**Big Data from the Bottom Up: A workshop exploring the relationship between big data and ethnography**

Wednesday 21st October 2015  
University College London – Darwin B05 (AM) and 14 Taviton Street (PM)

Sponsored by the Big Data Institute, the Centre for Digital Anthropology at UCL, and The ESRC Centre for Socio-Cultural Change.

This workshop brings together anthropologists and sociologists to explore how ethnography is being used to engage with big data. We have invited presentations from people who are doing ethnographic research on big data in order to explore the kinds of insights that ethnographic studies of users and producers of big data can provide on the ambition, challenges and threats of big data science. In addition, the workshop also invites examples of how big data is being used to extend or transform the principles and practices of ethnography. In these cases, what kinds of ‘big data’ are deemed able to answer the kinds of questions that ethnographers are interested in answering? How can big data inform ethnography and what happens to the validity and status of ethnographic data when it is set alongside other kinds of data collection and analysis?

The workshop builds on the work of the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change on the “Social Life of Methods”, in order to explore these potential alignments between big data and ethnography as two overlapping practices of social research. Bringing together perspectives from those who are working at the interface of big data and ethnography the workshop aims to better understanding what each of these methods aim to do, what questions they aim to answer and what have been the outcomes of recent experiments that have aimed to bring these methods together.

**Timetable**

*Morning: Darwin Building, Room B05*

9.15am Welcome, Coffee and Pastries

9.30am Introduction by Hannah Knox and Dawn Nafus – Big data and Anthropology

9.45am Introduction by director of the Big Data Institute, Patrick Wolfe / Sofia Olhede – The challenges of working with big data.

**Session 1: Big Data from the bottom up: Early Insights, Emerging Issues**

10.00-10.30 Evelyn Ruppert – Tracing Data Practices and the Making of Europe

10.30- 11.00 Adrian MacKenzie – Truth is no Longer in the Table?

11.00 – 11.30 Irina Shklovski – Incorporating Big Data into Everyday Life

11.30 – 11.40 Response by Kimberly Chong, UCL

11.40 - 12.00 Questions and Discussion

*Lunch: Staff Common Room, Anthropology Department, 14 Taviton Street,*

12.00 – 1.00 Lunch and Tea and Coffee, Department of Anthropology

*Afternoon: Daryll Forde Seminar Room, Anthropology Department, 14 Taviton Street*

**Session 2: From Ethnographies of Big Data to Data-Informed Ethnography**

1.00 – 1.30 Alison Powell – Big Data from the Bottom Up

1.30 – 2pm Dawn Nafus – Ethnography in, of, and through, the Data Sense Project

2.00 - 2.10pm – Response by Allan Abramson

2.10pm - 2.30pm – Discussion

2.30-2.45pm Tea/Coffee Break

**Session 3: Ethnography and Big Data – How big data is challenging ethnography?**

2.45 – 3.15 My Masden - Exploring with Heterogeneous Data

3.15 – 3.45 Farida Vis and Anne Burns - Big visual data and social media

3.45 – 4.15 Ben Anderson - On social theory and energy monitoring

4.15 – 4.25 Response by David Berry (Sussex)

**Session 3 Big Data and the Object(ives) of Ethnography**

4.30 – 4.40 Reflections on the day by Antonia Walford

4.40 – 5pm General discussion about the future of big data and ethnography and next steps.

**Directions**

The morning session will be held in room B05 in the Darwin Building on Gower Street. The postcode is: WC1E 6BT

The afternoon session will be held in the Anthropology department which is at 14 Taviton Street. The postcode is: WC1H 0BW

**Contact Details**

**Hannah Knox**

[h.knox@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:h.knox@ucl.ac.uk)

Office Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 8837

Mobile Tel: +44 (0)7816 104129

**Wireless Internet**

Eduroam is available throughout the UCL campus.

Twitter tag: #bigdataethnography

**If you have any special dietary requirements please let me know as soon as possible.**