

Contentious Data: A One-day Event on the Poli- tics of Big Data

Speakers include:

Sandra Braman (Texas A&M University), **Alison Powell** (London School of Economics), **Hisham al-Miraat** (Digital Rights Morocco), **Linnet Taylor** (Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology and Society), **Dorien Zandbergen**

(University of Amsterdam), **Miren Gutierrez** (Universidad del Deusto), **Denis Rojo aka Jaromil** (dyne.org), **Geert Lovink** (Institute for Network Cultures), and **Stefania Milan** (University of Amsterdam).

University Theatre, University of Amsterdam,
Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16-18, 1012 CP Amsterdam
SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

data-activism.net

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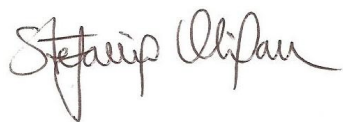
Dear speakers and participants,

— — — —

We are thrilled to welcome you to *Contentious Data*, the kick-off event of the DATACTIVE project. DATACTIVE (data-activism.net) is a interdisciplinary research project and team based at the Department of Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). It is made possible by a Starting Grant of the European Research Council (StG-2014_639379).

What is DATACTIVE about? We investigate grassroots engagement with massive data collection. With the progressive datafication of many aspects of human life, people become increasingly aware of the critical role of information in modern societies. This awareness nurtures new socio-technical practices rooted in data and technology, which we subsume under the notion of 'data activism'. By increasingly involving ordinary users, data activism signals a change in perspective and attitude towards datafication and massive data collection emerging within the civil society realm.

Contentious Data brings together scholars and practitioners to critically explore the politics of the so-called 'big data' from the perspective of grassroots activism and the organized civil society. In the spirit of our participatory and 'anti-disciplinary' working practices, we have summoned colleagues from various fields of study, and asked them to share with us their perspectives on data activism. We trust this exciting dialogue will contribute to shape our conceptual and empirical work in the years to come... and we hope you will enjoy it, too!



Stefania Milan, DATACTIVE Principal Investigator



Agenda day 1 – *Contentious Data* (public event)

Thursday September 15

University Theatre, Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16

10.00–10.30 Welcome by Stefania Milan, DATACTIVE Principal Investigator

10.30–11.30 Keynote 1: **Sandra Braman** (Texas A&M). Moderator: Kersti R. Wissenbach

11.30–12.30 Keynote 2: **Alison Powell** (London School of Economics). Moderator: Mahsa Alimardani

12.30–14.00 Lunch break

14.00–15.30 Roundtable: *Promises and Perils of Data Activism*, moderated by **Bodó Balázs** (University of Amsterdam) and featuring:

- o **Miren Gutiérrez** (Universidad de Deusto)
- o **Hisham al-Miraat** (Digital Rights Morocco)
- o **Linnet Taylor** (Tilburg University)
- o **Lonneke van der Velden** (DATACTIVE)

15.30–16.00 Coffee break

16.00–17.00 **Geert Lovink** (Institute of Network Cultures) in conversation with **Denis Roio aka Jaromil** (Dyne.org)

17–17.15 Closing & Wrap-up

Follows: 17.30–18:30 **Individual project presentations by DATACTIVE researchers**. Parallel sessions (by invitation only) at Oudemanhuispoort 4–6

19:30 **DATACTIVE dinner** for invited speakers & the DATACTIVE team at *Restaurant DenC*, Kerkstraat 377, 1017 HW Amsterdam

Agenda day 2 – DATACTIVE kick-off workshop (by invitation only)

Friday September 16

E-lab, Room 0.16, Turfdraagsterpad 9

9.30-9.45: Registration and welcome

9:45-10.30: Introduction by Stefania Milan, DATACTIVE Principal Investigator

10.30-12.15: ***Reactive data activism.*** Moderator: Becky Kazansky

- o **Seda Gürses** (Princeton University)
- o **Melanie Rieback** (Radically Open Security)
- o **Tijmen Schep** (SETUP)

