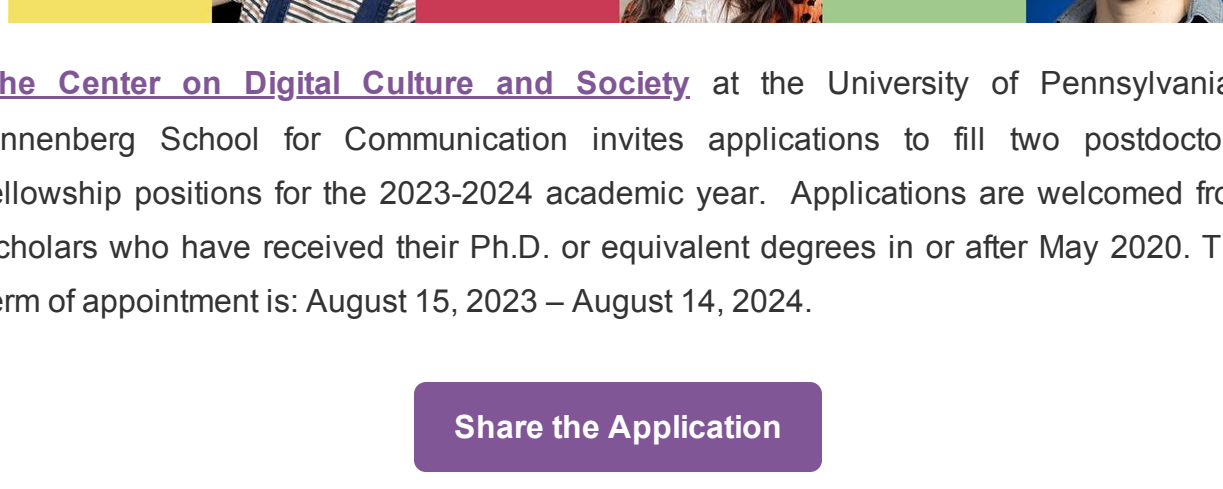


February 1, 2023

Reimagining our common future through critical scholarship and dialogue on digital culture, technology, and society.

## CDCS Call for Applications for Post-doctoral Fellowships, 2023-2024

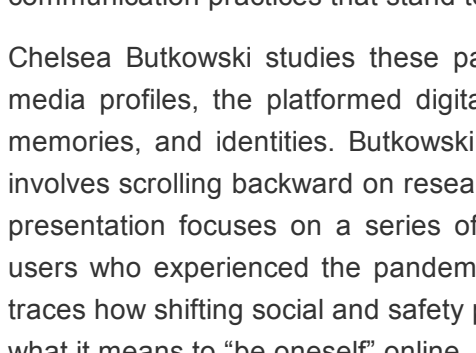
Apply by February 15, 2023



[The Center on Digital Culture and Society](#) at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication invites applications to fill two postdoctoral fellowship positions for the 2023-2024 academic year. Applications are welcomed from scholars who have received their Ph.D. or equivalent degrees in or after May 2020. The term of appointment is: August 15, 2023 – August 14, 2024.

Share the Application

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Chelsea Butkowski's colloquium

The COVID-19 pandemic unevenly disrupted everyday life on a global scale, and, as a result, it also altered the fabric of personal storytelling in online spaces. Changing pandemic safety measures and social routines rapidly transformed norms of digital self-representation and impression management. For example, social media offers opportunities to document life in lockdown while also placing personal

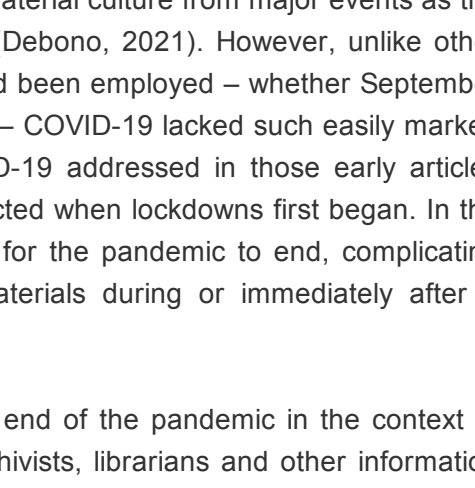
adherence to pandemic guidelines like mask-wearing and social distancing under networked scrutiny. Even as some of these alterations have already proven temporary, they also illustrate communication practices that stand to endure beyond the so-called "pandemic era."

