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Urban Food Futures: ICTs and Opportunities

INFORMATION PACK

Oxford Internet Institute
University of Oxford
1 St Giles Oxford OX1 3JS

December 14, 2011

SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY

Food is a vital foundation of all human life. It is essential to a myriad of political, socio-cultural, economic and environmental practices throughout history. However, those practices of food production, consumption, and distribution have the potential to now go through immensely transformative shifts as network technologies become increasingly embedded in every domain of contemporary life. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are one of the key foundations of global functionality and sustenance today and undoubtedly will continue to present new challenges and opportunities for the future. As such, this Symposium will bring together leading scholars across disciplines to address challenges and opportunities at the intersection of food and ICTs in everyday urban environment. In particular, the discussion will revolve around the question: What are the key roles that network technologies play in re-shaping the food systems at micro- to macroscopic level?

The symposium will contribute a unique perspective on urban food futures through the lens of network society paradigm where ICTs enable innovations in production, organisation, and communication within society. Some of the topics addressed will include encouraging transparency in food commodity chains; value of cultural understanding and communication in global food sustainability; and technologies to social inclusion; all of which evoke and examine the question surrounding networked individuals as changes catalysts for urban food futures. The event will provide an avenue for new discussions and speculations on key issues surrounding urban food futures in the network era, with a particular focus on bottom-up micro actions that challenge the existing food systems towards broader sociocultural, political, technological, and environmental transformations.

One central area of concern is that current systems of food production, distribution, and consumption do not ensure food security for the future, but rather seriously threaten it. With the recent unprecedented scale of urban growth and rise of middle-class, the problem continues to intensify. This situation requires extensive distribution networks to feed urban residents, and therefore poses significant infrastructural challenges to both the public and private sectors. The symposium will also address the transferability of citizen empowerment that network technologies enable as demonstrated in various significant global political transformations from the bottom-up, such as the recent Egyptian Youth Revolution. Another key theme of the discussion will be the role of ICTs (and the practices that they mediate) in fostering transparency in commodity chains. The symposium will ask what differences these technologies can make on the practices of food consumption and production. After discussions, we will initiate an international network of food-thinkers and actors that will function as a platform for knowledge sharing and collaborations. The participants will be invited to engage in planning for the on-going future development of the network.

SCHEDULE

08:40 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 10:00	Welcome and Opening Keynote
10:00 – 10:20	Morning Tea
10:20 – 12:00	Session 1: ICTs for Food Sustainability
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 12:40	Welcome by Helen Margetts, Director of OII
12:40 – 14:20	Session 2: Citizens as Change Catalysts
14:20 – 14:40	Afternoon Tea
14:40 – 16:40	Session 3: Transparency in Consumption and Production
16:40 – 17:30	Planning for the Food Network/ Wrap-up
19:30 onwards	Symposium Dinner at the Red Lion Pub

SESSIONS

Session 1: ICTs for Food Sustainability		
Presenters	Affiliation	Paper Title
Jaz Hee-jeong Choi	Queensland University of Technology / University of Oxford	Playful In-between: Engaging People to Create Sustainable Food Futures
Charles Reese Brigham & Soren Gigler	World Bank Innovation Practice	Harnessing Geospatial Technologies for Agricultural Food Security
Ugo Vallauri	Royal Holloway, University of London	Food Distribution and Consumption: Neighbourhood Projects, Community Building and ICTs
Nikolas Pollinger & Andrew Cock-Starkey	MyFarm	Ethnographic View on MyFarm

Session 2: Citizens as Change Catalysts

Presenters	Affiliation	Paper Title
Eleftheria Lekakis	Goldsmiths College, University of London	Mediated Ethical Consumption: Coffee Activism and Online Spaces of Civic Engagement
Marc Tuters & Denisa Kera	University of Amsterdam	Hungry For Data: Going Beyond The Local Fetish Through Food Traceability Interfaces
Sonia Massari	University of Florence, Gustolab Institute	Critical Approaches to Food Culture and Communication
Dan Betterton	Cultivate	Cultivate Oxford

