

# Pandemic Tech

The Interplay of Covid-19 and Technology in Shaping the Pandemic Experience



ONLINE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021

# Pandemic Tech

The Covid-19 crisis has created new developments in the use of technology and accelerated existing trends in technology usage. In lockdown, many were dependent on technology to access essential public services, for work, study and socialising. Those who didn't have access to technology were often 'locked out'. Information and misinformation about the virus were shared via social media networks. Fake news about the virus often centred around Big-Tech worries such as 5G and micro-chipping. The use of Artificial Intelligence was key in the development of new vaccines. Many apps were launched to track and trace the spread of the virus, and the use of digital passports is being investigated to allow safe travel in the future.

The LINCS conference will analyse and evaluate how technology shaped our experience of the pandemic and how the crisis has shaped technology development for the future.

This is a student-led, interdisciplinary conference aimed at PhD and early career researchers. Join us to discuss the key issues for policy makers, legal practitioners, public health bodies, educationalists, engineers and computer scientists.

To register go to <https://bit.ly/LINCS2021register> . Details of how to join the conference will be sent to you after registration.

## About our Keynote Speaker...

We are delighted to welcome Professor Rob Kitchin as our keynote speaker.

Professor Kitchin is an ERC Advanced Investigator in the National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis at Maynooth University

He is currently a principal investigator on the Programmable City project (funded by the European Research Council) and the Building City Dashboards project (funded by Science Foundation Ireland; also see Dublin Dashboard). He was formerly a PI for the Digital Repository of Ireland (2009-2017) and the All-Island Research Observatory (2005-2017).

His most recent academic publication is *Data Lives: How Data Are Made and Shape Our World*, published by Bristol University Press.

## The Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker

Day 2 of the conference starts with a talk from Emily Cameron-Blake and Saptarshi Majumdar, of the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. They will discuss their work on the Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker project.

The tracker systematically collects information on several different common policy responses that governments have taken to respond to the pandemic on 20 indicators such as school closures and travel restrictions. It now has data from more than 180 countries.

The data is also used to inform a Risk of Openness Index which aims to help countries understand if it is safe to 'open up' or whether they should 'close down' in their fight to tackle the coronavirus.

# Day 1, 16<sup>th</sup> June

## 12.45pm **Welcome and Introduction**

*Professor Cathal McCall, Programme Co-ordinator of LINCS and Professor of European Politics and Borders in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics*

## 1pm **Keynote Presentation:**

### **Civil liberties or public health, or civil liberties and public health? Using surveillance technologies to tackle the spread of COVID-19**

*Professor Rob Kitchin, Maynooth University*

In the keynote address, Professor Rob Kitchin will challenge the contention that surveillance technologies are necessary to ensure public health by questioning the technical and practical efficacy of surveillance technologies, and examining their implications for civil liberties, governmentality, surveillance capitalism, and public health.

## 2pm **Accessing and Delivering Essential Services Online (1)**

### **Short Presentation Session**

- Combating the next global pandemic using 6G: Legal obstacles to the use of federated deep learning in transferring and processing medical data.  
*Jordan Leinster, Queen's University Belfast*
- Maintaining service integrity during rapid digitalisation: the case of digital restorative services  
*Laidi Surva*
- Algorithmic decision-making, Covid-19, and the future of administrative justice.  
*Tomás McInerney, Queen's University Belfast*

## 3pm **Working from Home: Security and Surveillance**

### **Short Presentation Session**

- Experiencing privacy: Digitalization of the private sphere during lockdown  
*Katja de Neergaard, IT University of Copenhagen*
- White-collar pandemic labour: Working from home or living at work?  
*Rebekah Corbett, Queen's University Belfast*
- Digital Ethnography: Past, Pandemic and Future  
*Colette Casey, Queen's University Belfast*

## 4pm **Accessing and Delivering Essential Services Online (2) -**

### **Short Presentation Session**

- Remote services during the pandemic: Questioning the impact of technology on the relationships between social workers and service users  
*Katheryn-Margaret Pascoe, Ulster University*
- Proctoring, Privacy and Kim Kardashian - Taking Exams during the Pandemic  
*Emma McAllister, Queen's University Belfast*
- APPIFICATION - The lessons from pandemic for a smart city  
*Sejal Chandak, Queen's University Belfast*

# Day 2, June 17<sup>th</sup>

1.30pm

## **The Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker**

*Emily Cameron-Blake, Saptarshi Majumdar, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford*

The presenters will discuss their work on a global panel database of COVID-19 government policies in response to the pandemic - the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT). Systematically collecting data for 20 indicators that include containment and restrictions policies, public health measures and vaccine distribution, our database publishes in real-time, covering 187 countries and 4 sub-national data sets. Collected by a large team of specially trained volunteer data contributors from all over the world, we discuss the organisational and technical challenges of such a large citizen science data collection effort in the face of a public health emergency.

2.30pm

## **Digital Places, Spaces and Travelling in Lockdown** **Short Presentation Session**

- Dungeons, dragons and COVID-19  
*Dean James McIntyre, University of Manchester*
- Exploring and experiencing places through mobile media in times of COVID-19 pandemic  
*Maciej Głowczyński, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*

3.30pm

## **Social Media and Covid** **Short Presentation Session**

- Pandemic crisis prevention and social media analytics: Trust and ethical implications  
*Susannah Copson and Panagiotis Loukinas, Trilateral Research*
- Going Coronaviral: Trump, Twitter and the (De)securitisation of COVID-19  
*Cian Luddy, Queen's University Belfast*

4.30pm

**Close**



# Follow the Conversation

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## Conference Organisers

Emma McAllister

Emma is in her first year of a PhD, studying the experiences of students using Artificial Intelligence in Further and Higher Education.

Rebekah Corbett

Rebekah's research examines the operation of facial recognition technology in privately-owned public spaces, and its impact on democracy, citizenship and urban governance.

## Additional Thanks to...

The conference organisers would like to thank Valerie Miler and the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Peace, Security & Justice for their invaluable help throughout the conference planning process.

We would also like to thank the following LINCS scholars who facilitated the online sessions and sat on the programme committee:

- Brian Byrne
- Colette Casey
- Oliver Donnelly
- Cian Luddy