

Wednesday Seminars

LECTURE SERIES IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

26.11.2025 | 5 p.m. | @ Übungsraum IKSA | NIG, 4th floor

Katta Spiel (TU Wien)

The Ableism in the Machine: Encoding Disability and Access



Katta Spiel is an Assistant professor for Critical Access in Embodied Computing at the HCI Group of TU Wien (Vienna University of Technology), where they work on the intersection of Computer Science, Design and Cultural Studies. They research marginalized perspectives on technologies to inform interaction design and engineering in critical ways so they may account for the diverse realities they operate in. In collaboration with neurodivergent, disabled, disabled and/or nonbinary peers and partners, they explore novel potentials for designs, methodological and epistemological insights as well as innovative technological artifacts.

When thinking about disability and technology, developers often consider access as a secondary, exceptional thing. Technologies are created foremost ,for everyone‘ without specification of who is actually counted into this group and often post-hoc solutions offered to non-normative access needs. This is often driven by a medicalised model of disability that is taken up from a helper perspective of non-disabled designers who conceptualise disability as an ,interesting design issue‘ that requires their ,expert‘ assessment. My talk illustrates how different understandings of disability and ableism can guide us in understanding how technologies operate in specific contexts and how we may imagine self-determined alternatives rooted in mutual solidarity and disability justice.



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