

ISSTI

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION
www.issti.ed.ac.uk
newsletter
no. 28 | March 2016



Science Studies Unit celebrates 50th Anniversary

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programme of activities

S50

Science Studies Unit 50th Anniversary

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2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Science Studies Unit (SSU) at the University of Edinburgh by the late David Edge. Ground-breaking work at the SSU, notably by Barry Barnes and David Bloor, established the 'strong programme' in the sociology of scientific knowledge. This approach, which became known as The Edinburgh School', has had an enormous influence on our field.

In 2007 SSU merged with the Research Centre for Social Sciences, which since 1986 had coordinated a parallel programme of research into the social shaping of technology and innovation, to create the Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) Subject Group. STIS is organising a series of events and special projects to honour this crucial event in the history of our discipline. Join us as we look not only into the past, but also towards the future of STIS in Edinburgh and globally.

Short History

The Science Studies Unit was founded in 1964 by the late David Edge (1932-2003), as an experimental venture, with the help of a generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation. The 'experimental' period was fixed at five years, and ended in March, 1971. Due to its clear success the University assumed full support of the unit. Originally part of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, the Science Studies Unit moved into the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1992, and has been part of the School of Social and Political Studies since its formation in 2001. Since 2008 it has been a core component of the Science Technology and Innovation Subject Group.

David Edge recruited a team of young and energetic lecturers to form the Unit: Barry Barnes, David Bloor, and Gary Werskey. Early research associates at the Unit included John Law, Margaret Deacon and Brian Wynne. By 1971 there was also a small group of research students and a growing library. The Unit was soon joined by the historian Steven Shapin. Together, they developed the so-called "Strong Programme" in the sociology of scientific knowledge. This highly distinctive approach proved so radical and influential that it changed the social sciences, and its practitioners became known throughout the world as the "Edinburgh School".

The aim of the Unit, as originally formulated, was 'to focus attention, by teaching and research, on those areas where scientific activities overlap with more general concerns of human societies'. This aim has been interpreted very widely. The primary focus of the Unit's work has been on studies which enlarge our theoretical understanding of the social processes operating both within the scientific community, and in its relations with society at large. Such an understanding helps to expose the complexities of the political, ethical, and intellectual problems associated with the growth of science and technology in modern society. In its teaching, the Unit devised courses on the elements of this social understanding of science and technology in contemporary and historical settings.

The Unit became recognised as a centre of excellence for the study of the sociology, history, and philosophy of science, medicine and technology. Through numerous changes of personnel, the Unit continued the tradition of high quality scholarship and teaching. Since its foundation, therefore, it consistently proved to be an exemplary embodiment of the University's commitment to the benefits of interdisciplinarity in both education and

research. It also upheld, and continued to pursue, the aims set out at its foundation. In 1986 David Edge and Donald MacKenzie proposed a parallel enquiry into the social shaping of technology. A burgeoning programme of interdisciplinary studies of technology and innovation was coordinated by Robin Williams in the Research Centre for Social Sciences. Growing collaboration between these complementary programmes culminated in their merger, in June 2008, to create the Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) Subject Group, which continues to build upon and develop the SSU's remarkable legacy.



Members of the Science Studies Unit in the early 1980s

Back row, left to right: Mike Barfoot, Steven Shapin, Carole Tansley, Moyra Forrest, Andy Pickering, Dave Smith.

Front row: David Bloor, David Edge, Barry Barnes, David Miller.

Calendar activities 550th anniversary

Various events are being organised over the year under the overarching umbrella of #SSU50. The programme is developing rapidly. For latest information go to: <http://www.stis.ed.ac.uk/ssu50>



June 2016

7- 9 June - STIS-themed Workshops at the SGSSS Summer School.

