

EASST Conference

2-4 September 2010

University of Trento, Italy

Call for convenors and thematic tracks

PRACTISING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, PERFORMING THE SOCIAL

The 2010 EASST conference, to be held in Trento (Italy), from the 2-4 September is the biennial forum of the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST) for contributions on topics from the range of disciplines found within science, technology and innovation studies.

As in previous years the conference provides a broad platform for presentations based on contemporary research on the wide variety of topics in which STS and innovation scholars are active. These include risk and regulation, environmental sustainability, systems of innovation, sociology of expectations, sociotechnical transitions, science and technology policy, ethics of health & medicine, governance of emerging technologies, gender and science.

The particular focus for the 2010 conference is that of practice and performance. It turns its attention to science and technology as situated practices rooted and grown in a sociomaterial context, exploring the performativity of technoscientific practices.

The notions of “social construction” and “social shaping” of science and technology have been crucial for the development (and success) of science & technology studies. Increasingly, however, the “social” is seen as a question rather than as a distinctive explanatory category. The “social” begins to be viewed as the result of the connections that take place in an ecology of elements and heterogeneous relations, as well as of the scenarios these connections depict.

Terms such as “construction” and “shaping” are frequently replaced by concepts, verbs and metaphors drawn from the cultures of performance. Science and technology, are seen as performative domains of the “social”; choreographies of sociomaterial relations where realities and representations are enacted simultaneously.

One approach recognizes the performative character of science and technology, understanding when, where and how a “thing” arises, and explores the ways in which science and technology “do things”. Another approach addresses the “doing” of things: namely, that the performances and the performativity of scientific and technological practices are embedded and embodied in material, symbolic and textual artefacts.

Practice, is probably one of the most useful concepts to capture this ambivalence. It allows us to look at science and technology as an ecology of heterogeneous elements and interactions, embodying and enacting situated processes of change and repetition of different sociomaterial worlds. Through practising science and technology, and in scientific and technological practices, so, “doing things” and the “doing of things” find a common ground of expression.

A key characteristic of the contemporary world is the role played by knowledge practices in the production and reproduction of the sociomaterial configuration which is often called “society”. STS and the concepts of practice and performance enable a unique perspective for studying and observing scientific and technological innovations, as well as the articulation of different forms of sociality and ideas of the social. This is the challenge addressed in key areas such as medicine and genomics, body and gender, work and organizations, communication & technology, consumption & markets, geographies and space.

New procedure for submission of sessions and papers

In contrast to previous EASST conferences, the 2010 conference involves a first stage call for track convenors, with a subsequent call for papers. The conference will be organized in approximately 20-30 parallel thematic tracks (each collecting

approximately 20-30 participants) that run through the whole conference (3 days, 7 sessions).

This initial call is for thematic tracks by convenors who will be responsible for organizing them. Convenors of track proposals accepted by the Programme Committee of the conference will manage their theme within the call for abstracts, and will be responsible for reviewing, accepting/rejecting and organising submissions into their track. Teams of convenors (up to a maximum of four people) are welcomed, particularly if they are international in composition.

Track proposals are invited for EASST 2010 which address any theme within the field of science, technology and innovation studies. Track proposals may address (but are not limited to) the particular focus on practice & performance. These could include the following themes:

- Technoscientific networks, uncertainty and governance;
- Medicine and healthcare as technoscientific practices;
- Dispersed practices, mobile technologies and information infrastructures in networks of innovation and financial markets;
- The 'doing' of bodies and gender in science and technology;
- Methodological approaches for investigating scientific and technological practices.
- The performativity of technical objects and design;
- Working and organizing in technologically dense practices;
- Juxtapositions in science and technology communicating practices.

Tracks should address broad issues and themes within the field of science, technology and innovation studies, in order to attract a large number of scholars and last for the entire duration of the conference. Submissions for thematic tracks are expected to include an outline of the proposed theme and the area of interest (maximum of 500 words), as well as a short description of the convenors.

There will also be an open stream, whose convenors will be indicated ex-post by the Programme Committee of the conference. As for the others, this track will include

between 20-30 participants, selected by the Programme Committee on the basis of the abstracts received and not addressed to any particular track.

Convenors will independently set the session topics and overall organization of the track. If a track collects less than 10 abstracts, there will be a discussion with the Programme Committee to decide whether to run the track anyway or join another track. In case a track collects more than 40 abstracts, there will be a discussion with the Programme Committee to decide whether to split the track in two or not. In case the convenors consider an abstract interesting, but not fitting with the thematic track, they will be free to re-address the abstract to the convenors of the track they think it fits better or to the convenors of the open track.

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES:

- October 12 (2009): Proposal for convenors and thematic tracks deadline;

Please email proposals, following the guidelines, as a Word document, to conference@easst.net

- November 2 (2009): Communication to the convenors of the tracks accepted/rejected (or to be reviewed);
- November 23 (2009): Official announcement of the Conference, with the final track list included and the call for submission of abstracts of papers;
- March 15 (2010): deadline for abstracts submission;
- May 15 (2010): Communication of acceptance/rejection of abstracts to authors and opening of online registrations;
- June 15 (2010): early registrations deadline (required for all presenters);
- June 20 (2010): Final draft of the organization of each thematic session (to be sent by the convenors to the Scientific and Local Committee);
- July 5 (2010): Publication on the website of the final Conference program.