Section 3: Transparency in Consumption and Production

<i>Presenter (s)</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Paper Title</i>
Anna Davies & Jessica Pape	Trinity College Dublin	Kitchen Stories: ICT and imagined eating practices in 2050
Charlotte De Backer	University of Antwerp	The Impact of Television and ICT Use on Communal Eating Patterns, Diet and Health
Jonathan Elms & Alan Hallsworth	University of Stirling & University of Portsmouth	Online Grocery Shopping, Multi- tasking and Activity Fragmentation
Markus Schroeder	Vienna University of Economics and Business	Creating Consumer Awareness on the Internet
Tanja Schneider & Javier Lezaun	University of Oxford	Drawing Attention to Food Industry Practices: Foodwatch.de and Consumer Food Governance

SYMPOSIUM PUBLICATION

Authors of selected papers from the symposium will be invited to submit extended versions of their papers for publication in a special issue of Futures: Journal of Policy, Planning and Futures Studies (<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/futures/>). All papers will undergo a review process as per the journal guidelines. However, we will work with the authors of selected papers to revise their papers to increase the likelihood of acceptance at Futures.

PARTNERS

This symposium is supported by the [Institute for Creative Industries and Innovation](#), the [Creative Industries Faculty](#), the [Urban Informatics Research Lab](#) (QUT), and the Oxford Internet Institute (University of Oxford).

REGISTRATION

Invited presenters are not required to pay the registration fee. Every attendee must confirm their attendance with the symposium chair via email (h.choi@qut.edu.au) by Friday, November 25, 2011.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMODATION (in order of proximity to venue)

- The Randolph Hotel, Beaumont Street, OX1 2LN [+44 (0) 844 879 9132]
<http://www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk/our-hotels/macdonald-randolph-hotel/>
- The Buttery, 11-12 Broad Street, OX1 3AP [Tel: +44(0) 1865 811950]
<http://www.thebutteryhotel.co.uk/>
- Bath Place Hotel, 4-5 Bath Place, OX1 3SU [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 791812]
<http://www.bathplace.co.uk>
- The Old Parsonage Hotel, 1 Banbury Road, OX2 6NN [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 310210]
<http://www.oldparsonage-hotel.co.uk/>
- Cotswold Lodge Hotel, 66A Banbury Road, OX2 6JP [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 512121]
<http://www.cotswoldlodgehotel.co.uk/>
- Parklands Hotel, 100 Banbury Road, OX2 6JU [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 554374]
<http://www.parklandsoxford.co.uk/>
- The Old Bank Hotel, 92-94 High Street, OX1 4BN [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 799599]
<http://www.oldbank-hotel.co.uk/>
- Galaxie Hotel, 180 Banbury Road, OX2 7BT [Tel: +44 (0) 1865 515688]
<http://www.galaxie.co.uk/>
- College rooms can also potentially be found via this website:
<http://www.oxfordrooms.co.uk>

GETTING TO THE VENUE

The Oxford Internet Institute is located at 1 St Giles, in Central Oxford. We are opposite the Ashmolean Museum / Taylor Institution Library (look for our blue door), about 10 min walk from the Oxford railway station and 5 min from the central coach station.

Oxford is about 60 miles (90 kms) northwest of London and has excellent road and national rail links. Regular coach services connect Oxford with the capital and also with Heathrow, Gatwick and Luton airports.

From London airports

London Heathrow and Gatwick airports are linked to Oxford by The Airline coach service, which

operates a direct frequent service twenty-four hours a day (tel: +44 (0)1865 785400). London Stansted airport is linked to Oxford by the National Express 757 coach service, running every two hours (tel: +44 (0)8705 747777). A list of taxi companies, many of which offer a bespoke airport pick-up service, can be found on the Tourist Information Centre website.

By train

A direct service operates between Oxford and London Paddington (approximately every 30 minutes), and between Oxford and Birmingham New Street via Banbury and Coventry. Other services operate from the north via Birmingham New Street; from the South via Reading; and from the west via Didcot or Reading. For information contact National Rail Enquiries (tel: +44 (0)8457 484950).

