

# Hemispheric Headspace Sessions:

In May 2024, University of Pittsburgh's Pitt Cyber and the Writing Institute sponsored two workshops in partnership with the University of Western Cape's Centre for Humanities Research, convening faculty, researchers, archivists and librarians at the University of Western Cape, the University of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Kentucky and Leuphana University. Participants connected in hybrid sessions, convening in Cape Town, South Africa and Pittsburgh, U.S.A. with call-ins from Germany and Kentucky, U.S.A. via Zoom. Over the course of two workshops, we discussed issues pertaining to concepts of partition in everyday life, geopolitical domains and across digital realities, and our relationship to data, in regard to personal data, public data and the particular concerns that emerge in relation to ethical care for archival holdings in the age of rapidly advancing AI tools.

Our discussions began in each session with provocations from key participants.

In the first session, remarks were offered by:

**Premesh Lalu**, Centre for Humanities Research, Former Director, University of Western Cape

**Annette Vee**, Department of English, Director of Composition Program, University of Pittsburgh

**Illah Nourbakhsh**, Robotics Institute, Director of the Center for Shared Prosperity, Carnegie Mellon University

In this preliminary session we attended to questions that included:

- What might partition mean in the context of rapidly evolving AI systems?
- Where does your work reside in this emerging reality where the digital and the algorithmic intertwines with the tactile, the analogue?
- Where does the integration of AI tools in features of everyday life appear and how obvious or undecipherable are AI tools in facets of home and work?
- What does digital fluency look like in our research, in our work as educators?

- How does advancing AI influence or impact elements of geopolitical relationships domestically or across nation states in the midst of this emergent and increasingly hybrid analogue and digital context?

In our second session, we considered our relationships to data. We explored how we store, access and value variations of personal data, public data and the particular concerns that can emerge in relation to archival holdings, their care, upkeep and access in relation to advancing AI tools.

Opening provocative remarks were offered by:

**Alison Langmead**, History of Art & Architecture and School of Computing and Information, Director of Visual Media Workshop, University of Pittsburgh

**Valmont Layne**, Program Director New Archival Visions, Centre for Humanities Research, University of Western Cape

In this preliminary session we attended to questions that included:

- How has the role of the archivist and information stewards shifted in the rise of data digitization and proliferation of AI tools?
- What concerns pertaining to ownership, access and use arise in regards to the digitization of archival holdings and the proliferation of datafication?
- What are the implications or concerns in relation to AI systems like LLMs that can 'scrape' data that might be sensitive or otherwise compromising in various archival holdings?
- What does security look like for archival holdings in the age of AI?
- How does the age of social media color or influence how we consider what data or personal archival material is public versus private?
- How might these technological developments and methodological concerns facing archivists raise further ethical questions pertaining to ownership of personal data, persistence in intended or unintended discrimination in valuation and preservation of archival materials as data, and the role of systemic oppression, silencing or resistance that can be compounded or leveraged at scale in power negotiations situated in this digital age?

Sessions were convened by Jennifer Keating, University of Pittsburgh Department of English and Writing Institute; Nora Mattern, University of Pittsburgh School of

Computing and Information; and Valmont Layne, the Centre for Humanities Research, University of Western Cape. Administrative support for the sessions was generously provided by the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of Western Cape, Pitt Cyber and the European Studies Center, University of Pittsburgh.

Our intention is to use these workshop sessions as preliminary discussions for potential research and pedagogical collaborations in the coming months and years. As a follow-up to the sessions, we analyzed meeting notes and recordings to identify a series of themes that will guide future programming. We present these themes as a *Hemispheric Headspace* mind-map and accompanying guide.