

1. Events

Event Details

AAG 2025: Reinventing Digital Work

Start date : 24 March 2025 09:00

Date de fin : 28 March 2025 17:00

Where : Detroit

Hosted by : American Association of Geographers

Information sources :

<https://www.aag.org/events/aag2025/>

Organizer: Weiqiang Lin (Department of Geography, National University of Singapore)

Digital work – an umbrella term used to denote work organized around digital technologies – is coming of age. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly accelerated and exploited this trend, both demonstrating the feasibility of digitalizing parts of the economy, and forcefully restructuring the labor force to conform to emerging digital technologies. In recent years, geographers, among others, have paid increasing attention to such forms of virtual employment as well. Various, their investigations have spanned from platform workers in the gig economy (Graham 2020; Wells et al. 2021) to digital nomads (Hannonen 2022; Holleran and Notting 2023) to even conventional, white-collar work that has ditched the office to reorganize job responsibilities around the home (Bissell et al. 2020). These developments have not only raised important questions about the (still-)changing geographies of the workplace (Richardson 2022; 2024), but have also had serious implications on issues on fairness, such as the time boundaries of work, the subjection of labour to surveillance and performance indicators and the gender division of labour (Richardson 2018; Van Doorn 2017; Van Doorn and Badger 2020).

Yet, while current studies have charted some productive contours of capital's reorganization of work, along with its injustices, they have also tended to concentrate on only a few prominent types. Indeed, the scope of the digital economy today has exploded beyond simple informational transactions (such as hiring an Uber, or attending online meetings), to spread to such unlikely candidates, as well as new industries, as medicine, spirituality and religion, recreational sports, art therapy, comedic sketches, education, life coaching, and so on (see, e.g., Nagendra 2020; Rossiter 2016). These categories not only signal the creation of 'new' roles partly organized around self-employment, individual aspirations and new community formation, but also speak to the agency of (some) workers in mobilizing resources and (re)inserting themselves within capital's automated infrastructure in their own terms (cf. Lin 2022). Without over-stating the emancipatory capacity of such agencies, this call is interested in identifying and unpacking a diversity of visions for digital work, which can extend, inform and challenge existing politics.

This session seeks to bring together researchers similarly curious about the (re)inventive potentials of digital work, without losing sight of capital's entanglements—notably through an equally proliferative platform capitalism (Leszczynski 2020; Srnicek 2017). The intention of the session is to curate a collection of papers attuned to these developments in Detroit, a city that has itself turned to technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to transform 'traditional' industries such as marketing, security and automobiles. Some suggested, but non-exhaustive, themes for the session include:

- Theorizations of digital work and its diversities
- Intersections between digital work and the material world
- Self-employment taking advantage of digital platforms
- Young people's aspirations for work through digital technologies
- Digital nomadism and other non-nomadic content creation
- Online marketplace for freelance services and its workers
- Gig economy and coexistence with other kinds of work
- Micro-politics of labor in platform capitalism
- Social enterprises and digital reformations
- Digital work and implications for urban planning
- Digital work and implications on migration and mobilities
- Digital work beyond the West / in the Global South

Practical informations :