Policy for funding research travel and activity for UID staff

In the yearly budget, Umeå Institute of Design allocates a certain sum to be used as funding for research related travel and activities. The total amount of funding depends on UID’s overall economical capacity, and shall be budgeted and followed up on a regular basis. This policy applies specifically to these allocated funds, and does not cover travel or activities that are planned and carried out within educational programmes, courses or other specified budgets. Further, it does not apply to travels made for representative and strategic purposes, such as when UID needs an “official” representation at certain strategic meetings, events, fairs, conferences and similar.

The following principles are valid until further notice when it comes to applying for allocated funding for travel and research related activities at Umeå Institute of Design. The department can deviate from these principles if it can be considered to be in the general interest of UID. Such deviation shall always be motivated in writing.

Who can apply for funding?
Funding for UID employees can only be granted for applicants who have a minimum of 30% employment over a period of at least 6 months. Funding is not normally granted during leave of absence. PhD students have an individual expense budget for travel and research activities, and are thus not eligible to apply for additional internal funding.

When to apply?
Applications for funding can be handed in three times a year, with deadlines on September 10th, January 10th and May 10th. Conditional applications can be made in advance, i.e. pending acceptance of paper/workshop or similar at a conference or other venue.

How to apply?
To apply for funding, an application is submitted to the Subject Development Committee, which will evaluate, prepare and prioritise all applications for decision at the Decision meeting. A form for the application is available, and consists of three main sections:
- a background section describing the venue/destination and the basic reason for attending;
- a section describing the applicant’s purpose and motivation for the travel, including its relation to the applicants research/development plan;
- a section detailing the budget, including other sources of funding applied for.

Principles for granting travel funding
Funding can be granted for participation in a conference, research meeting, etc. as well as for collecting or producing research materials. In order to be eligible for funding of conference travel or research meeting, at least one of the following criteria must be met:
- the applicant presents a conference contribution (talk, paper or poster).
- the applicant organises a conference session or workshop.
- the applicant chairs a session or is commentator or similar.
UID normally only grants funding for travel, lodging and conference fee or similar. Meal costs (traktamente) is not covered in these cases, even if the costs should be lower than the maximum limit allowed.

Funding is granted according to the following limits:
- within Sweden, maximum 10 000:-
- within Europe, maximum 15 000:-
- outside Europe, maximum 20 000:-

The maximum amount allowed per year and employee is 20 000:-.

In order to be granted travel funding from UID, the applicant should also use the resources available for application from other funds within and outside the university. Possibilities to use funding from eventual external research projects will be considered in the evaluation process.

**Reporting**

UID can grant travel funding when the outcome or the travel somehow can be expected to contribute to research and education at UID. This can be done in direct ways, at seminars, school meetings and Wednesday lectures, but also more indirectly and generally (for example by contributing to a more research related education, or similar). Irrespective of dissemination format, approved funding must be followed by a final report documenting the travel or activity.

To make a report is mandatory, and should be submitted to the Subject Development Committee no later than 1 month after the travel/activity took place.

**Principles for granting funding for research activities**

When it comes to granting funding for collection or production of research material, other costs than travel or lodging can also be relevant, for example for materials. Such costs shall always be motivated specifically in the application. In order for allowing funding for collecting or producing research material, one of the following criteria should be fulfilled:
- applicant has no external funding for research
- applicant has no own expense means for research
- arguments for relevance and need for means can be verified through research project/individual study plan in relation to existing expense or project means.

