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Building Data (Delft/Rotterdam, 23–24 Nov 22)

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft and Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Nov 23–24, 2022
Deadline: Jun 13, 2022

Dennis Pohl

Building Data: Architecture, Memory and New Imaginaries

Vast amounts of data of the built environment are continuously generated, stored, retrieved, updated, edited, and resaved – a seemingly endless cycle of coding and recoding of the past and the present, and of possible futures. Up to such a point, its material infrastructures even disrupt national energy and water grids. We are looking at a new kind of living memory system being constructed, that is generative and transformative.

All the things copied onto the xillions of hard drives and cloud storage become part of our everyday world through constant repetition, temporarily stabilising itself to finally become cultural sediment of our societies. The increasing layers of data and its infrastructures offer an unexplored kind of territory for new forms of storytelling for architecture, other kinds of imaginations and fields of knowledge.

Architects have become curators of a planetary real-time database, even beyond the planet, among others by smart integration and recombination. But while we operate with large-scale data sets of cities, public space and landscapes, it is not quite clear how we might address the actual building scale. Even when there has been radical experimentation before in the pre-digital era, with media architecture and form finding tools, with the streamlining of production flows and security protocols. Therefore, we aim to seek: where is the building in this vast, interactive and extractive information system of data production?

For possible answers we want to start with the role of repositories and data sets, digital archives and collections; they can help explore new thought-provoking opportunities to reinvent the building in our data society. We understand archives and repositories not as passive, aggregated information, but as open laboratories for knowledge production and, thus, the intellectual and cultural examination of the built environment.

Important questions we want to address include, but are not limited to:

- How can we explore digital archives to think new imaginaries and develop new narratives about and by buildings?
- In which visual and written languages are the new narratives and imaginaries created, and how are they organised?
- Are there other kinds of narrative systems, non-visual, non-linguistic? Material and sensory ones?

And what would that mean?
- Who is developing the narratives, and for whom?
- If post-humanism might (re-)direct the new data-landscapes, what sort of data buildings might come out of this shift?
- And, how do data collections change architectural research and practice regarding the past, present, and future?

The conference is connected to 'The New Open', the new flagship project of the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft, led by Georg Vrachliotis and the Theory of Architecture and Digital Culture Group. It continues some of the themes of the 2020 conference: 'Repositioning Architecture in the Digital', in which we explored the emergence of the data society in the 1970s.

More information can be found here: https://jaap-bakema-study-centre.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/activities/repositioning-architecture-digital

Practical information:
Abstracts of 300-500 words plus a short bio (300 words max) should be sent to Fatma Tanış: f.tanis@hetnieuweinstituut.nl
The aim is to have the conference proceedings published at the conference date.

Dates:
Deadline submissions of abstracts: 13 June 2022
Notification of selection: 4 July 2022
Submission of full draft papers (ca. 2000 words): 5 September 2022
Conference dates: 23-24 November 2022

Organising Committee:
Dirk van den Heuvel (HNI, TU Delft), Georg Vrachliotis (TU Delft), Fatma Tanış (HNI, TU Delft), Dennis Pohl (TU Delft)

Advisory Board:
Tom Avermaete (ETH Zürich), Hetty Berens (HNI), Maristella Casciato (Getty Research Institute), Carola Hein (TU Delft), Georg Vrachliotis (TU Delft)

Locations:
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft and Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam

Selection:
The selection is in the hands of the convenors Dirk van den Heuvel and Georg Vrachliotis, and advisory board of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre.

Criteria are relevance and focus in relation to the call, state-of-the-art research, an innovative and challenging approach, and an eloquent and evocative articulation of the proposition. Academics and practitioners alike are invited to submit. We are aiming for a diverse group of speakers, in terms of nationality, seniority and academic and institutional background, among other categories, so as to assure a productive and lively exchange of knowledge.

Covid:
Despite the current positive situation with neither travel restrictions in place, nor restrictions for public events, we have to mention the possibility of a new wave. We aim for a physical in person conference. However, if this changes, we will have to follow covid travel guidelines and restrictions as set out by the Dutch government and the organising institutes TU Delft and HNI. If need be we will organise the conference as a blended event with a mix of online and onsite presentations.

Please note, selected participants who want to join us in Delft and Rotterdam, are requested to organise their own support for travel costs and hotel accommodation.

Reference:

CFP: Building Data (Delft/Rotterdam, 23-24 Nov 22). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 28, 2022 (accessed Aug 2, 2025), <https://arthist.net/archive/36534>.