12:15-13.45: lunch

13.45-15.30 ***Proactive data activism.*** Moderator: Frederike Kaltheuner

- o **Vladan Joler** (Share Labs)
- o **Emmanuel Didier** (CNRS/University of California, Los Angeles)
- o **Jennifer Gabrys** (Goldsmiths, University of London)

15.30-16.00 coffee break

16.00-17.45: ***Software tools for research.*** Moderator: Davide Beraldo

- o **Richard Rogers** (University of Amsterdam)
- o **Paul Dourish** (University of California, Irvine)
- o **David Berry** (University of Sussex)

17.45-18.30 Closing & Wrap-up

Speakers

Hisham Al-Miraat



Moroccan *Digital Rights Association*. In 2015, he helped *Privacy International* to uncover unlawful electronic surveillance against intellectuals, journalists and human rights activists in his country.

Hisham is a medical doctor by profession and the former advocacy director for *Global Voices*, a global community of bloggers and technologists advocating freedom of expression online. In 2011, during the Arab Spring, Hisham helped the pro-democracy movement to get its message through on the internet by launching a couple of online advocacy initiatives and citizen journalism platforms, including Mamfakinch.com, winner of the 2012 Google Breaking Borders Award. In 2014 he founded the

Bodó Balázs



researcher and a Marie Curie Fellow at IViR.

Bodó Balázs is an economist and piracy researcher at the Institute for Information Law (IViR) at the University of Amsterdam. He was a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at Stanford University's Center for Internet and Society in 2006/7 and a Fellow at the Center between 2006 and 2012. Since 2012 he has been a Fulbright Fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Since 2013 he is based in Amsterdam, working as a

David Berry



David M. Berry is Professor of Digital Humanities and a co-Director of the Sussex Humanities Lab, in the School of Media, Film and Music, at the University of Sussex. His most recent book is *Critical Theory and the Digital* and the edited collection, *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design* (with Michael Dieter).

Sandra Braman



Sandra Braman is Professor of Communication and Abbott Professor of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. Her books include *Change of State: Information, Policy, and Power*, and the edited volumes *Biotechnology and Communication: The Meta-Technologies of Information*; *The Emerging Global Information Policy Regime*; and *Communication Researchers and Policy-making*, in addition to almost 100 scholarly journal articles and book chapters. She is Editor of the Information Policy Book Series at MIT Press and Fellow of the International Communication Association. Braman is former Chair of the Communication Law and Policy Division of the International Communication Association and former Head of the Law Section of the International Association of Media and Communication Research. She has held visiting professorships at the University of Bergen (Norway), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Södertörn University (Sweden), and the University of South Africa (UNISA, South Africa).

Emmanuel Didier



Emmanuel Didier is a founding member and permanent researcher at Epidopo (Epigenetics, Data, Politics), a joint research unit funded by the French *Centre national de la recherche scientifique* (CNRS) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and located in the latter. He is an associate researcher with the Centre Maurice Halbwachs (CNRS, Ecole normale supérieure and EHESS) and a member of the Center for Study of Invention and Social Process at Goldsmiths, University of London. He teaches 'Socio-history of statistics' at the *Ecole Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique* (ENSAE) and at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, and 'Bio-Data', 'The Social and Political Consequences of Big Data in Biology and Medicine' at UCLA.

Paul Dourish



Paul Dourish is Chancellor's Professor of Informatics in the Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, with courtesy appointments in Computer Science and Anthropology, and an Honorary Senior Fellow in Computing and Information Systems at the University of Melbourne. His research combines topics in human-computer interaction, social informatics, and science and technology studies. He is the author of *Where the Action Is: The Foundations of Embodied Interaction* (MIT Press, 2001), and, with Genevieve Bell, *Divining a Digital Future: Mess and Mythology in Ubiquitous Computing* (MIT Press, 2011). His most recent book, *The Stuff of Bits: An Essay on the Materialities of Information* (2017), is currently in production. He is a Fellow of the ACM, a member of the SIGCHI Academy, and a recipient of the AMIA Diana Forsythe Award and the CSCW Lasting Impact Award.