- Document Analysis (based on previously very well run and much loved workshop organised by Miguel Garcia Sancho)
- Strategic Ethnographies (based on the increasing number of non-traditional ethnographic work, with specific interest in multi-sited and non-physical environment.
- More info: <https://summerschool.socsciscotland.ac.uk>

14 Jun 2016 9:00am - 15 Jun 2016 2:00pm (Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, High School Yards, Edinburgh): ISSTI Retreat - Special SSU50 Edition

For more information contact Robin Williams (R.Williams@ed.ac.uk)

15 Jun 2016 2:00pm - 5:00pm (location TBC): SSU50 - Official Gala

16 Jun 2016 9:00am - 17 Jun 2016 10:00pm (Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, High School Yards, Edinburgh): Practising the Reflexivity Tenet (50 years later) - SSU50 Workshop

What better way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Science Studies Unit than applying the reflexivity tenet to the tradition of knowledge that its members initiated? Join us for a two-day discussion about the social conditions bringing about the past, present and future of Science and Technology Studies.

November 2016

29 Nov 2016 9:00am - 5:00pm (location TBC): Between History, Sociology and Politics: Half a Century of STIS - 2nd National Conference of the UK Association for Studies of Innovation Science and Technology

Dr Xiaobai Shen's new project assesses Business Models in Film, Music and e-fiction publishing in China and the UK

CREATE, the RCUK Centre for Copyright and New Business Models in the Creative Economy is funding a £71,776 comparative project led by Dr Xiaobai Shen (Edinburgh), with Co-Is Prof. Martin Kretschmer (Glasgow) and Prof. Robin Williams (Edinburgh).



Following a supplementary bid to the contingency fund of CREATE, additional funding of £71,776 has been made available. This will specifically

extend the scope of Edinburgh's recently awarded study of China's film sector 'Convergence or differentiation in IP protection strategies and business models?' to digital music and (fiction e-book) publishing.

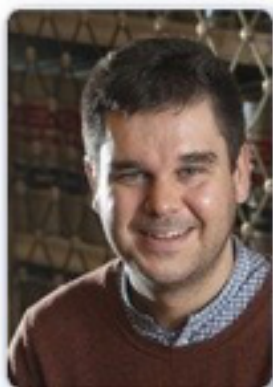
Incorporating current research carried out under the UK CREATE programme, this new project will allow a comparative perspective between developments in China and the UK. The film sector study is also supported by a £31,924 award from the

AHRC Centre for Digital Copyright and IP Research in China.

Xiaobai heads a distinguished research team including Profs. Burkhard Schafer and Robin Williams and Dr Martina Gerst [Edinburgh] and Prof. Yinliang Liu [Peking], Prof. Xudong Gao [Tsinghua]. <http://www.create.ac.uk/blog/2016/01/14/new-create-associated-project-assesses-business-models-in-film-music-and-e-fiction-publishing-in-china/>

Miguel García-Sancho, Chancellor's Fellow in Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS), has been awarded a Starting Grant by the European Research Council.

The grant of nearly 1.5 million euros will fund a five-year project which will look at changing patterns of organisation in three large-scale DNA sequencing initiatives: the human, yeast and pig genome projects.



The PI and two postdoctoral research fellows will investigate how each genomic initiative organised the collection of DNA sequence information, in order to ease

the translation of the data into relevant medical outcomes, such as biotechnology products and tools to combat human and animal disease.

The project's initial hypothesis is that the yeast, human and pig genome projects started as bottom-up initiatives, in which a growing amount of sequence information was gathered through the coordination and pooling of results of a relatively large number of laboratories that were not specifically working on DNA sequencing. As the 1990s went by, this bottom-up approach was abandoned in favour of a top-down strategy

in which a selective club of factory-style centres sequenced each genome from one end to the other.

The methodology will combine historical work in archives with quantitative and qualitative tools from the social sciences. This will require a systematic compilation of data about the actors involved in each genomic initiative which will be later submitted to Social Network Analysis (SNA). The design and interpretation of the SNA maps will be conducted in cooperation with Gil Viry, Niki Vermeulen and Ann Bruce, all of them involved in ISSTI.

