STandD

Centre for Society, Technology and Development

presents:

The Map and the Territory
Towards an Anthropology of Digital Health

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Friday, February 19, 12:30-2:00pm, Peterson Hall, Room 116, 3460 McTavish Street

From network science literature to everyday public health settings, digital media have become highly correlated with access to care and protection against health-related risk. There is, overall, a deepening enmeshment of digital media and healthcare. This paper will examine the relative failure of two digital health systems, namely Google Flu Trends and the Pan-African e-Network Project. Once a poster child of big data analysis applied to disease surveillance, Google Flu Trends ceased its operations in August 2016. A flagship of India-Africa cooperation, the Pan-African e-Network is a transnational telemedicine project that has been suffering from heavy low utilization issues. This paper will explore theoretical implications of these failures for an anthropology of digital health, emerging at the junction of living and technical systems, "network thinking" and medical work, modeling patterns and chaotic life forms. Specific attention will be paid to tensions between the tendencies towards exponential, accelerated growth of networking, and the silent transformations and differential speeds involved in rendering digital health operational.

Lunch/Refreshments provided

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