the New Digital Age* – <https://youtu.be/E2NQpk2OShE>
- Arno Verhoeven – *How do you follow the object when you're inside of it? Comparing and contrasting Design with STS* – <https://youtu.be/fdAKKVCDwSQ>
- Farah Huzair, Fumi Kitagawa, Geoff Gregson, Raluca Bundichi – *Innovation Studies as if history and sociology and STS mattered* – https://youtu.be/8rr_sdU1an4
- Mark Wong – *Mapping Multi-Domain Institutional Networks with Computational Methods and Linked Data* – <https://youtu.be/Cs4J-6aXttE>
- James Lowe – *Interfacing Many Ways at Once* – <https://youtu.be/ivQGZKCCS0s>

Multiversaries in 2026

2026 marks a significant milestone: it is 25 years since ISSTI was founded to bring together the diverse community of researchers across the University of Edinburgh engaged in research, teaching and knowledge transfer on the social and policy aspects of science, technology and innovation, and to present these achievements to wider stakeholders. 2026 also marks the 60th anniversary of David Edge's appointment to establish the Science Studies Unit (SSU) — one of the first such centres in the world — as well as the 40th anniversary of Robin Williams' appointment to coordinate the programme of socioeconomic research on technology here. The upcoming ISSTI retreat (12-13 May 2026) will be the first of a series of events over the year to celebrate this history.



Book Announcement



David Bloor has published a new book, *The Cambridge Cockpit and the Paradoxes of Fatigue, 1940–1977*. The book examines a controversial wartime study of pilot fatigue conducted by the Cambridge Psychology Laboratory during World War II, when its members were commissioned to investigate fatigue. Researchers installed a Spitfire cockpit as experimental apparatus, producing results that appeared to confirm the dangers of fatigue. Drawing on archival material, Bloor reconstructs the experiments, their interpretation, and the intellectual resources that shaped their results.

The book also traces a major empirical and theoretical challenge to the Cambridge programme from a field study of landing accidents suggesting that fatigue effects were negligible. Bloor examines the consequences of this challenge and Cambridge's response, and situates the work alongside studies in Germany and the United States, showing how the Cockpit experiments continue to challenge current understandings of pilot fatigue.

Source: [The University of Chicago Press](https://www.chicagopress.com/9780521875666)

Creative Writing

Pippa Goldschmidt's book *Deutschstunden; eine Rückkehr* has been published by CulturBooks in Germany. The book is a non-fiction account of her reclaimed German citizenship and her return to Germany. It explores how we come to know our own family histories, contrasting her German and Austrian family background with the history of the universe. The book is currently available in German only ([here](#)).

Her short story, “*The Way Out*”, commissioned by the Center for Science and the Imagination at Arizona State University, was published in *Future Tense Fiction, Issues in Science and Technology* (26 September 2025). The story is available [here](#).

Presentations

Robin Williams was an invited speaker at the prestigious conference on civilisational issues in the era of Artificial Intelligence in Beijing, China, in November 2025. His talk, entitled “Tracing the Development Trajectories of Emerging Medical AI Products and Practices”, highlighted the slow progress to date in applying AI in healthcare. The current wave of enthusiasm surrounding AI can lead us to overlook the protracted learning processes of deployment. Many AI products currently offered by vendors are “point solutions” designed to address specific problems. However, naïve market enthusiasm has been eroded by the high cost of developing, implementing and validating stand-alone products — encouraging vendors and adopters to standardise and deploy these through platforms. Professor Williams argued that these developments call for sustained attention to the governance and evolution of AI, as well as further research into the contexts in which AI products are deployed.



Jarita Holbrook has presented the following posters: “Thoughts on Changing Our Demographics” at the EPSC–DPS Joint Meeting, Helsinki, Finland, 9 September 2025 ([link](#)); and “Getting the South African Oral History Project Online” at the American Astronomical Society Meeting (AAS 245), National Harbor, USA, 14 January 2025 ([link](#)).