Jennifer Gabrys



Jennifer Gabrys is Reader in the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London, and Principal Investigator on the ERC-funded project Citizen Sense, which engages with inventive approaches to participation and monitoring in order to test and query environmental sensing technology. Gabrys' books include a techno-geographical investigation of environmental sensing, *Program Earth: Environmental Sensing Technology and the Making of a Computational Planet* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016); and a material-political analysis of electronic waste, *Digital Rubbish: A Natural History of Electronics* (University of Michigan Press, 2011). Her work can be found at citizensense.net and jennifergabrys.net.

Seda Gürses



Seda Gürses is currently a visiting research collaborator at the Center for Information Technology Policy (CITP), University of Princeton, where she worked as a postdoctoral research associate in 2015–2016. She works on privacy and requirements engineering, privacy enhancing technologies and surveillance. Prior, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Media, Culture and Communications Department at the Steinhardt School, New York University (NYU) and at the Information Law Institute at NYU Law School, where she was also part of the Intel Science and Technology Center on Social Computing. She completed her PhD at the University of Leuven, in the Privacy and Identity Management Group of the Department of Electrical Engineering.

Miren Gutiérrez



Miren Gutiérrez is the director of the Expert Programme ‘Data analysis, research and communication’ of the University of Deusto, San Sebastian, where she has been lecturing in Communications since 2014. She is also Research Associate at the *Overseas Development Institute* (ODI) and advisor of the *Climate and Knowledge Development Network* in London. She was Communications Manager at the ODI Climate Programme (London, 2013–2014); *Index on Censorship* Communications Director (London, 2011–2012), *Greenpeace Spain* Executive Director (Madrid, 2010–2011); *MarViva* Communications Director (Mallorca, 2009–2010); *Inter Press Service* Editor in Chief (Rome, 2003–2009); *El País* Correspondent (New York, 2001–2002); *La Prensa* Business Editor (Panama, 1996–2001); Southeast Asia *EFE* Correspondent (Hong Kong, 1990–1996). Miren has written for, e.g., *El Mundo*, *El País*, *The Nation*, *Wall Street Journal*, *UPI* and *Transparency International*. She is writing her PhD on data activism at the University of Deusto.

Vladan Joler



Vladan Joler is an Associate Professor and Chair of the New Media Department at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, and the Director of SHARE Foundation and SHARE Labs – Investigative data reporting lab. In the past few years SHARE Lab focused on the independent investigation of invisible infrastructures, black boxes that mediate our interactions, our deepest personal communications and our behaviour and activities. The goal was to explore, understand and visualise different aspects of power, hidden behind the walls of the communication infrastructure, hardware and algorithms. Each investigation was a blend of different methodologies, mostly based on analysis of independently collected data, visualisation of large data sets, combined with the principles of investigative journalism and media theory. Our research includes: Inside Facebook Algorithmic Factory, Hacking Team metadata investigation, Mapping of online trackers, Mobile phone permissions analysis, Mapping surveillance architecture.

Geert Lovink



Geert Lovink is a media theorist, internet critic and author of *Dark Fiber* (2002), *Zero Comments* (2007), *Networks Without a Cause* (2012) and *Social Media Abyss* (2016). Since 2004 he is researcher in the Faculty of Digital Media and Creative Industries at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA) where he is the founder of the *Institute of Network Cultures*. His centre recently organized conferences, publications and research networks such as *Video Vortex* (the politics and aesthetics of online video), *Unlike Us* (alternatives in social media), *Critical Point of View* (Wikipedia), *Society of the Query* (the culture of search), *MoneyLab* (internet-based revenue models in the arts) and a project on the future of art criticism. From 2004–2013 he was also Associate Professor of new media at the Department of Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam. Since 2009 he is Professor at the European Graduate School (Saas-Fee/Malta) where he supervises PhD students.

Alison Powell



Alison Powell is Assistant Professor in Media and Communications at the London School of Economics where she leads LSE Data and Society, including the MSc in Media and Communications (Data & Society). Her research examines the ways in which value decisions are negotiated within the design of new ICTs. She is writing a book on data citizenships and 'sensing citizenships', and working on several funded projects related to citizenship, cities, data and ethics, as well as a history of 'everyday data citizenship'. Along with Nick Couldry, she recently published the article 'Big Data From the Bottom Up' in *Big Data and Society*, along with several other publications discussing information policy, activism, and open source culture. She is regularly invited to deliver lectures on the social and political consequences of the Internet of Things and Smart Cities projects. She completed her PhD at Concordia University in Montreal and her postdoctoral study at the Oxford Internet Institute.