**Preparation and decision**

Applications are prepared and prioritised by the Subject Development Committee. Decisions are made at the Decision meeting, after the issue has been discussed in the Local Cooperation Group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue/Åtgärd</th>
<th>Decision/Action Beslut/Åtgärd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Election of minutes checker</td>
<td>Chatharina Henje was appointed to check of the minutes from today’s meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val av justeringsperson</td>
<td>Catharina Henje utsågs till justeringsperson av dagens protokoll.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 Travel Funding for staff application | Heather Wiltse, assistant professor at UID, has applied for travel funding (10,000 SEK) for participation in a double panel session at the conference SPT (the Society for Philosophy and Technology) in Germany, June 14-17, 2017. She has initiated, collaboratively written and submitted a suggestion for the panel discussion. The submitted suggestion has been accepted by the SPT conference. The application is in accordance with requirements and guidelines at UID for application for Travel funding. 
The Subject development committee suggest that the travel funding application of 10,000 SEK will be approved. 
Heather Wiltse did not attend in the discussion. |
| Ansökan om resemöte för personal | Heather Wiltse, forskarassistent på Designhögskolan, har ansökt om resemöte för att delta i en dubbelpanel diskussion på konferensen SPT (the Society for Philosophy and Technology) i Tyskland, 14-17 juni, 2017. Hon har initierat, samskrivit och skickat in ett förslag på paneldiskussion. Förslaget har accepterats av SPT. Ansökan möter krav och riktlinjer för ansökningar för resemöte på Designhögskolan. 
Ämnesutvecklingskommittén föreslår att ansökan godtas. 
Heather Wiltse deltog inte i diskussionen. |
| 3 Travel Funding for staff application | Heather Wiltse, assistant professor at UID, has applied for travel funding for participation at the conference RTD (Research Through Design) in UK March 22-24, 2017. The application does not fulfill the requirements and guidelines at UID for application for Travel funding for staff, to e.g. contribute with own research, organize a session, chair a session or collection or production of research material. |
The Subject development committee suggest that the travel funding application will not be approved.

Heather Wiltse did not attend in the discussion.


Ämnesutvecklingskommittéen föreslår att ansökan inte godtas.

Heather Wiltse deltog inte i diskussionen

5 Additional questions

No additional questions.

Övriga frågor

Inga övriga frågor

6 Next meeting

Date for next meeting is not decided yet.

Nästa möte

Datum för nästa möte är inte fastslaget ännu.

Monica Lindh-Karlsson
Chairman/Ordförande

Catharina Henje
Minutes checker/Justerare

Secretary/sekreterare
Application for travel and research activity funding for UID staff

Name: Heather Wiltse

Employment title: Assistant professor

Purpose of travel or research activity
For conference related application, please state form of participation/activity and attach eventual conference programme and/or letter of acceptance or invitation. For other activities, please state how these are related to your research.

The purpose of travel is to attend RTD 2017, the research through design conference, in Edinburgh, UK, March 22–24. This is a relatively new conference series that focuses on practice-based research through design, and that works with new types of formats that are appropriate for this kind of research. This conference is thus highly relevant for UID. I would like to attend so that UID will have a presence there and as part of my own competence development, generally staying current with relevant research conversations. Although my own work does not quite fit within this frame and I have thus not submitted anything to present, I have already participated in the conference by serving as a reviewer of several submissions at both stages of the review process. And the other benefits of attending this particular conference suggest that it would be worthwhile even without a presentation—both for me individually and UID more generally.

Please state how feed-back from the travel/activity will be shared at UID

Feedback will be shared in primarily informal ways through ongoing conversations in research at UID, and the knowledge gained will also feed into my own research and development. I could also do an ‘out and about’ presentation for UID staff, if desired.

Sum applied for: 11 763

Specification of costs:

Conference registration (early rate until Jan. 31) and dinner: £360 (3 963 SEK)
Travel to Edinburgh (taxis and flights): 2 800 SEK
Hotel (4 nights): 5 000 SEK

Applications from other sources of funding:
Please state other funding bodies you have sent applications to, and also any granted funding already received or decided upon from these. Please also state if funding has been denied, or if your application is not yet processed.

No other applications will be attempted, since they typically require a presentation.

Possibility to use PhD student expense account or external project funding:

Nonexistent.
Motivation for application to UID (in relation to other possible sources)

As stated above, this is a highly relevant conference for UID, such that it is advantageous to have representation there. It is also important for me to maintain awareness and understanding of what is going on in this research community, not least as director of PhD studies, particularly since this will no doubt continue to be a prime publication target for UID PhD students.

