Ricky Wichum

Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences
History of Technology
ETH Zurich
Clausiusstrasse 59 (RZ)
CH-8092 Zurich

rwichum@ethz.ch

POSITIONS

Since October 2019	Lecturer (*Oberassistent*), History of Technology, ETH Zurich
April 2017 – September 2019	Postdoctoral Researcher, History of Technology, ETH Zurich
October 2015 – March 2017	Postdoctoral Researcher, Institute for Advanced Study on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation (MECS), University of Lüneburg
January 2009 – March 2015	Research Associate, Department of Sociology, University of Freiburg

EDUCATION

Since October 2019	Habilitation project (second book), History of Technology, ETH Zurich
January 2009 – February 2015	Dr. phil. in sociology (summa cum laude), Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg (advisor: Stefan Kaufmann)
October 2002 – December 2008	*Magister Artium* in Sociology and Political Science (final score: 1,5), Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Freiburg

RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS

October 2019 – March 2025	ETH Zurich, Swiss National Science Foundation, Co-author of the project "Trading Zones. Computer and Swiss Federal Administration (1960-1990)", PI: David Gugerli
April 2018 – October 2019	Collegium Helveticum, Zurich, Research Associate in the fellow period "Digital Societies", PI: David Gugerli
September 2010 – August 2013	University of Freiburg, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Civil security research program, project "A Monitoring of Security in Germany", Co-author of the subproject "Technology and (In-)Security", PI: Stefan Kaufmann
January 2009 – March 2010	University of Freiburg, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Civil security research program, project "Security Research Dialogue", PI: Stefan Kaufmann

FELLOWSHIPS AND RESEARCH STAYS

September – December 2023	Visiting Scholar at the Center for Science, Technology, Medicine, and Society, University of California, Berkeley
April 2022	Academic Guest at the Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen (Laura Skouvig)
January 2017 - February 2017	Academic Guest, History of Technology, ETH Zurich
June 2014 – February 2015	Doctoral Scholarship, FAZIT-Stiftung, Frankfurt am Main

December 2013 – March 2014	Junior Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Study on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation (MECS), University of Lüneburg

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2022	Zur Geschichte des digitalen Zeitalters, Springer (edited with Daniela Zetti)
2021	Simulation for All. The Politics of Supercomputing in Stuttgart, Chronos (with David Gugerli)
2020	An den Grenzen der Berechenbarkeit. Supercomputing in Stuttgart, Chronos (with David Gugerli)
2017	Biometrie. Zur Soziologie der Identifikation, Wilhelm Fink

Articles and Chapters

2022	Der Computer als Maschine in Niklas Luhmanns Systemtheorie der Verwaltung der 1960er Jahre. Soziale Systeme. Zeitschrift für soziologische Theorie 1(25), 226-233.
2022	Transformation. Die Erfahrung der Ankündigung von Wandel und Veränderung (with Daniela Zetti). In Wichum and Zetti eds., Zur Geschichte des digitalen Zeitalters, 1-11.
2022	Supercomputing and the Emergence of digital federalism (with David Gugerli). In Bory and Zetti eds., Digital Federalism. Information, Institutions, Infrastructures (1950-2000), 117-140.
2021	Niklas Luhmann: Theorie der Verwaltungswissenschaften (1966). In Wulz et al. eds., Deregulation und Restauration. Eine politische Wissensgeschichte, 90-103.
2019	Auf der Schwelle. Die Systemtheorie Niklas Luhmanns, die Kybernetik und der Computer um 1970. In Friedrich et al. eds., Steuern und Regeln. Jahrbuch Technikphilosophie, 85-101.
2019	Recht und Verwaltungsautomation um 1960. In Kipker et al. eds., Der normative Druck des Faktischen. Technologische Herausforderungen des Rechts und seine Fundierung in sozialer Praxis (Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie. Beiheft), 69-87.
2019	Cybersecurity. In Rieger and Kasprowicz eds., Handbuch Virtualität, 669-680.
2016	Risk and Security. Diagnosis of the Present in the Context of (Post-)Modern Insecurities (with Stefan Kaufmann). Historical Social Research 41(1), 48-69.
2015	Die Technisierung der Sicherheitsproduktion und ihre Ambivalenzen. Das Beispiel biometrischer Identifikation (with Stefan Kaufmann). In Haverkamp and Arnold eds., Subjektive und objektivierte Bedingungen von (Un-) Sicherheit, 319-337.
2014	Editorial. In Blum, Kaufmann, and Wichum eds., Resilienz. Behemoth. A Journal on Civilisation 7(2), 2-4
2013	Security as Dispositif. Michel Foucault in the Field of Security. Foucault Studies 15, 164-171.
2013	Der Missbrauch biometrischer Systeme aus kriminologischer Sicht (with Rita Haverkamp). In Dölling and Jehle eds., Täter-Taten-Opfer. Grundlagenfragen und aktuelle Probleme der Kriminalität und ihrer Kontrolle, 326-347.