Public Engagement Activities

Giulia De Togni

- ✧ November 2025. “Fearless Women in Computing.” Invited keynote speaker at an event for 600 pupils (all girls) from 17 schools in Edinburgh, hosted by St George’s.
- ✧ April 2025. Edinburgh Science Festival. “Your Robot Friend.” Two collage-making workshops for primary school-aged children and accompanying adults (60 participants), including a jointly delivered talk with Dr Marta Romeo (Heriot-Watt University).

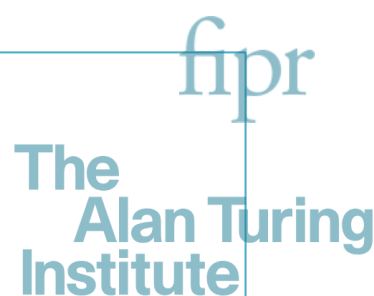
Appointments

Ben Collier

- ✦ Chair of the Foundation for Information Policy Research (appointed in 2025)

Giulia De Togni

- ✦ 2025–2026 Turing Fellow, The Alan Turing Institute
- ✦ 2025–2030 Elected Member, UK Young Academy (Royal Society)
- ✦ 2025–2030 Member, University of Edinburgh Senatus Academicus



Alumni Awards



Gemma Milne was awarded a grant in December 2025 for the project “*Focused Research Organisations in the UK: Examining New Organisational Models for a Resilient, Mission-Driven R&D System*”. She was appointed Lecturer in Innovation and Technology Management at the University of Glasgow in April 2025 after completing her PhD in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh.

Marion Maisonobe has been awarded a 2025 CNRS Bronze Medal. As a former IASH–SSPS Fellow (2018–2019), she has maintained an active collaboration with colleagues at the University of Edinburgh since her fellowship, including a subsequent visit to STIS in 2024 (hosted by Niki Vermeulen) linked to the RSE Saltire Award project GEOCOLLAB and the ANR-funded follow-on project OCEANLINKS.



PhDs Awarded in 2025

- Harry Moncrieff (STIS)
- Jawana Paradzayi (STIS)
- Sofie Illemann Jaeger (STIS)
- Kate Bowell (STIS)
- Andreas Lindemann (STIS)
- Dhaval Joshi (Human Geography, co-supervised by Sophie Haines from STIS)
- Louis Volkmer (STIS)
- Yu-Chen Lin (STIS)
- Cristina Moreno Lozano (STIS)
- Mayline Strouk (STIS)

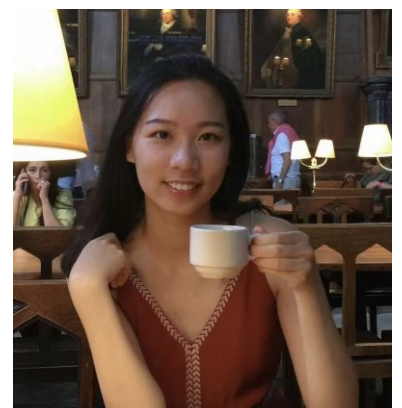
New ISSTI Members



Alexander J. Browne is a postdoctoral scientist in the School of Chemistry. He completed his PhD in Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh in 2018, then conducted postdoctoral research at the University of Tokyo, Princeton University and the University of St Andrews before returning to Edinburgh to take up his current position in September 2025. He was a finalist in the STEM for Britain competition in 2023 and currently sits on the Scottish Science Advisory Council. His day job is chemical synthesis — weaving atoms together into novel structures that host exotic quantum behaviours, providing the material foundation for new energy, computing and medical technologies. He wants to figure out how history and culture determine how chemistry is practised today, its role in society, and whether social science approaches could enhance chemical innovation.

Yuze Sha is a discourse and communication researcher. Her research sits at the intersection of public health communication, digital media, and multimodal meaning-making. She examines how legitimacy and trust are produced, negotiated and challenged through semiotic resources and platform affordances, particularly in public health discussions.

Yuze’s recent work includes analyses of NHS COVID-19 policy communication on Twitter/X and public responses, anti-vaccination discourse across pseudoscience and conspiracy websites, and public and media representations of perpetrators and victims in violent crime. She is a Research Fellow on Professor Martyn Pickersgill’s Wellcome project “Between Deception and Dissent”, which studies how unproven, disproven or misleading health claims are regulated in contemporary states and the socio-political consequences of current approaches.



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