By coach

Frequent 24-hour direct services connect Oxford with London (peak times every 10-20 minutes). The Oxford Express service includes Victoria Coach Station, Grosvenor Gardens, Marble Arch, Baker Street/Gloucester Place and Hillingdon (tel: +44 (0)1865 785410). The Oxford Tube service includes Grosvenor Gardens, Marble Arch, Notting Hill Gate, Shepherd's Bush, and Hillingdon (tel: +44 (0)1865 772250). For information on coaches to other major cities and airports contact National Express (tel: +44 (0)8717 818178). Coaches arrive at Gloucester Green Coach Station in the city centre.



By car

Birmingham-Oxford: M40-A34
Bristol-Oxford: M32-M4-A34
Cardiff-Oxford: M4-A420
Edinburgh-Oxford: A74(M)-A74-M6-M42-M40-A34
Glasgow-Oxford: M74-A74(M)-M6-M42-M40-A34
London-Oxford: A40-M40-A40
Manchester-Oxford: M56-M6-M42-M40-A34
Newcastle-Oxford: A1-A1(M)-M1-A43-M40-A34
Nottingham-Oxford: M1-A43-M40-A34

Parking in Oxford

Many Oxford streets are now closed to traffic and parking is severely limited. Visitors are encouraged to use the Park and Ride bus services which operate between the city centre and parking areas on the outskirts at Pear Tree, Woodstock Road (north); Water Eaton (north); Seacourt, Botley Road (west); Redbridge, Abingdon Road (south); and Thornhill, London Road (east). Please note that Thornhill and Seacourt are often full, particularly on University Open Days. We therefore recommend that drivers coming to Oxford from the east (including London), the south and the west use the Redbridge Park & Ride, while drivers arriving from the north can choose between Pear Tree and Water Eaton.

Taxis

Taxi ranks are located at Oxford Railway Station, Gloucester Green Coach Station and St Giles' in the city centre.
A list of taxi companies can be found on the Tourist Information Centre website.

CONTACT

Symposium Chair

Dr Jaz Hee-jeong Choi (h.choi@qut.edu.au)

Organising Committee

Dr Mark Graham (mark.graham@oii.ox.ac.uk)

Dr Bernie Hogan (bernie.hogan@oii.ox.ac.uk)

Dr Eleftheria Lekakis (e.lekakis@gold.ac.uk)

Events and Administration Officer

Tim Davies (tim.davies@oii.ox.ac.uk)

OPENING KEYNOTE

Social Media as a Platform for Behaviour Change

Shaun Lawson (slawson@lincoln.ac.uk)

Online social networks (OSNs) have become so pervasive that they are now the glue that interconnects people, places, and business in work, play and lifestyle. As such, the increased understanding - and deliberate and targeted use - of social media has a potentially profound impact in almost any aspect of a modern digital society. We are beginning to see, for instance, that the hitherto unachievable insight in to what our friends collectively think, and do - through online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter - can be used to challenge our awareness of our own individual behaviour and that of our social and demographic groups and beyond. This talk will present recent research which aims to exploit OSNs as platforms to raise awareness and transform behaviour across a number of health, sustainability and lifestyle issues. This will include discussion of work conducted at the Lincoln Social Computing (LiSC) research centre and beyond. Particular focus will be placed on the opportunities - as well as the challenges - that are present in the domain of urban food cultures and practices.

Shaun Lawson is Professor of Social Computing in the School of Computer Science where he directs the Lincoln Social Computing (LiSC) Research Centre. He holds PhD and BEng degrees from Universities of Surrey and Newcastle respectively. His research is focussed on social aspects of human-computer interaction (HCI). This includes investigations of how people engage with mobile and social platforms including online social networks (OSNs), micro-blogging services, and social and pervasive games. Much of his recent work is built upon the hypothesis that such technology provides a platform to deliver social interactive services which can be used for serious purposes and behaviour change. For instance he currently holds EU, HEFCE and EPSRC funding to, respectively, investigate how social computing can be used to: teach leadership skills, reduce energy consumption and improve engagement with psychological treatments for mental health disorders. He has authored or co - authored over 50 publications which have accrued over 100 citations from academic colleagues and has held peer-reviewed grants worth £1.5 million from sources such as EPSRC, the EU, Microsoft Research and UK charities.