Melanie Riebeck



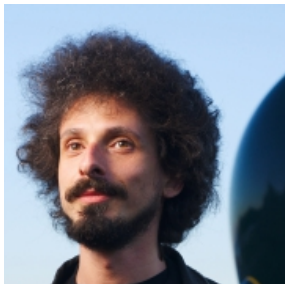
Dr. Melanie Riebeck is the CEO/Co-founder of Radically Open Security, the world's first non-profit computer security consultancy company. Prior to this, she was Assistant Professor of Computer Science at the Free University of Amsterdam, performing RFID security research (RFID Virus and RFID Guardian) that attracted worldwide press coverage, and won several awards (VU Mediakomeet, ISOC Award, NWO I/O award, IEEE Percom Best Paper, USENIX Lisa Best Paper). Melanie worked as a Senior Engineering Manager on XenClient at Citrix, where she led the Vancouver office. She was also the head researcher in the CSIRT at ING Bank, where she set up their Analysis Lab and spearheaded the ING Core Threat Intelligence Project. For fun, she co-founded the *Dutch Girl Geek Dinner* in 2008. Melanie was named 2010 ICT Professional of the Year (Finalist) by WomeninIT, one of the 400 most successful women in the Netherlands by Viva Magazine (Viva400) in 2010, and one of the fifty most inspiring women in tech (Inspiring Fifty Netherlands) in 2016.

Richard Rogers



Richard Rogers, PhD, is University Professor in New Media & Digital Culture and Department Chair of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He is Director of the *Govcom.org Foundation*, the group responsible for the Issue Crawler and other info-political tools, and the *Digital Methods Initiative*, dedicated to studying natively digital data and methods for Internet research. Among other works, Rogers is author of *Information Politics on the Web* (MIT Press, 2004), awarded the best book of the year by the American Society of Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). His recent book, *Digital Methods*, published by MIT Press (2013), won the Outstanding Book Award from the International Communication Association. Rogers is a three-time Ford Fellow and has received research grants from the Soros Foundation, Open Society Institute, MacArthur Foundation and Gates Foundation.

Denis Roio aka Jaromil



Denis Roio, also known as Jaromil (jaromil.dyne.org), is a researcher in philosophy of technology and a software artisan. His creations are recommended by the *Free Software Foundation* and redistributed worldwide. He is also an active contributor to media theory discourses. Since 2000, Jaromil dedicates his efforts to build *dyne.org*, a non-profit software house gathering a growing number of artisans and socially engaged developers. Among *dyne.org* productions are software as FreeJ, MuSE, HasciiCam, Tomb, Frei0r video plugins and Dyne:bolic, the 100% free GNU/Linux distribution for multimedia. Jaromil received the Vilém Flusser Award at Transmediale (Berlin, 2009) while leading for 6 years the R&D department of the Netherlands Media Art Institute (Montevideo/TBA). He is included in the 'Purpose Economy' list of top 100 social entrepreneurs in EU (2014) and the '40 under 40' European young leaders program (2012).

Tijmen Schep



Tijmen Schep is a technology critic and privacy designer. He wrote the book "Design my Privacy" which will be available in English in Oktober 2016. He co-founded SETUP, a Dutch non-profit that explains data-issues to a wider audience using funny media campaigns. They have scraped together a database of all Dutch people from public online sources, and are now exploring scenarios combining the reputation economy and the internet of things.