Eventual additional information:

As requested.
Application for travel and research activity funding for UID staff

Name: Heather Wiltse

Employment title: Assistant professor

Purpose of travel or research activity
For conference related application, please state form of participation/activity and attach eventual conference programme and/or letter of acceptance or invitation. For other activities, please state how these are related to your research.

The purpose of travel is to attend SPT 2017, the biannual conference of the Society for Philosophy and Technology in Darmstadt, Germany, June 14-17. I have submitted a proposal (attached) for a double panel session with six other researchers. I initiated the proposal and asked the others to somehow respond to a set of problematics that I articulated, and that I used to frame the collective submission. The topic of the panel (“Relating to things that relate to us”) is closely connected to the research and book project Johan Redström and I are currently working on, and this provided an excellent opportunity to engage other researchers and initiate a broader discussion around these matters. This will of course be of substantive benefit to our own research, but will also be advantageous in other ways in terms of drawing attention to and inviting discussion around our work, not least our forthcoming book. Happily, the theme of the entire conference is quite closely related to what we are working on, so it was also possible to pick up on that in the framing of the panel. The conference website states that notification of acceptance should be sent by March 1.

Please state how feedback from the travel/activity will be shared at UID

Feedback will be shared primarily informally through ongoing discussions among researchers at UID, and will also feed back into my own work. Other proposals for productive ways to share feedback would be welcome.

Sum applied for: 10 000

Specification of costs:

Conference registration: 250 € (2 400 SEK)
Travel (taxis and flights): 3 600 SEK
Hotel (4 nights): 4 000 SEK
Applications from other sources of funding:
Please state other funding bodies you have sent applications to, and also any granted funding already received or decided upon from these. Please also state if funding has been denied, or if your application is not yet processed.

I will apply to at least the Wallenberg travel fund if and when I receive notification of acceptance, and also the Kempe travel fund if I am able to find current information about how to do that.

Possibility to use PhD student expense account or external project funding:
Nonexistent.

Motivation for application to UID (in relation to other possible sources)
I do not currently have external funding that would be possible to use, or any remaining startup funding from the faculty. And it is in the strategic interests of UID that I raise my own (and thereby UID's) visibility and build my professional network in this area, and of course also develop my research. (Here it should perhaps be noted that although this is a philosophy of technology conference, several people on the panel and in this community have strong connections to/interest in design; and the issues to be addressed in the panel are highly relevant to future foundations of industrial design when it seems everything is becoming 'smart' and 'active', with consequences we do not yet understand.)

On a somewhat different note, one of the things I am most proud of with this panel is that it is gender balanced and involves interesting people at all career stages, from PhD student to full professor; and it is oriented by important and timely challenges rather than by allegiance to a particular tradition or institution. This is a way of working that is not all that common (yet) and for which I would like to be known, and that I hope also reflects well something about the values, culture, and commitments of UID.

Eventual additional information:
As requested.
Relating to things that relate to us

Steven Dorrestijn, Diane Michelfelder, Michel Puech, Holly Robbins, Yoni Van Den Eede, Fanny Verrax, Heather Wiltse

A proposal for a double panel at SPT 2017

Key words: ontology, epistemology, postphenomenology, fluid assemblages, ethics, digital ethics, object-oriented philosophy, design

Our world is thoroughly textured by technological things, from the most ordinary to the most sophisticated. Many of these things can now be described in terms of their digital, networked, computational, ‘smart’ character. Even as they are often manifested as things we can hold in our hands, their (mostly hidden) internal processes and systemic interconnections make them significantly different from relatively more straightforward physical things that we may have been used to in the past. They also pose fundamental challenges for understanding—both practically and philosophically—what they are and what they do, how they relate to us and to each other.

More specific questions that now emerge include: How should we relate to and make sense out of things that withdraw/are not fully accessible to us on the basis of our own intentionality and experience; that actively relate to and in some cases ‘use’ us; and that can actively relate to each other in ways that do not involve us at all (and thus might call for innovative analytic methods)? And what are the conceptual, analytic, epistemological, practical, and ethical implications of the above? These are the problematics that we will collectively engage in this double panel.