Welcome to Tirion Seymour



Tirion has just completed her PhD in the area of medical sociology. Her doctoral research examined the role of partnerships between organisations involved in Scottish health services, particular around rare and complex conditions. While she is based in STIS, Tirion will be working with Gill Haddow on projects to do with biomedical technologies and their impact on individuals and society.

Welcome to Pippa Goldschmidt



Pippa Goldschmidt is a new visiting fellow at STIS. She's a writer based in Edinburgh, and she used to be an astronomer; she's also worked in science policy in both the UK and Scottish Governments. Her short stories, poetry and non-fiction have been published in a variety of magazines and anthologies, including New Writing Scotland, the TLS and the New York Times, and also broadcast on Radio 4. Find out more at <http://www.pippagoldschmidt.co.uk>, and she tweets as @goldipipschmidt

Welcome to Bill Jenkins



Bill Jenkins, who completed a PhD with STIS last year, will be rejoining us as a cultural engagement fellow until the end of April. He will be working with Niki Vermeulen on an AHRC-funded project to create an Edinburgh history of science walking tour app, based on the popular walking tour given by Professor John Henry every year until his recent retirement. Anyone who would like to contribute interesting stories about the history of science linked to places in Edinburgh is invited to contact Bill at wjenkin3@exceed.ed.ac.uk.

Welcome to Hajar Mozaffar



Hajar Mozaffar has been appointed to a lectureship into the University of Edinburgh Business School, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group. Hajar did her PhD on "Inside the New Sites of Innovation: How User Communities Influence Complex Enterprise Technologies" with Neil Pollock before taking up a research fellowship in Public Health investigating the implementation of electronic prescribing in English hospitals.

Congratulations to Prof Francesca Bray

Rice: *Global Networks and New Histories* has been selected as a Choice Outstanding Academic Title of 2015.

Prof Bray co-edited a book with fifteen chapters, written by specialists on Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Each chapter brings a new approach that unsettles prevailing narratives and suggests new connections. Together they cast new light on the significant roles of rice as crop, food, and commodity and shape historical trajectories and interregional linkages in Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Asia.



Edinburgh Alumnists

We are planning to launch an informal Alumni association for Edinburgh postgraduate students (and staff) who have been engaged in the area of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies.

We have a fairly complete list of past PhD Students from the Science, Studies Unit and the Research Centre for Social Sciences (which merged to form the Science, Technology and Innovation Studies subject group). We are extending this list to include MSc students and graduates from other departments (e.g. Sociology, Anthropology and the Business School) embarked upon the same intellectual journey. As the latter list may particularly be incomplete we would invite your help in putting us in touch with former students and colleagues. And the SSU 50th Birthday celebrations provide an opportunity to reach out to former associates.

Are you in touch with past graduates? If they are not already receiving our mailings can you ask them to send an email to Eileen Mothersole (E.Mothersole@ed.ac.uk) with their names, contact details and their dates in Edinburgh? We will use this list to provide information about activities here and the development of our research and analytical perspectives. We want to explore ways in which stronger alumni links could enhance scholarship and international links. We welcome suggestions about how to do this. Initially we will be distributing information by email. But should we be setting up an email server or using social media?

ALUMNI MEMORY COLLECTION

We ask alumni for video clips of memories, quotes/short sentences and photos (to be edited in a short film and used as part of the SSU 50th anniversary events). We would also like to collect any documents alumni would want to deposit at STIS/Library. We will also conduct film encounters with alumni during the June events (for future archival work). If you would like to participate in this project please fill in this form: <http://bit.ly/memory-collection-submission>

A call to sign up as AsSIST-UK members

The proposal to establish the Association for Studies in Innovation, Science and Technology-UK (AsSIST-UK) received full support from almost 100 delegates attending the launch (<https://www.york.ac.uk/satsu/current-projects/assist-uk/>). Should you wish to join please contact sarah.shrive-morrison@york.ac.uk with your institutional email stating whether you are a staff member or doctoral student. There will be a public launch of AsSIST-UK at the British Sociological Association 2016 conference in Aston University on the evening of 6th April 2016.

