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Abstract title: Interactions between STS and ‘new’ media: investigating the selfie as a dance of agencies

This paper focusses on how STS-concepts from user studies (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2008) and the notion of the dance of agencies (Pickering, 1995) can help to understand the recent and popular phenomenon of selfie-taking as a practice through which producers of selfies gain agency in sociomaterial configurations (Orlikowski, 2009). Within Media Studies, selfies are often analysed in relation to questions of identity, subjectivity, and image and genre theory (Rettberg, 2014). Instead of solely concentrating on the images that are created in the process of producing selfies, this paper investigates how digital, social and mobile technologies (including selfie sticks) resist and accommodate user agency. Furthermore, selfie-taking is understood as a dance of agencies between actors; instead of analysing the object or image, the practice of creating selfies is viewed as one through which meaning and materiality are enacted together. This analysis seeks to understand this enactment by underlining ongoing tensions between users and technologies, and between materiality and the alleged superficiality of the selfie, in order to move beyond the image. This, in turn, may lead to ideas about other “technologies of the self”, how these resist and accommodate user agency, and how STS and media theory may further complement one another.

References

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