The complexities of these contemporary things and their relations call for bringing multiple perspectives to bear in conversation with each other—and this is precisely the kind of conversation that we wish to catalyse and stage in these sessions. The double panel is thus as much about the problematics collectively articulated and conversation generated as it is about individual presentations in themselves.

The individual contributions, split into two sessions, are as follows.

Session 1: Relating to things that relate to us—ontology and epistemology

On the multi-intentionality of assembled things

Heather Wiltse

Working within a (post)phenomenological framework, human-thing relations are typically understood on the basis of intentionality—a thing never existing on its own, but rather always as a thing for a human in a world. Yet contemporary networked computational technologies fundamentally challenge this basic epistemological grounding of that much of what they are and do is not present to our experience through use. To take an everyday example, we might consider the act of using Google to search for something. While it is quite possible to see it as a tool that enables searching, from the perspective of its design it could be more accurately described as a thing for harvesting user data and facilitating targeted advertising. This means that while a person
using the service to search has one kind of intentional relation to it, those who relate to other sides of it (Google, marketers, etc.) have a quite different one. Google is also not an isolated, stable thing, but more like a fluid assemblage composed of many interconnected, constantly evolving, contextually customized components that have their own agencies and (intentional) relations to each other. An adequate description of things that are fluid assemblages must thus account for the multi-intentionality of their relations—what they are for, and for whom.

The Omnipresence of Breakdown: Object-Oriented Philosophy of Technology
Yoni Van Den Eede

Graham Harman’s object-oriented philosophy (OOP) has up until now received little to no attention from philosophy of technology (PhilTech). Yet two crucial aspects of OOP make it worthwhile, even necessary, to dig into it:

1) Harman is well-known for his innovative reading of Heidegger, that puts the tool analysis “upside down.” For dominant approaches in PhilTech such as postphenomenology the tool analysis has been of great importance. What could Harman’s “reversal” mean for those approaches?

2) Harman also offers an idiosyncratic reading of Latour, supplying a kind of “mirror image” to him: he supplements the Latourian relationalist-network perspective with a notion of “substance.” But PhilTech is still sticking to the standard relationalist reading. It serves to inquire into possible reasons for this neglect, and see if and how OOP can be put to use for the study of technology.

Technology is not a particular focus in Harman’s work, but if we look at OOP through the “lens” of technology, interesting results may ensue. The notions of “breakdown,” “relation” and “network” play a fundamental role here, and it may turn out that these actually acquire an enhanced meaning – especially looked at against the backdrop of contemporary/emerging “algorithmic technologies,” that may require an object-oriented analysis.

Design to Situate Im/material Context
Holly Robbins

We tend to design our technologies as black boxes. This may be an effort to promote ease of use, yet it limits our ability to engage with and understand the socio-ecological context around the artifact. How does it perform its function, how do I use it, how does it use me? This lack of context becomes especially problematic when we consider the layers of complexity that come with data-intensivity and connectivity and that are becoming increasingly commonplace surrounding contemporary artifacts.

Yet, design has a powerful potential in breaking this black box paradox. Design approaches have the potential to not only surface this socio-ecological context, but also support opportunities for our engagement with it. Philosophical frameworks explicating the problematic nature of our relations with artifacts can also provide us with some ideas on how design can resolve some of these more complicated entanglements with objects.

Working with design practitioners and design researchers, we have examined and developed design approaches that take into careful consideration how people, ways of doing, and the complex nature of materiality around objects can not only communicate this socio-ecological context, but also bind it.
Session 2: Relating to things that relate to us—ethics and pragmatics

Attachment to things, artifacts, devices, commodities: an inconvenient ethics of the ordinary

Michel Puech

The nearest things to us (physically, functionally, emotionally) are elusive. They are ontologically vague and morally thin in the best case; they are totally unseen and utterly despised in a lot of cases.

In applied ethics the trend seems to be: continually expanding ethical consideration to new "objects" (every human and not just me, my tribe, race, gender; then animals, plants, ecosystems). Can this expansion reach ordinary things? Digital objects?

In wisdom ethics, awareness and care of the ordinary open a new dimension that requires new methods for engaging and valuing the objects populating our technosphere and the entities populating our infosphere.