ABSTRACTS

Playful In-between: Engaging People to Create Sustainable Food Futures

Jaz Hee-jeong Choi (h.choi@qut.edu.au)

With rapid global urbanisation and advancement in information communication technologies emerged new forms of urban experiences and transformations, and thus how cities are understood as systems, and people as agents for change. Parallel to this development, recent years have seen a growing concern for current global food production, distribution, and consumption systems, which do not ensure but rather threaten food security for the future. Much research has focused on exploring the potential of information communication technologies (ICTs) to facilitate positive changes towards more sustainable futures, particularly from the bottom up. However, the fundamental debate still prevails between the sceptic view (that the outcome of such endeavours would be minimal and/or too slow, and the environmental impact of producing and using technologies is relatively high) and growing optimism (that while technologies will not function as a panacea, they will provide novel solutions to diverge from the current trajectory of regression). This paper takes the mid-point: it acknowledges the need for extensive reframing of political agendas and systematic changes with imminent consequences, but at the same time maintains hope for individuals to be at the forefront of (re-)imagining and (co-)creating necessary transformations across various domains of society towards more sustainable food futures. The paper uses the analogy of hunters and gatherers in history to reflect on the existing and potential food practices of individuals as foragers in the wild contemporary urban jungle. It argues and provides examples supporting that the conceptual basis for engaging individuals in more sustainable food practices in urban environments is play(fulness).

Harnessing Geospatial Technologies for Agricultural Food Security

Charles Reese Brigham (cbrigham@worldbank.org)

The Global Agricultural Food Security Program (GAFSP) is a multilateral mechanism to assist in the implementation of pledges made by the G8++ at the L'Aquila Summit in July 2009 and was set up in response to a request from the G20 in Pittsburgh in September 2009. The objective is to address the underfunding of country and regional agriculture and food security strategic investment plans already being developed by countries in consultation with donors and other stakeholders at the country-level. This will make aid contributions toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) One – eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Agricultural Food Security is an inherently geographic exercise. Such critical infrastructure targeted explicitly by GAFSP include: water distribution and transport systems; marketplaces, agri-businesses units, production areas, monitoring stations, watersheds, dams and reservoirs, hillside intensification, vulnerable households, small-scale/rural infrastructure, rice, maize, cassava, cotton, coffee and cocoa producing areas. Understanding the spatial position and extent of such infrastructure combined with agricultural activities provides an opportunity to address some of the fundamental issues around the underfunding of country and regional agriculture and food security strategic investment. This increased understanding makes aid more predictable and accountable overall.

Geospatial technologies are integral to these endeavors. Such technologies allow for the interactive mapping of the MDG development indicators at the sub-national level which are strategic tools for policy makers to gain a better understanding of regional differences of poverty and human development within countries. Furthermore, interactive maps allow the user to overlay these development indicators with information related to the exact location of existing development programs related to the agricultural sector and food security and provide a baseline for the implementation of GAFSP project activities.

The GAFSP Coordination Unit in partnership with the World Bank Institute (WBI) Innovation Team is developing a global interactive mapping platform providing an overview of all GAFSP financed projects. This is being complemented by specific country-level (i.e., Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan and Togo) and project-level interactive mapping platforms for each GAFSP financed program that will combine local project data with local socio-economic data and relevant food security data. This will also include developing mechanisms to reduce errors and bottlenecks in information retrieval, processing and dissemination.

The GAFSP partnership with WBI for enhancing and showcasing their country portfolios at a project level has spurred from the fruitful comprehensive mapping work already conducted as part of the World Bank's Mapping for Results (M4R) for Bolivia, Philippines, and Kenya. Many other countries including Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, India, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and China have explicitly requested services of the M4R teams for targeted work on the descriptive measures of spatial development indicator data that will allow for increased understanding and the geographic accessibility and dispersion of projects in relation to the financial portfolio and demographic characteristics. The visualization of MDGs and Project Mapping activities are built out from the existing foundational geospatial infrastructure and more granular level information pertaining to project details as outlined by Country teams from WB, IFAD, FAO, Inter-American Development Bank.