Chelsea Butkowski studies these pandemic self-making practices through the lens of social media profiles, the platformed digital spaces dedicated to displaying our online interactions, memories, and identities. Butkowski uses social media scroll back interviews, a method that involves scrolling backward on research participants' social media profiles alongside them. This presentation focuses on a series of 48 interviews conducted in late 2021 with social media users who experienced the pandemic in the U.S., largely located in Upstate NY. Ultimately, it traces how shifting social and safety pressures of pandemic life prompted participants to relearn what it means to "be oneself" online.

**February 6th, 12:15-1:30pm EST.** Register for the in-person event [here](#)

### Frances Corry's Colloquium

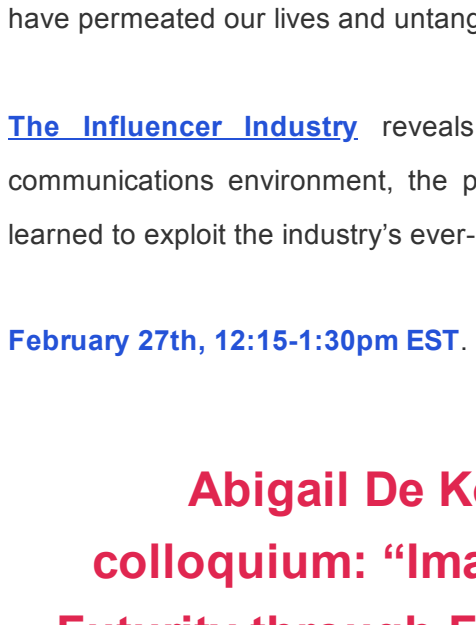
During the spring of 2020, in the early months of COVID-19 lockdowns in the United States, popular press outlets discussed how digital documentation would provide a robust record of the pandemic. Articles detailed how numerous archival groups were rallying resources to aggregate diverse digital media—from websites to user-submitted photos—that could one day provide a historical record of that unprecedented moment.



These archival practices can be characterized as "rapid response collecting," a methodology used by information and history institutions to collect "material culture from major events as the phenomenon unfolds or in the immediate aftermath" (Debono, 2021). However, unlike other American crises for which rapid response collecting had been employed – whether September 11th, 2001, or the Boston Marathon bombings of 2013 – COVID-19 lacked such easily marked temporal boundaries. Instead, the 'moment' of COVID-19 addressed in those early articles lasted much beyond the few weeks optimistically projected when lockdowns first began. In the meantime, cultural debates arose over what it meant for the pandemic to end, complicating rapid response collecting's promise to aggregate materials during or immediately after a significant event.

This talk addresses the cultural ambiguity around the end of the pandemic in the context of rapid response collecting. Through interviews with archivists, librarians and other information professionals who engaged in digital collecting around COVID-19, it reviews how these professionals planned, executed, and ended rapid response collecting around COVID-19; how they grappled with the ambiguous ends of the pandemic through collecting practices; and how these practices may come to shape how COVID-19 is historicized and remembered into the future. The talk offers both theory-driven explorations of how the pandemic has been temporally bounded through the collection of digital media, as well as practical takeaways for collecting documentation as an event unfolds.

**February 13th, 12:15-1:30pm EST.** Register for the in-person event [here](#)



### Emily Hund's Book talk

Before there were Instagram likes, Twitter hashtags, or TikTok trends, there were bloggers who seemed to have the passion and authenticity that traditional media lacked. The Influencer Industry tells the story of how early digital creators scrambling for work amid the Great Recession gave rise to the multibillion-dollar industry that has fundamentally reshaped culture, the flow of information, and the way we relate to ourselves and each other.