My intuition is that trying to constructively assess the moral significance of the most ordinary things (material and virtual, from coffee cups to Google search, from SMS texting to hot showers) has something about it that is inconvenient for moral correctness in the humanities. A candidly refreshing inconvenience, I suggest.

Ethics of technology below and above reason: The case of living with smart technologies

Steven Dorrestijn

With sensors and computational power, today’s smart technologies can collect information and exercise multiple functions dependent on the context. Smart technology thus could allow for sophisticated interactions with their users. Technology could become ever more ‘social’ and ‘personalized’. But at the same time the increasing ‘intelligence’ of devices also seems to raise the risks associated with technology, that it might take too much command over its makers and users. Humans and technologies could be seen as in a competition of outsmarting each other. What does this mean for humans as ethical actors?

With reference to concrete examples, such as a research project about interactive screens for public spaces, I will discuss different aspects of interaction with smart technologies. I will compare occurrences of rich, two-way interaction with poorer forms of interaction which come down to a kind of process control system. I will thus consider how technical smartness may afford, even catalyze, or rather foreclose forms of human smartness. To ethically assess this I will invoke an ethics of technology below and above reason (about the technical conditions ‘below’ and aspirations to values ‘above’ the rational subject of modern moral theory).

The New Assisted Living: Relating to Alexa Relating to Us

Diane Michelfelder

In the past two years, AI-enabled and voice-activated tabletop digital assistants (TDAs), such as Amazon’s Echo and the more recently developed Google assistant Home, have become increasingly popular among consumers in the US. My goal in this paper is to take up this panel’s theme by exploring the question of the ethical impacts of TDA’s—in particular, of Amazon’s Echo, who responds to the name “Alexa”.

3
For the most part, philosophical explorations of the ethical impacts of TDAs have focused on issues involving security and privacy. This presentation will go in a different direction, by looking at the impacts on our capabilities for developing relational virtues such as empathy, compassion, and trust. More specifically, it will take the form of teasing out a possible ethical paradox with respect to Alexa’s current design.

This exploration will involve, in part, a discourse analysis of users’ interactions with Alexa, based on comments from the Amazon website, which demonstrate that users relate to Alexa as something with whom a relationship based on trust and caring could be established; the phenomenological elements of Alexa’s design (such as name and voice) encourage this. At the same time, Alexa takes input without regard to prioritizing what commands matter more than others: it is all algorithmically the same (from Alexa’s “perspective”) whether it is asked to stream music, give a weather report, or report the balance of one’s bank account. And, just as importantly, Alexa arguably takes most commands to reflect a user’s self-interest, rather than the user being interested in the well-being of others with whom she is in relation. Over time, this skews Alexa’s picture of the user, prompting the following worry: Does a TDA such as Alexa encourage users to build a connection with it based on relational virtues, while at the same time undermining conditions on which users can build similar connections to others? And, if so, how might this paradox be addressed?

From dealing with virtual others to the construction of the self: Videogames as an ethical sandbox

Fanny Verrax

How do we relate to virtual others? While much has been written on multiplayer online videogames, I would like to argue here that single-player videogames also offer a unique experience of virtual alterity and of ethical learning. More specifically, I would like to focus on five features of single-player videogames that make them a worthy ethical experience.

1) They offer a safe learning environment, indefinitely iterative to the player’s wish, desacralizing mistakes and providing a learning curve.

2) Consequently, they allow for a type of mastery in reaching “the golden mean”. More broadly, they embody the Aristotelian view on virtue learning.

3) They extend the field of ethical questions and contexts one can think about, developing a sense of moral imagination. Typical examples here include being a prison manager (Prison Architect), running a pharmaceuticals company (Big Pharma), or working as a customs officer in a totalitarian state (Papers, Please).

4) They lead to a construction of the self through emotions control, while the player deals solely with an artificial intelligence.

5) Finally, they can provide a valuable empirical and individual basis to Arendt’s thesis of the “banality of evil,” allowing perhaps for more benevolence towards non-virtual others’ weaknesses.