Shorter Pieces and Book Reviews

2022	Review of Gabriele Balbi and Andreas Fickers. History of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Transnational Techno-Diplomacy from the Telegraph to the Internet. In Technikgeschichte 3(88), 325-326.
2020	Rechnen in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, Blog "Cache".
2019	Erfasst! Andreas Bernard entwirft eine Ideologiekritik der digitalen Kultur, Review of Andreas Bernard. Komplizen des Erkennungsdienstes. Das Selbst in der digitalen Kultur. In Soziopolis (10 January).
2015	Souveränität und Hypertrophie. Zum Nachleben der "Kontrollgesellschaften". In Soziopolis (4 November).
2012	Conference Review "Security Dispositifs. Technology – Space – Event" (with Sabine Blum). In H-Soz-Kult (21 June).

2009   Review of Jörg Potthast, Die Bodenhaftung der Netzwerkgesellschaft. In traverse. Zeitschrift für Geschichte 3, 168-170.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

ETH Zurich (in German)

Digital Nature and the Naturality of the Digital (Spring Semester 2024)

Digital Government since 1950 (Spring Semester 2023; with David Gugerli)

Student Colloquium for Master´s Thesis (Spring Semester 2022; Spring Semester 2021; with Eleonora Sammarchi)

Introduction to the History of Technology: Concepts and Current Debates (Autumn Semester 2021; with Rachele Delucchi)

Theory and Methodology of History and Philosophy of Knowledge (Autumn Semester 2021; with Rachele Delucchi)

A History of Personal Computing (Spring Semester 2021; with Mirjam Mayer)

Digital Humanities – Computing in the Humanities (Autumn Semester 2020)

WebClass Introductory Course History of Technology 3.0 (Autumn Semester 2019; with Gisela Hürlimann)

Factory, Laboratory, or Platform? Organizing High Performance Computing since the 1960s (Spring Semester 2019; with David Gugerli)

Search Histories. Digging into Web Histories (Autumn Semester 2018; with Daniela Zetti)

Privacy in the Digital Society (Spring Semester 2018)

University of Freiburg (in German)

Theories of the Exceptional (Winter Semester 2013/14; with Tobias Schlechtriemen; MA, BA Sociology)

Media Theory (Summer Semester 2013; with Stefan Kaufmann; MA, BA Sociology)

Arts and Society (Summer Semester 2011; with Onur Erdur; MA, BA Sociology)

Discipline and Punish in Societies of Control (Summer Semester 2010; with Sabine Blum; MA, BA Sociology)

Sociology of Technology and Social Theory (Summer Semester 2009; MA, BA Sociology)

Student Advising

Inez Barrer, "Raumplanung, Expertenwissen und Computertechnik in der Schweiz, 1955 bis 1990", Autumn Semester 2023, Essay on Reading in the History of Technology, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

Julius Schmid, "Generalität als Pragmatismus: Eine technikhistorische Textanalyse von Tim Berners-Lee Information Management (1989)", Term Paper Autumn Semester 2022, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

Leander Leuenberger, "Computer für die Verwaltung: Fluch oder Segen?", Term Paper Autumn Semester 2022, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

