

DOING DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY 4/8/22

LINKS AND QUESTIONS FROM CHAT

LINKS

Ethnographic Café

<https://www.ethnographiccafe.org/>

Rutgers Digital Ethnography Working Group (DEWG)

<https://rutgersdigitaethnography.org/>

A Strategic Nature: Public Relations and the Politics of American Environmentalism—Melissa Aronczyk and Maria I. Espinoza

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/a-strategic-nature-9780190055356?cc=hu&lang=en&>

Distributed Blackness: African American Cybercultures—André Brock, Jr.

<https://nyupress.org/9781479829965/distributed-blackness/>

Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis--André Brock, Jr.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1461444816677532>

PDF: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/hpyvqmae2ju77u/Brock%20-%20CTDA.pdf?dl=0>

If...Then: Algorithmic Power and Politics—Taina Bucher

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/ifthen-9780190493035?cc=hu&lang=en&>

The Digital Street—Jeffrey Lane

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-digital-street-9780199381265?cc=hu&lang=en&>

Discount code from Oxford -- ASFLYQ6 for 30% off.

Computing Taste: Algorithms and the Makers of Music Recommendation—Nick Seaver

<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo183892298.html>

Influencer Culture UK Parliament—Sophie Bishop

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1126/influencer-culture/>

André Brock Presentation Slides

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tadslqnv3h0l41d/Ethnographic%20Cafe%20-%20CTDA.pdf?dl=0>

TikTok API

Unofficial API wrapper: <https://github.com/davidteather/TikTok-API>

TikTok offer API: <https://developers.tiktok.com>

Qualitative Social Media Research Resources

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yHOhPMxRP8eNog0kQdTDvbTd2R2PivL4zur5HMJARP8/edit?usp=sharing>

QUESTIONS

- How do you see the ways in which you define “field” or “**field sites**” change by studying the **intersections between online/offline**, and what costs may we pay if ignoring this “hybrid flavor”
- How shall we **integrate the offline & online** ethnographical materials?
- What is the difference between **digital ethnography and discourse analysis** and/or conversation analysis as practiced by ethnomethodologists?

*Andre Brock: The differentia specifica of ethnography resides in **observing conduct** in its place and time. DE seems to study the PRODUCTS of conduct but not conduct itself.*

*André Brock: Digitalization transforms **social interactions into objects** (words, emojis, trolling) that can be studied as records after they have occurred, so I think that's more the terrain of discourse analysis, but they unfold in real time and in real life too, so there's space for ethnographic observation*

- Maybe some **platforms** are more available for digital ethnography? Like Twitch since you can observe online interactions in real time
- I wonder how our **relationship to temporality** changes in doing digital participant observations? CTDA seems more flexible to discuss this process. Living in the tweets and also scraping and examining the data in a post-live reality.
- Is there a "**now**"-ness in ethnography that we must consider?
- You can literally collect years' worth of data in a compressed amount of **time** (collecting 10 years of twitter data in 2 months—how "long" am I in the "field"?)
- How do you capture the ways Black expressive culture use language as play if you only capture the record? Like how to you **capture the energy of the moment** (which is what I think is the most useful aspect of ethnography)?

*Andre Brock: I'm already reading 'the record': If I capture a live video for later analysis, I only have my notes *at the time* to contextualize that moment [which isn't the moment]*

- Curious about **insider/outsider** status in digital ethnography.

André Brock: I feel as if insider/outsider matters less to me because I'm looking at archives + twitter is a fast moving platform - a lot of times you might miss the moment when the community activates

- Great points **about being 'in the field'** -- the Internet is always on, so it feels like a struggle with digital ethnographers being "always in the field" -- the slippages between very being online 'for fun' versus very online 'for research'.

- Have you used **digital auto-ethnography** in your research, or included your positionality based on the digital spaces you're studying/engaging with? What tools, techniques or methods have you found useful for recording your own experiences of digital spaces both as a researcher and as a user (if you differentiate at all)?
- I would love to hear some reflections about **being at risk and putting people at risk**. "Classic" ethnography deals a lot with these questions - that the physical presence of the ethnographer requires being vulnerable and sometimes putting interlocutors at very tangible risk - a sensitive issue that needs to be navigated very carefully. Can you reflect on these issues in online spaces?
- Digital profiles and self-projection brings a distinct dimension to the strategies we need to undertake to establish and maintain rapport with different people/groups we study. How do you **navigate your digital presence**, self-construction and selective sharing of self when you need to maintain ties with different research subject groups—that at times may have very conflicting points of view about the world? We do this in real time all of the time....but in the digital world they're much more accessible across different social domains, which raises new opportunities but also risks in terms of the fieldwork "doors" that can be opened or closed. For example, do you have multiple profiles even on the same social media platform? Or how has this played out for you?
- I think there's also a line here that this question of "legitimacy" or identifying the "community" that you want to study online will work differently when studying some sort of **marginalized/subcultural group** depending on if you have some shared identity with them or not.
- How do we deal with **online "fakeness"** while doing digital ethnography?
- About **data analysis** when you have so many different sources of data. Practically speaking, what's your workflow for getting everything into the right place for analysis. If you're not doing webscraping, if you're taking screenshots by hand, for example.
- How do you **capture data** on screen (e.g., screenshot)? How do you store them and code/annotate?

- I love **screenshots** too but then my desktop gets crazy in no time -- anyone have other **organization** tips?

André Brock: I also use Scrivener, Bear, and now Apple Notes because they all allow the storage of text + multimedia (notes will even do OCR on screenshots).

Amy King: I use Google Jamboard for screenshotting and initial analysis for first-pass post-it note style thinking and note taking, and also OneNote for screenshots and longer text notes, before it moves into Word. I'm about to start figuring out how to analyse JSON files...

Yehuda Perry: History of science person Kevin Baker also has some writing/twitter threads about file management!

- What about if the content (**screenshot**) is **ephemeral**? For instance, "stories."
- How do you ethically handle **screenshots** once they've been **removed**? I'm curious because often scholars justify using screenshots because they were once public. Do you go back and check if individuals have removed the content? Or made their accounts private?

*André Brock: If I use the **screenshot**, I'll go visit the original URL to see if anything has changed. Many times those **accounts have been deleted** by Twitter! So then do I delete the screenshot because the platform deleted the post?*

*Nick Seaver: I try to go back and ask people whose public online statements I use for **permission to quote** (introduces some other issues, but has worked so far for me).*

*Nick Seaver: My interlocutors ***love*** **deanonymizing themselves** on social media whenever my stuff circulates online. But IRB makes me promise I won't say who they are!*

- On the **ethics of data collection**: How do you balance the need for the metadata with the ethics of collecting user data like bios, profile photos, usernames (not handles) on platforms like Twitter with contentious users' perceptions of public/private porous boundaries?

- How do you navigate **IRB approval** for, say, looking through a young person's phone or being part of an online chat? How often do you announce your presence, as you might in a small group IRL?
- What **IRB issues** have you had to navigate in doing this work?

André Brock: Most of us end up filing 'exempt' because we're asked to file with a social science or biomedical IRB.

André Brock: We still have very few IRBs that even understand what the issues of PII and the digital are.