

Quantified Self in research – methodological and epistemological considerations

24th of March, starting 10am.

Venue: Consumer Society Research Centre, Conference room, Unioninkatu 40 (Metsätalo), 1st floor.

This research workshop focuses on self-tracking, an expanding field of technology development that refers to various kinds of bodily and mental functions, including everyday movements, physical activity, and body weight. The technological devices promoting self-tracking include scales, pedometers, sleep trackers, mood trackers, and heart-rate variability measuring devices. These devices tie in with the notion of the Quantified Self (QS) that promotes the idea that self-monitoring tools, as they continue to enter daily use, offer an effective opportunity for people to understand their own lives as sets of numerical phenomena that can be examined and acted upon. In recent years thousands applications and devices have been developed for self-tracking and tracking practices are expanding to new areas: the collection and analysis of personal data are advocated and implemented in different social contexts and institutions, including the workplace, the school, and the hospital. People are seduced, encouraged, obliged, pushed, and coerced into using tracking devices for monitoring aspects of their bodies and lives and for producing personal data which can be used for the purposes of others.

The morning talks present ongoing research on methodological uses of self-tracking and epistemological foundations of the Quantified Self. In exploring tensions and changes self-tracking practices might promote, the discussions pay attention to forms of knowledge production that shape the new wave of technologies of self and suggest that self-tracking practices offer new modes for understanding and promoting everyday phenomena, including health and social belonging, by uncovering visual, temporal and emotional patterns in people's lives. The afternoon research idea workshop is open to all students and scholars interested in self-tracking research.

Morning talks 10-

Josh Berson: Vigilance and instrumentation

Mika Pantzar: Social rhythms of the heart

Minna Ruckenstein: Detecting visibility and temporality: from heart-rate variability to food tracking

Nina Honkela: Emotion tracking and the co-construction of interiority and exteriority

Research idea workshop 14-

An open forum for presenting ideas and ongoing research that has to do with self-tracking.

Discussions focus, for instance, on food tracking, direct-to-consumer genetics and emotion tracking.

The workshop is arranged by the Consumer Society Research Centre, University of Helsinki and sponsored by the Digital Health Revolution research consortium funded by Tekes.

If you have questions, please contact: minna.ruckenstein@helsinki.fi