QUT DIGITAL MEDIA RESEARCH CENTRE

TRANSFORMING MEDIA INDUSTRIES: SUSTAINABLE LABOUR

FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2023
QUT KELVIN GROVE CAMPUS
10:00AM-5:00PM
KG-Z9-607

Changes in media industries have wide ranging effects, some of the most substantial implications are being experienced by those working in these industries.

This symposium will focus on addressing the challenges and pathways to Sustainable Labour in the sector.

Featuring two panels, focussing on television/film and on the games industry, and a keynote address from *Dr. Mike Seymour | University of Sydney* on the implications of machine learning for creative roles in these industries.

For more information and to register to attend,
CLICK HERE

WITH GUEST KEYNOTE

Dr. Mike Seymour
University of Sydney

QUT Digital Media Research Centre

PROGRAM

10:00AM - 10:15AM	Welcome
10:15AM - 12:00PM	Sustainable Labour in Film and Television
12:00PM - 1:00PM	Lunch
1:00PM - 2:15PM	Beyond the Hype, Perspectives from the AI Trenches: Implications of Machine Learning for Creative Processes, Production Schedules and Your Job
2:15PM - 2:30PM	Working Afternoon Tea
2:30PM - 4:00PM	Sustainability in Videogame Development
4:00PM - 5:00PM	Networking Drinks

10:15AM -12:00PM: Sustainable Labour in Film and Television
Kevin Sanson (Prof, Queensland U of Technology)
Amanda Coles (Senior Lecturer, Deakin University)
Godwin Simon (Lecturer, Queensland U of Technology)

In this session, panellists will offer grounded accounts of the division of media labour across diverse job categories and industrial contexts. The panel takes the division of labour to mean both the social relations of the workplace and the relationships that connect workers around the world. The concept also includes the power dynamics that structure access to paid employment and the variable experiences of that employment for different individuals. Collectively, panellists will query the interrelationship among macro-level structural changes and the more everyday interactions that characterize the workplace, untangling the various ways shifting industrial practices, market dynamics, and cultural initiatives shape labour relations among media workers and between media workers and employers.

1:00PM - 2:15PM: Beyond the Hype, Perspectives from the AI Trenches: Implications of Machine Learning for Creative Processes, Production Schedules and Your Job
Dr. Mike Seymour (University of Sydney)

Dr. Mike Seymour has a Ph.D in digital humans, virtual production and AI. His research is into using interactive real-time photoreal faces in new forms of Human Computer Interfaces (CHI) and engagement. Mike has worked in R&D and in film production, winning an AFI and being nominated for an Emmy. He has worked as a writer, consultant and educator and serves as an important link between the film and vfx community and the researchers and innovators who constantly push the limits of AI and Machine Learning technology. Mike co-founded the Motus Lab at the University of Sydney that explores AI digital humans using both traditional high end computer graphics and also advanced neural rendering and machine learning. He regularly appears in the media from local TV and radio (Channel 7 news, ABC radio) to print, NY Post, Harvard Business Review and more. He is an engaged researcher working with teams in LA, Israel, Zurich, London, Wellington and of course Australia.

2:30PM - 4:00PM: Sustainability in Videogame Development
Moderator: Benjamin Nicoll (Senior Lecturer, QUT School of Communication)
Panellists: Ben Abraham (Independent researcher and founder of AfterClimate)
Brendan Keogh (Senior Lecturer, QUT School of Communication)
Erika Verkaiik (MPhil student, QUT School of Communication)

This panel will explore the idea of sustainability in relation to the labour of videogame development. Like most creative roles, videogame development is a career fraught with risk and uncertainty. Many emerging videogame developers work in small teams on independent passion projects, relying on personal savings, contract work, and “angel investment” to keep themselves afloat. Those lucky enough to secure ongoing employment in the videogame industry are frequently driven out of the profession due to issues around burnout, crunch, and toxicity. The videogame industry is itself extremely volatile, subject as it is to rapid technological change. How do videogame developers sustain themselves and their careers in the face of these challenges? This panel will explore this question through individual papers on videogame developer communities, ecological sustainability in the making and playing of videogames, and the rapidly changing financial context of the industry’s largest companies. It will conclude with a moderated panel discussion and audience Q&A.

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Guest Speakers

Amanda Coles (Senior Lecturer, Deakin University)

Dr. Amanda Coles is a Senior Lecturer in Employment Relations in the Faculty of Business and Law at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. Amanda's research examines the political economy of labour markets and workforce development in the creative and cultural industries with a focus on public policy, collective representation and intersectional inequality. She is a Co-Researcher with the SSHRC-funded Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalisation and Work (CRIMT) in Montreal, Canada. Her academic career is informed by her professional history in the Canadian independent film and television production sector.

Ben Abraham (Independent researcher and founder of AfterClimate)

Ben Abraham is an sustainability researcher and consultant, and the author of the first book on games and climate impacts 'Digital Games After Climate Change'. In 2022 he founded AfterClimate which helps game developers take effective climate action, and provides research and consulting on decarbonization and net zero targets for some of the biggest game companies in the world. He publishes a newsletter called Greening the Games Industry on what the field is doing to address its climate impacts.

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