Linus Pfrunder, "Beim Zuschauen zuschauen. Wie das Schweizer Fernsehen sein Publikum erforschte – eine politische Wissensgeschichte, 1964-1985", Second Supervision of Master Thesis, Autumn Semester 2022, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

Joel Walder, "Über die Institutionalisierung technischen Wissens. Die Schweizerische Unfalluntersuchungsstelle, ca. 2005-2016", Autumn Semester 2021, Essay on Reading in History of Technology, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

Mirjam Mayer, "Umzug in die Moderne. Die Problematisierung des funktionalen Wohnkonzepts nach 1960", Spring Semester 2018, Essay on Reading in the History of Technology, Master History and Philosophy of Knowledge, ETH Zurich

ORGANIZATION OF WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Semester workshop "Digital Democracy Sphere. A forum for ETH researchers across disciplines studying democracy in the digital age", Spring Semester 2023, ETH Zurich (co-organized with Margarita Boenig-Liptsin)

IDEA League Summer School "Trajectories of Technology", 5-9 September 2022, RWTH Aachen (with Gabriele Gramelsberger and Daniela Zetti)

IDEA League Summer School "Infrastructures of Science", 13-17 July 2020, Filzbach, ETH Zurich (with Daniela Zetti and Gabriele Gramelsberger)

Workshop Research Network "Computer, Administration, and History, Vol. 4", 20-21 November 2019, ETH Zurich (with Nick Schwery)

Conference "Geschichte des digitalen Zeitalters", 22 – 23 November 2018, ETH Zurich (with David Gugerli and Daniela Zetti)

Panel "Recht und Gesellschaftstheorie" at the Fourth Congress of the German speaking Sociology of Law Associations, 14 September 2018, University of Basel (with Doris Schweitzer)

Kick Off Workshop Research Network "Computer, Administration, and History", 12 June 2018, ETH Zurich (with Nick Schwery)

International Conference "Agent Cultures and Zombielands. Fields, Fictions, and Futures of Agent-Based Modeling", 23-25 June 2016, Institute for Advanced Study on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation (MECS), University of Lüneburg (with Sebastian Vehlken)

Workshop "Cybernetic Hypothesis", 31 May – 1 June, Leuphana University Lüneburg (with Erich Hörl, Mathias Denecke, Laura Hille, and Yuk Hui)

Workshop "Politics and Governmentality of Simulation", 10 May 2016, Institute for Advanced Study on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation (MECS), University of Lüneburg (with Petra Gehring)

Workshop "Soziologische Theorie", 25 May 2012, Department of Sociology of the University of Basel (with Matthias Leanza)

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND INVITED TALKS

"Identity, Statehood, and Computer Sciences. A History of the Social Security Number in Switzerland (1960-1980)", 8 November 2023, paper presented at the STS/HST Working Group Meeting, Center for Science, Technology, and Medicine (CSTMS), University of California, Berkeley

"From Service Provider to European Infrastructure. A History of a High-Performance Computing Center (1996-2007), 28 October 2023, talk at the panel "Universities as locally situated knowledge – making infrastructures embedded in perpetually changing global political economies: Changing practices at departments, institutes, labs, and universities – III" (organized by Sharon Traweek and Knut Sorensen) at the annual meeting of the Society for the History of Technology, 26-29 October 2023, Los Angeles (California)

"Federalism in the Digital Realm: The Political Knowledge of Computer Science", 21 September 2023, talk at the 14th annual conference of the Special Interest Group in Computing, Information, and Society (SIGCIS), Online-Edition 2.0, 21-23 September

"Powerhouse or Interactivity? Contested Future Imaginaries of the Computer in the Swiss Federal Administration, 1970", 20 April 2023, talk at the annual conference "Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Kommunikations- und Medienwissenschaft", Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (panel organized by Ely Lüthi)

"Aushandlungszonen der Interoperabilität. Computerpolitik im Schweizer Föderalismus, ca. 1980", 9 December 2022, talk at

the workshop "Interoperabilität", University of Siegen (organized by Matthias Röhr, Christian Henrich-Franke, Sebastian Giessmann, Thomas Haigh)