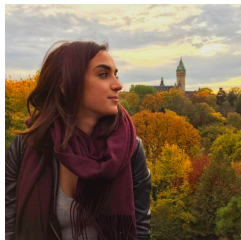
Linnet Taylor



Linnet Taylor is Assistant Professor of Data Ethics, Law and Policy at the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology and Society (TILT), where she researches the interface between big data, rights and democratic representation worldwide. She was previously a Marie Curie fellow in the UvA International Development Studies department, where she researched the emergence of ethical frameworks around the use of big data in development policy. She conducted postdoctoral research at the Oxford Internet Institute on big data in social science, and holds a PhD in Development Studies from the Institute of Development Studies, UK. She blogs at linnettaylor.wordpress.com.

The DATACTIVE team

Mahsa Alimardani



Mahsa is the DATACTIVE research assistant. She has been doing research and work on Internet controls, policies and digital security with a focus on Iran since 2012. She recently completed her Research Masters at the UvA degree with a dissertation on *Contentious Politics and Information Controls in Iran*. She is also the Iran editor for *Global Voices*. **Keywords:** social movements, digital security, censorship, information controls, MENA

David Beraldo



Davide Beraldo is a postdoctoral researcher with the DATACTIVE project, and a freelance software developer. His PhD thesis (2017) explores the epistemological challenges for social movement studies in the digital age. He graduated in Social Sciences and Political Science at the University of Milan and has a background in computer programming. **Keywords:** social movements, digital sociology, network analysis, complexity theory

Jonathan Gray



Jonathan Gray (jonathangray.org) is Prize Fellow at the Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath. He was a postdoctoral researcher with DATACTIVE (2015–2016). His work focuses on the politics of open data and public data infrastructures. He is also Research Associate at the *Digital Methods Initiative* (WvA); Research Associate at the médialab at Sciences Po; and Tow Fellow at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia University. **Keywords:** open data, public data, public information, data infrastructures, Science & Technology Studies

Frederike Kaltheuner



Frederike Kaltheuner is a researcher with the DATACTIVE project. She holds an MSc from the University of Oxford, is a 2016 Transatlantic Digital Fellow and works also as a technology reporter. As of October 2016, she will be joining *Privacy International* as a policy officer on data innovation. More about her can be found out on frederikekaltheuner.tumblr.com.

Keywords: privacy, algorithms, predictive analytics, ethics

Becky Kazansky



Becky is a PhD candidate and researcher with the DATACTIVE project. She earned a Master's in Interactive Telecommunications at NYU, and spent the last ten years working to strengthen human rights, privacy, and digital security with different civil society organisations. She was previously Lead Programme Researcher and a digital security trainer with *Tactical Technology Collective*.

Keywords: privacy, surveillance, security, risk, resistance

Stefania Milan



Stefania Milan (stefaniamilan.net) is the Principal Investigator of the DATACTIVE project, and an Assistant Professor of New Media and Digital Culture at UvA. A sociologist of the digital, she is the author of *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change* (Palgrave 2013/2016), and co-author of *Media/Society* (Sage 2011). She advocates for digital rights in internet governance & cybersecurity fora.

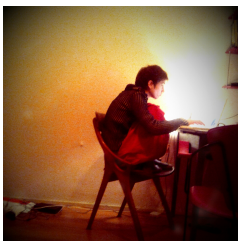
Keywords: data activism, cloud protesting, cyberspace governance, research ethics and methods

Niels ten Oever



Niels ten Oever is a PhD researcher with DATACTIVE. He is also the Director of Digital at *Article 19*. He has designed and implemented freedom of expression projects in the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Northern Africa, Brazil and Afghanistan, and worked on internet governance issues within the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers and the Internet Engineering Task Force. **Keywords:** digital civil society, tactics, Internet imaginaries

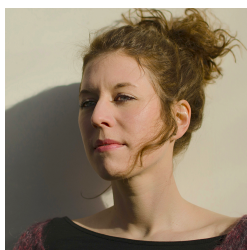
Lonneke van der Velden



Lonneke van der Velden is a postdoctoral researcher in the DATACTIVE project, and a lecturer at the New Media and Digital Culture program at the UvA. She is part of the editorial board of *Krisis*, journal for contemporary philosophy in the Netherlands. She also sits on the Board of Directors of the Dutch digital rights organization *Bits of Freedom*. **Keywords:** internet surveillance, activism,

open source intelligence, Science & Technology Studies

Kersti Ruth Wissenbach



Kersti is a PhD researcher with the DATACTIVE project. An international consultant, she has been working on the intersection of technology, communication and socio-political change for over a decade. As strategy and policy advisor trainer and co-creator, she had worked with activist groups, NGOs and governmental organizations in, e.g., Honduras, Ghana, Nigeria, Cambodia, Rwanda and Mozambique. Kersti holds a lecturer position with the

