

# The Contours of Algorithmic Life

Algorithmic culture imagines the world and the bodies that inhabit it as computationally knowable: devices such as the Fitbit and the NikeFuel suggest that the body is incomplete without a technological supplement, treating one's health as a quantifiable output dependent on quantifiable inputs; the very logic of gamification, which finds increasing traction in educational and pedagogical contexts, suggests that the world is not only renderable as a winnable or losable situation, but is in fact better, more enjoyable if not more effective; the increased proliferation of how-to guides from HGTV and DIY television and the LifeHack website demonstrate an increased demand for approaching tasks with discrete algorithmic instructions. Despite ubiquitous rhetoric that algorithmic culture aspires toward efficiency, empowerment, and inclusivity, however, algorithmic culture is ultimately only able to make intelligible and significant that which can be discretized, quantified, operationalized, proceduralized, and gamefied, and in the process, algorithmic culture is necessarily exclusive.

This conference seeks to understand the way in which algorithmic culture and its inclusionary/exclusionary logic cuts asymmetrically across a number of categories such as gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, race, nation, age, dis(ability), and so forth. We are looking for papers that analyze, historicize, and ethnographize algorithmic culture in its many different manifestations, including, but not limited to gamification, the computational self, data mining and visualization, (self-)surveillance, and games for health. We are especially interested in papers that explore the boundaries and borderlands of what can and cannot be adapted, translated, or incorporated into algorithmic thinking including what happens to that which exists outside algorithmic culture.

Areas open for exploration include but are not limited to:

- Daily life in algorithmic culture
- Gamefication of education, health, politics, and other social arenas
- The life and death of big data and data visualization
- Classification and categorization in algorithmic culture
- Identity politics and the quantification of self, bodies, and populations
- Algorithm and affect
- Visual culture of algorithms
- Ethics and regulations of algorithms, procedures, and protocols
- Algorithmic imaginaries in fiction, film, video games, and other media
- Algorithmic culture and (dis)ability
- The un-algorithmic, the un-algorithmicable

For further information, please contact:

Martin Isaac Weis, [miweis@ucdavis.edu](mailto:miweis@ucdavis.edu)  
Josef Nguyen, [jddnguyen@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jddnguyen@ucdavis.edu)