Launching the Postgraduate Forum for Science, Technology, Innovation and Society (PF-STIS)

PF-STIS is a Science, Technology and Society (STS) studies forum for doctoral students and early career researchers to exchange ideas and discuss academic and professional development. PF-STIS aims to be a space that encourages new scholars to refine their ideas, methodologies and projects in dialogue with one another and to provide a network of colleagues as people move into professional roles. The first meeting will also involve appointing volunteers to the steering group of the PF-STIS. This "steering workshop" will be held in April/May at the University of Sheffield. PF-STIS has an online presence here: <https://pfstis.wordpress.com>. Get in touch if you are interested in being involved (pfgscomm [at] gmail com).

Congratulations to our completed and current PhD students

Valeri Wiegel, "Biographies of an innovation: an ecological analysis of a strategic technology project in the auto-industry".

Pat Byrne, "Hurling together with technology: Appropriation of the mobile phone in the everyday life of an Irish community group"

Pattamaporn Prachomrat, "Public sector R & D and innovation in an emerging country: An analysis of knowledge flow between public and private sectors in the Thai National System of Innovation".

Meritxell Ramírez-i-Ollé, "The Making of Dendroclimatological Knowledge: a Symmetrical Analysis of Trust and Scepticism in Science".

Eva Hoffmann, Computer Science in Afghanistan: a situational analysis of university lecturers".

An essay by a STIS PhD student, **Matjaz Vidmar** has been shortlisted in the "World in 2065" competition.

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García-Sancho M. (2016) Recasting the local and the global: the three lives of protein sequencing in Spanish biomedical research (1968-1998). In M. Merz and P. Sormani (eds.) *The Local Configuration of New Research Fields: On Regional and National Diversity* (Springer: Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook): 205-228.

Henry, J. (2015). "Science in the Athens of the North: The Development of Science in Enlightenment Edinburgh", in Robert G. W. Anderson (ed.), *Cradle of Chemistry: The Early Years of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: John Donald), pp. 7-24.

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Pickersgill, M. (forthcoming 2016) 'Epistemic Modesty, Ostentatiousness, and the Uncertainties of Epigenetics: On the Knowledge Machinery of the (Social) Sciences', *The Sociological Review* (special issue on 'Biosocial Matters: Rethinking the Sociology-Biology Nexus in the Twenty-First Century').

Pickersgill, M. and Hogle, L. (2015) 'Enhancement, Ethics and Society: An Empirical Medical Humanities Agenda for the Social Studies of Enhancement', *Medical Humanities*, 41, 2, 136-142.

Broer, T. and **Pickersgill, M.** (2015) '(Low) Expectations, Legitimization, and the Contingent Uses of Scientific Knowledge: Engagements with Neuroscience in Scottish Social Policy and Services', *Engaging Science, Technology & Society*, 1, 1, 47-66.

Pollock, N. and **Williams, R** (2016), *How Industry Analysts Shape the Digital Future*, Oxford University Press.

Pollock N and **Williams, R** (2015) "Venues of High Tech Prediction: Presenting the Future at Industry Analyst Conferences", *Information and Organization*, Volume 25, Issue 2, pp. 115–136

Williams, R. and **Pollock, N** (2015), 'Industry Analysts – how to conceptualise the distinctive new forms of IT Market Expertise?' *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*. AAAJ-03-2015-1989

Williams, R (2016) Why is it difficult to achieve e-health systems at scale? *Information, Communication & Society* 19 (4) pp. 540-550.

Lee L, **Williams R**, Sheikh A. (2015) 'What does ePrescribing mean for patients? A case study of the perspectives of hospital renal patients', *Journal of Innovation in Health Informatics*, 22(4):391-398.