Communication for Development program at the University of Malmö. **Keywords:** civic technology, transnational activism, collective action, power

Advisory Board

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DATACTIVE

The Venues

Day 1

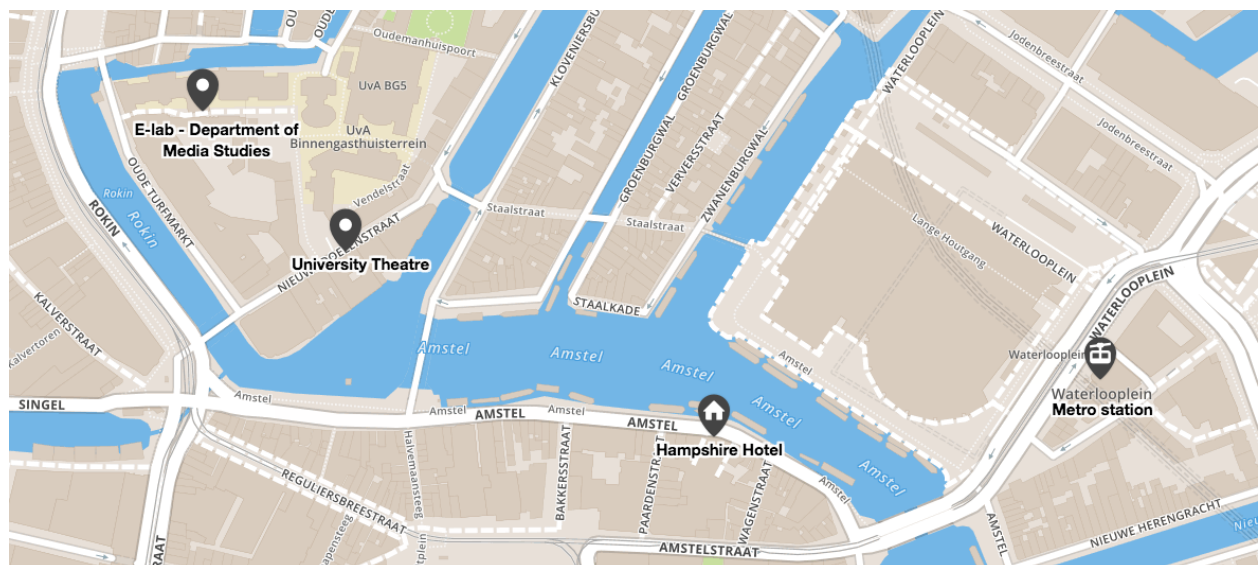
Universiteitstheater (University Theatre), Nieuwe Doelenstraat 16, 1012 CP Amsterdam

Rooms A2.14 and A2.30, Oudemanhuispoort 4-6 (feedback sessions)

Day 2

E-lab, Department of Media Studies, Turfdraagsterpad 9, 1012 XT Amsterdam

For speakers: All venues are 500-600 mt walking distance from Hampshire Hotel Eden Amsterdam.



Transport and Accommodation

Schiphol Airport

To get to/from Schiphol Airport:

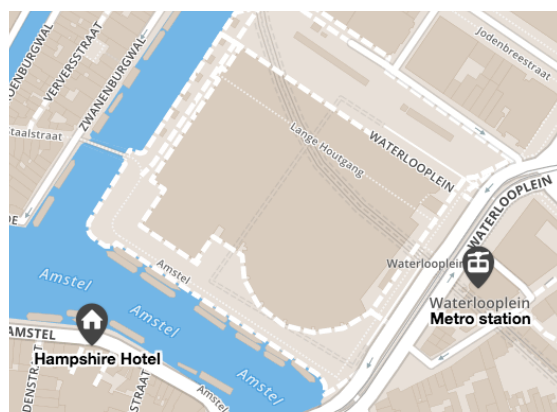
<http://www.schiphol.nl/Travellers/ToFromSchiphol.htm>

We recommend travelling by train, it is the fastest and more convenient way to reach the city center (and the greenest, too!). The train station is located in the Arrivals hall of the airport.