Drawing on dozens of in-depth interviews with leading social media influencers, brand executives, marketers, talent managers, trend forecasters, and others, former CDCS post-doc fellow [Emily Hund](#) shows how early industry participants focused on creating and monetizing digital personal brands as a means of exerting control over their professional destinies in a time of acute economic uncertainty. Over time, their activities coalesced into an industry whose impact has reached far beyond the dreams of its progenitors—and beyond their control. Hund illustrates how the methods they developed for creating, monetizing, and marketing social media content have permeated our lives and untangles the unforeseen cultural and economic costs.

[The Influencer Industry](#) reveals how, in an increasingly fractured and profit-driven communications environment, the people we think of as "real" are merely those who have learned to exploit the industry's ever-shifting constructions of authenticity.

**February 27th, 12:15-1:30pm EST.** Register for the in-person event [here](#)

## Abigail De Kosnik's colloquium: "Imagining Futurity through Fandom and Piracy"



The future is in crisis. Futurist thinking, including ordinary personal life planning, has become fraught for billions of people due to ongoing pandemic, climate change, political extremism, and the threat of world war. Apart from these global crises, many individual minority youth (Black, brown, and LGBTQ+ teens, and girls living in strict religious households) have experienced oppressive conditions that rendered futurity challenging to the point of unthinkableity.

In this talk, De Kosnik will discuss several cases of young people using media fandom and piracy to imagine future selves and future lives despite severe constraints related to their identities and orientations. It is possible that the majority of the world's population can learn much from minority youths' ability to transform works and systems at hand into practices of sustenance and pathways to tomorrow.

**March 13th, 12:15-1:30pm EST.** Register for the virtual event [here](#)

## Mark your calendar for CDCS-MIC Symposium on Digital Activism April 17th, 2023



### ICA presentations of Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows

[Chelsea Butkowski](#) will present two papers: "From Staging Normalcy to Moving in Silence: The politics of visual self-representation in a pandemic era"; and "Communication about sensors and communication through sensors: Localizing the Internet of Things in rural communities".

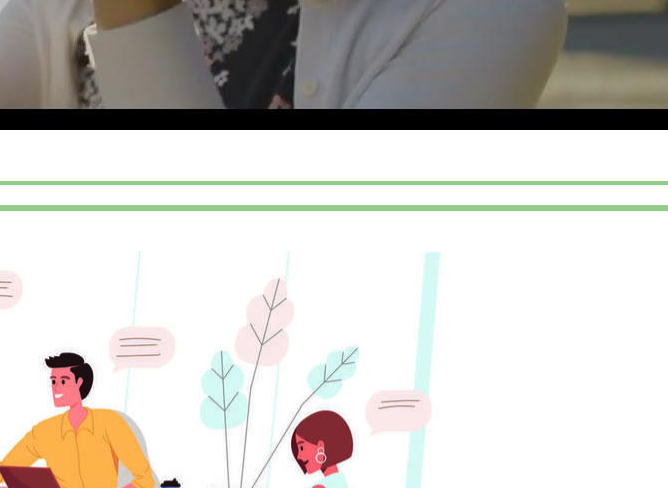
[Chloe Ahn](#) and [Jenny Lee](#), members of the Working Group on Digital Platforms, Labor, and Surveillance will present the paper "Colonizers in the neighborhood: A content analysis of Nextdoor users' 'postracial' surveillance."

[Woori Han](#) will present a paper on "Single's Inferno: Reimagining heterosexual romance and racism in the (post)#MeToo era." In addition, Woori will present her paper "The liminal politics of the early homosexual media activism: The case of Korean gay/lesbian magazine Buddy (1998-2003)" at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, Denver, CO, April 12th-15th.

