

## i HT24 reexam: Welcome to examination!

This examination consists of open questions, sometimes referred to as 'essay questions'. It includes **7 questions**, each rewarded with a maximum of 3 points. The examination is limited to **2 hours**. To pass it you need **13 points** (60%)

The grading will focus on the overall capability to explain and apply ideas. It will assess whether (1) answers are logically coherent, whether (2) they are grounded in readings, lectures, and discussions, and, when applicable, that (3) answers engage the key concepts of the course.

Advice:

Please, read the questions carefully! Each question normally consists of multiple requests, such as: "**Define...** and **explain...** **illustrate** ... with an example..."

If you feel unsure about how to respond or don't remember exactly what papers or lectures said, trust your instincts and stay focused on the question. Explain in your own words, to the best of your abilities. Do not start to broadly talk about related things, to show you know other things.

It could be worth noting that longer answers are not necessarily better answers, since long texts increase the risk of ending up with inconsistencies.

# 1 HT24 reexam, Question 1

In actor-network theory, the principle of *generalized symmetry* proposes that humans and material artifacts should be viewed equally regarding their capacity to act, i.e., in terms of agency.

Describe, in your own terms, how this principle is useful when analyzing how socio-technical systems—systems that include both human and technological elements—behave and evolve.

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Maximum marks: 3

## **2 HT24 reexam, Question 2**

Jacob has been learning about operand and operant resources. He understands that an operand resource is something that is acted upon to achieve a goal. This aligns well with his view of technologies as tools. However, he's unsure about the concept of *operant resources*.

Explain to Jacob what an operant resource is, and how it is different from an operand.

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### **3 HT24 reexam, Question 3**

Daniel struggles with the concept of *affordances*. He understands that affordances emphasize *meanings* over the inherent attributes of artifacts. His confusion stems from the fact that affordances are defined in *relation* to an observer or user. To him, if an affordance is something relative, it seems pointless.

What did Daniel miss about affordances? Explain to him why an affordance, although being defined in relation to an observer, can be useful to explain general aspects of material artifacts.

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#### 4 HT24 reexam, Question 4

Olivia understands that *reproducibility* refers to the ability to create copies of a digital artifact without any additional marginal cost. However, she's unsure about the consequences of this. The lecture she's attending suggests that reproducibility leads to more diverse markets, including a wider range of niche products and services.

Explain to Olivia why the reproducibility of digital technology tends to produce markets with greater diversity.

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## 5 HT24 reexam, Question 5

According to Jonathan Zittrain, *generativity* is found in “a technology’s overall capacity to produce unprompted change driven by large, varied and uncoordinated audiences”. He also proposes that such generative capacity derives from four aspects of the technology: capacity for leverage; adaptability; ease of mastery; and accessibility.

Explain, in your own terms, how these four aspects “produce unprompted [spontaneous] change driven by large, varied and uncoordinated audiences”.

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## 6 HT24 reexam, Question 6

Emma is trying to understand how the concept of *boundary objects* can be useful in design. She has read that a boundary object is something general that different people can recognize and use in various contexts, but it can still have different meanings in each of them. This helps maintain a common identity, align different interests, and enable knowledge sharing between environments, while also supporting local needs and specialized designs. To fully grasp the concept, Emma needs an example.

Choose an example of a boundary object that is relevant to design. Use this example to explain to Emma how boundary objects can be *plastic* enough to adapt to local needs and constraints while still being *robust* enough to maintain a common identity across different sites.

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## 7 HT24 reexam, Question 7

Explain the basic idea behind *ontological reversal* and reflect on the consequences of ontological reversal for the design of digital systems.

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Maximum marks: 3