Hotel

Hampshire Hotel - Eden Amsterdam,
Amstel 144, 1017 AE Amsterdam

From Schiphol airport: Take any train to Amsterdam Centraal. Metro lines 51, 53, 54 reach Waterlooplein (your stop) in 2 minutes. From there, it is a 300mt walk to the hotel (and you are in the heart of Amsterdam!)



Public Transport

Travelling within Amsterdam by public transport is straightforward and convenient. GVB day passes are available from 1 to 7 days, with prices starting from €7.50. You can also purchase your tickets in advance from the GVB website. A single ticket costs €2.90.

Rent a Bike

Cycling is the quintessential Dutch experience! You can rent a bike at the following locations:

Macbike: <http://macbike.nl>

Starbikes Rental: <http://www.starbikesrental.com/> (it accepts Bitcoin!)

Exploring Amsterdam

Visit EYE - The Film Museum in the Netherlands - discover the world of cinema. Enjoy a beautiful building above the water, films, exhibitions and a terrace restaurant.

<https://www.eyefilm.nl/en>

The International Institute of Social History (IISG) is one of the largest archive for labour, left and social history in the world.

<https://socialhistory.org/>

Wilde Zwijnen offers modern Dutch dining in a trendy, rustic setting with wood tables, exposed brick & an open kitchen.

<http://wildezwijnen.com/english.html>

Fotoweeek - On 9-18 September 2016, museums, galleries, shops and other organisations immerse themselves in the world of photography as Fotoweeek hits the Netherlands. The 2016 theme is 'Kijk! Dit ben ik' ('Look, this is me!'): this edition is dedicated to portrait photography.

<http://www.defotoweeek.nl/>

Klassiek op het Amstelveld is a free outdoor festival featuring up-and-coming classical talents and established ensembles, choirs and orchestras. It takes place on September 17-18.

<http://www.klassiekophetamstelveld.nl/en/>

Contact

In case of urgent questions during your stay please contact

info@data-activism.net

OR

Stefania Milan +31-(0)20-5252416

Police, fire brigade or ambulance

- Emergency police, fire brigade, ambulance: 112
- Police information (non-emergency): 0900 8844

Emergency doctor's office

An emergency doctor office is available for problems outside of regular doctor's hours. The service operates around the clock (24/7) and is available for nights, weekends and all public holidays.

The number in Amsterdam is 088 003 0600. The operator will connect you with an emergency doctor in your area.

DATACTIVE

Thank you

Contentious Data was made possible by the crucial support of our funders: the **European Research Council** (ERC), the **Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis** (ASCA), the **Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies** (ACGS), and the **Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research** (AISSR).

DATACTIVE wishes to thank a;sp Federica Bardelli and Carlo De Gaetano for designing the DATACTIVE logo and the poster for this event. If you like their work, check out their portfolios [here](#) and [here](#).

We hope you enjoy your stay in Amsterdam!

The DATACTIVE team



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‘A word (DATACTIVE) is a data point that can be encrypted, hidden and disguised – both in its shape and meaning. It is also an action of communication, a statement of resistance and awareness.

In reference to the lo-fi printing/photocopy techniques of the 70’s punk fanzines and to the recent rediscovery of that visual language by the new wave of experimental design clusters (see Metahaven) we scanned the word DATACTIVE as an action of re-appropriation of meaningful data.

Moving the printed word on the scanner multiple times generates new shapes, new distortions, meaning the active and evolving nature of both DATACTIVE objects of study and therefore of DATACTIVE itself.’

Federica Bardelli and Carlo De Gaetano, 2016

DATACTIVE**University of Amsterdam**Department of Media Studies, room 213.b

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1012 XT Amsterdam

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