"The Emergence of Bargaining Zones. Digital Information Systems in the Swiss Federal Administration (1960-1990)", 28 November 2022, talk at the TUM School of Social Sciences and Technology, Technical University of Munich

"Information Systems. Digital Statehood and the Transformation of the Digital (1960-1990)", 27 April 2022, talk at the Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen (organized by Laura Skouvig)

"Public Data and Personal Computers. The Emergence of a Personal Computing Culture in the Swiss Federal Administration, ca. 1980" (with Mirjam Mayer), 28 October 2021, 6th International Conference on the History and Philosophy of Computing, ETH Zurich (organized by Juan Luis Gastaldi and Luc Pellissier)

"Die Zeit der Informationssysteme. Digitale Staatlichkeit und die Transformation des Digitalen", 18 June 2021, online talk at "Technikgeschichte über Mittag" (organized by Gisela Hürlimann and Marcus Popplow)

"Automatisierte Gesichtserkennung und biometrische Identität. Perspektiven einer Soziologie der Identifikation", 1 December 2020, online talk at the virtual panel discussion "Gesichtserkennung in Europa" (organized by Deutsches Architekturmuseum and RheinMain University of Applied Science)

"Bodies and Biometrics. The Machine-Readable Body. A Critique", 30 January 2020, talk at the workshop "Digital Myths. Mediation, Narratives and Mythopoiesis in the Digital Age", University of Lugano (organized by Gabriele Balbi)

"Simulation and Sovereignty – The Politics of a High-Performance Computing Center", 5 December 2019, talk at the Bauhaus Digital Masterclass, University of Weimar (organized by Christoph Engemann)

"Accessing the Supercomputer. Interfaces between the Supercomputer and its Users", 26 October 2019, talk at the panel "Between Organism and Machines. Interfaces of Humans, Machines, and Animals in the 20th Century" (organized by Kevin Liggieri) at the Annual Conference of the Society for the History of Technology, Milan

"Digital Federalism", 27 September 2019, talk at the workshop "Digital Federalism in the History of Technology and Knowledge, 1970-1995" at the Collegium Helveticum, Zurich (with David Gugerli and Daniela Zetti)

"Jenseits des Marktes. (Wissenschafts-)Politik des Supercomputers", 8 May 2019, talk at the workshop of the research network "Computer, Administration, and History", Leuphana University Lüneburg (organized by Florian Hoof)

"Verwaltungsrecht oder Systemtheorie? Zur Epistemologie digitaler Verwaltung", 14 September 2018, talk at the panel "Recht und Gesellschaftstheorie" at the Fourth Congress of the German speaking Sociology of Law Associations, 14 September 2018, University of Basel

"Öffentliche Verwaltung und Gesellschaftstheorie", 19 June 2018, talk at the History of Science colloquium, University of Frankfurt (organized by Fabian Link)

"Systemtheorie und Kybernetik", 4 May 2018, talk at the workshop "Kybernetik und Geisteswissenschaften", Institute of History and Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Literature, TU Berlin (organized by Hans-Christian Herrmann and Boris Goesl)

"Im Computer. Zur Geschichte digitaler (Bundes-)Verwaltung in der Schweiz (1960-1990)", 19 December 2017, talk at the colloquium "Dialogo", Institute of History, University of Stuttgart (with Daniela Zetti)

"Der Wert von Privacy", 22 November 2017, input at the workshop "Reflecting privacy", Collegium Helveticum (organized by David Gugerli and Renate Schubert)

"´Dieser in der Soziologie wenig übliche Begriff´. Übersetzungen des Programmbegriffs um 1960", 13 October 2017, talk at the workshop "Algorithmische Wissenskulturen? Der Einfluss des Computers auf die Wissenschaftsentwicklung", Deutsches Museum Munich (organized by Ulf Hashagen, Rudolf Seising, Gerard Alberts, Gabriele Gramelsberger)

