Project title: Design Anthropology and Speculative Prototyping of Environmental Sensing

Discipline: Design

Key words: Design Anthropology; Science and Technology Studies; Citizen Science; Environmental Sensing

Supervisory team: Christian Nold, Rachael Luck

URL for lead supervisor’s OU profile: https://www.open.ac.uk/people/cn4844

Project Highlights:
- Developing design methods and practices;
- Prototyping of new forms of environmental sensing and citizen science;
- Exploring the socio-technical empowerment of communities.

Overview:
There has been a growth in citizen science and environmental sensing that involve the public in gathering data about their environment [1]. This involves people using smartphones and sensors to tag animals and plants and measure noise, radiation, air pollution and energy usage. These novel public practices raise questions around community formation, data quality, understandings of science, human and nonhuman sensation, political agency and are relevant to investigations of the disruptive potential of design.

The proposed research project is inspired by ideas from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and will apply and develop design methods and practices [2], including design anthropology and citizen science approaches [3] to observe and interrogate the practices of environmental sensing in design research.

References & Further reading:


Further details:
This research would suit someone with a passion to engage with environmental change. Ideally, they would have a background in design and/or social science and have some familiarity with discussions in Science and Technology Studies. They need to possess an aptitude for academic writing and collaborating with others. The student will need to travel to locations across the UK for data collection. The supervision team have practical experience of co-design and public experiments with communities as well as the analysis of these practices. To discuss the project please contact: christian.nold@open.ac.uk.

Applications should include:

- A 1000 word cover letter outlining why the project is of interest to you and how your skills match those required
- an academic CV containing contact details of three academic references
- an Open University application form, downloadable from: http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process
- IELTS test scores where English is an additional language

Applications should be sent to STEM-EI-PhD@open.ac.uk by 16.02.2024