[Yuval Katz](#)'s ICA presentations are: "Peace through solidarity: Nonreciprocal listening on the digital activist project Border Gone" (Activism, Communication and Social Justice Interest Group); and "Studying everyday peace in popular culture: The case of Arab Labor and the Israeli television industry" (Popular Media & Culture division).

## NEWS, PUBLICATIONS & UPDATES

CDCS has launched a new project on "Digital Pandemic." The goal of this project is to contribute to the building of a public culture of pandemic archiving, remembering, and storytelling. For more information, please visit [the project website](#).



Chloe Ahn and Jenny Lee presented their paper "Colonizers in the neighborhood: A content analysis of Nextdoor users' 'postracial' surveillance" at the Association of Internet Researchers conference in Dublin in November 2022.

[Frances Corry](#) addresses the intersection between platforms, their sociotechnical process of aging, and memory by focusing on local social platform OakdaleTalk and its use in reflecting on September 11, 2001. [Read the article](#). Corry also examines the technological moments of four case studies adapted from a multimedia research performance held at the conference The Fire This Time: Afterlives of 1968, each of which represented a vision of a better world, was inextricable from the social realities and power dynamics present in their making. [Learn more in the co-authored article](#).

On January 25, 2023, Corry presented a paper on "DH broken: Between experimentation and degradation" in [the Reframing Failure seminar series in the School of Advanced Study, University of London](#).

On November 7, 2022, [Guobin Yang](#) delivered a keynote speech on "Issues in the Writing of a Cultural History of the Chinese Internet" at the Inaugural International Conference on the Study of Internet Histories. The Conference was hosted virtually by the College of Media and International Culture of Zhejiang University.

On December 16, 2022, Guobin Yang delivered a keynote speech on "Postcritique and the Sociology of China in Uncertain Times" at the 5th International Chinese Sociological Association's Annual Conference. Hosted virtually by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the conference focused on the theme of "Expanding Traditional Boundaries of Sociology: New Issues and New Challenges in Uncertain Times."

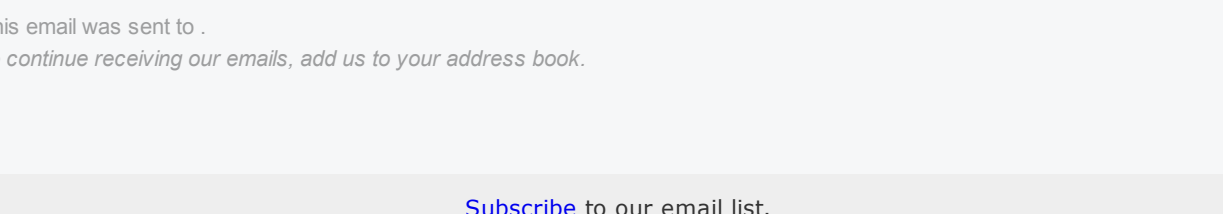
Guobin Yang's new book [The Wuhan Lockdown](#) was selected as a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2022.

On January 23, 2023, Guobin talks about COVID-19 memories on The Spectator's podcast "Chinese Whispers."

Listen to the podcast

CDCS published Kelly Diaz's photo essay on ["Signs of the Times: Public Displays at the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic."](#)

Watch a video about Kelly Diaz's project.



## Working Group Meeting updates

[Theory Lab](#) will continue to meet biweekly on Tuesdays at Annenberg room 300 from 12:15 - 1:30 pm. Please get in touch with [Liz Hallgren](#) and [Lucila Casalena](#) about the meeting next Tuesday, February 7th.

The Center for Digital Culture and Society has started a new working group on [Digital Activism and Data Justice](#) led by Devon Probol. The working group will meet biweekly on Mondays at Annenberg room 300 from 12:15 - 1:30 pm. Please get in touch with [Devo Probol](#) about the next meeting dates.

The Center on Digital Culture and Society supports critical, interdisciplinary scholarship and dialogue on all aspects of digital culture, technology, and society.

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