"Als die Verwaltung in den Computer kam. Zur Diskussion zwischen Ernst Forsthoff und Niklas Luhmann um 1960", 6 October 2017, talk at the workshop "Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Soziologie", TU Braunschweig (organized

by Nicole Holzhauser and Stefan Moebius)

"Wie die Schweizer Bundesverwaltung in den Computer kam (1960-1990)", 28 June 2017, talk at the colloquium History of Technology, TU Berlin (organized by Uwe Fraunholz and Gisela Hürlimann)

"Politik und Computersimulation", 5. October 2016, response at the workshop "Normativität in der Computersimulation", High-Performance Computing Centre Stuttgart HLRS, University of Stuttgart (organized by Michael Resch, Andreas Kaminski, Juan Durán)

"Anthropologie und Programm. Zwei Lektüren zum Verhältnis von Recht und Technik im Informationszeitalter", 22 September 2016, talk at the conference "Recht und Technik im Informationszeitalter", University of Bremen (organized by Junges Forum Rechtsphilosophie)

"Recht, Politik, Automation. Der Computer bei Horst Herold und Niklas Luhmann", 21 January 2016, talk at the workshop "The Digital Strand", History of Technology, ETH Zurich (organized by Hannes Mangold and Daniela Zetti)

"Unbestimmtheit und Unbehagen. Subjektivierungen digitaler Identität auf Facebook", 15 May 2015, talk at the conference "Aller Dinge sind frei? Utopie und Unbehagen in der technisierten Welt", Theodor-Heuss-Akademie, Gummersbach (organized by Stefan Rieger)

"Das Gesetz und die medientechnische Vermessung des Körpers", 3 October 2014, talk at the panel "Routen und Routinen – Koordinaten des Körpers in neuen Räumen", Annual Conference Gesellschaft für Medienwissenschaften, University of Marburg (organized by Stefan Rieger)

"Biometrie und Soziologie", 26 April 2013, talk at the "Studientag soziologische Theorie", Department of Sociology, University of Basel (organized by Axel Paul, Ulrich Bröckling, and Stefan Kaufmann)

"Wenn, dann hier – Biometrische Zugangskontrollen als Sollbruchstelle", 30 November 2012, talk at the workshop "Sollbruchstelle. Medien und Geschichten kontrollierter Ver/un/sicherungen", Graduate Research Programme "Media of History – History of Media", University of Weimar

"Zur Soziologie der Technisierung von Sicherheit", 6 November 2012, talk the Doctoral Symposium "Sicherheit in einer offenen Gesellschaft: Technische, rechtliche und moralische Herausforderungen durch neue Sicherheitstechnologien", Center for Security and Society, University of Freiburg

"Die Technisierung von Sicherheit am Beispiel von Biometrie", 19 June 2012, talk at the Department of Sociology, University of Freiburg

"Verbinden und Identifizieren. Die Theorie des anthropometrischen Signalements von Alphonse Bertillon", 11 November 2011, talk at the "Studientag soziologische Theorie", Department of Sociology, University of Basel (organized by Axel Paul, Ulrich Bröckling, and Stefan Kaufmann)

"Der Missbrauch biometrischer Systeme aus kriminologischer Sicht", 30 September 2011, talk at the conference "Täter – Taten – Opfer. Grundlagenfragen und aktuelle Probleme der Kriminalität und ihrer Kontrolle", Kriminologische Gesellschaft, University of Heidelberg (with Rita Haverkamp)

"Biometrische Maschinen. Die algorithmisch-visuelle Konstruktion von Identität", 27 August 2010, talk at the eikones summer school "Die Wirksamkeit von Bildern", University of Basel

"Das Regieren von riskanten Körpern. Zum Beispiel Biometrie", 21 November 2009, talk at doctoral colloquium at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS), University of Freiburg

OCCASIONAL REFEREE WORK

Administration and Society; Behemoth. A Journal on Civilisation; Foucault Studies; Learning, Media, and Technology; Leviathan. Berliner Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft; Mittelweg 36; Minds and Machines; Technikgeschichte; Tecnoscienza; Zeitschrift für Theoretische Soziologie