This paper will provide an introduction to the GAFSP and provide a demonstration and first insight into the interactive mapping platform for

country-level (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal) and project-level GAFSP financed programs. This will be followed by a wider discussion on the role of such initiatives to better monitor project and impact on people; to enhance transparency and social accountability; and to enable citizens and other stakeholders to provide direct feedback.

Food Distribution and Consumption: Neighbourhood Projects, Community Building and ICTs

Ugo Vallauri (Ugo.Vallauri.2007@live.rhul.ac.uk)

This paper explores the role of ICTs in the self-organisation of a pilot of a veg-bag scheme in the London neighbourhood of Belsize Park, focusing particularly on the area of community-building, food distribution and consumption. The project, co-designed and run by the author in 2011, involves 25 families living in the neighbourhood and signed up for weekly deliveries from a small farm 40mi outside London, and volunteering occasionally at the farm site while gaining farming skills. It is part of the wider Transition Belsize community, also engaged in urban food production in public sites.

While arguably this type of projects are all about interacting face-to-face in the offline world, regaining a physical connection with food and the issues around it, the author argues that achieving the full potential, transparency and participation drive of such initiatives requires a strategic, organic use of ICTs and social media.

The ICT emerging area of interest include community-building and communal support in the form of skill sharing in food preservation as well as in recipe-sharing. While the preparation of veg-bags and their consumption are the tangible benefits of bottom-up urban food projects, their online documentation provides a channel to claim and routinely practice ownership, to achieve consensus and deliver feedback to all involved stakeholders. Ultimately, this is what differentiates such projects from business-run food distribution businesses, including commercial veg-bag schemes. A simple blogging platform with polls, picture uploading, recipe-sharing, comments, feedback and conversations with the farmer provides a formidable way to reclaim food production, distribution and consumption. This poses questions on the role and sustainability of small-scale initiatives, whether community-supported agriculture or food cooperatives. How small is big enough? Can a coalition of urban food projects and online communities behind them reshape the future of urban food?

Additionally, a needed reflection is on the waves of innovation between South and North of the world. While farmers in developing regions are accessing unprecedented ICT services to obtain market information and ultimately sell their products, and consumers use mobile money for instant micro-payments, the reality is much more fragmented in Europe. What can we learn and

appropriate from the use of mobile payments in developing regions to make urban food futures a reality?

Ethnographic View on MyFarm

Nikolas Pollinger (npollinger@hotmail.com) & Andrew Cock-Starkey
(Andrew.Cock-Starkey@nationaltrust.org.uk)

Farming as a practice is opaque to the public in developed nations: it has withdrawn from evidence in cities, the proportion of the workforce it employs has been in perpetual decline and decisions about land use are taken by a diminishing number of landowners who respond to the demands of consumers for cheaper food by scaling and automating production, raising questions of social justice alongside those of environmental degradation. Greater public understanding of the conditions of production is arguably a pre-requisite for change at the individual level of consumption and at the level of policy. That this understanding should have as its focus farming practices of the developed world is illustrated by the fact that approximately 50% of the UK's food is still sourced domestically and eight European countries are responsible for a further 25% of its supply. These figures have remained stable for 15 years.

In this paper I subject to ethnographic analysis a high profile attempt to shed light on developed nation farming practices using ICTs. I posit that MyFarm, a website positioned as an experiment in the online management of a National Trust farm, is best understood as a sociological 'boundary object' at the intersection of the social worlds of the participating public and farming community.

One of the features of boundary objects is their amenability to diverse interpretations. Participant observation in the experiment's early stages uncovered the dominant interpretation of MyFarm as a tool to achieve 'seeing like a farmer'. I discuss to what extent this tool makes transparent the processes of agricultural production, in the face of factors such as the constraints of technology, which highlight the disembodied nature of the experience. I also discuss the prospects that this experiment offers for inspiring change given the tone which is neutral between mainstream approaches to farming, the narrower than envisaged audience, the deference the audience shows to authority despite the delegation of control to it over limited decisions and the lack of an objective or mechanism to track any influence on behaviour. We cannot assert that ICTs deliver transparency unproblematically any more than we can assert that knowing something means we act in accordance with this knowledge, because a host of factors determine behaviour. Nevertheless, MyFarm has struck a cultural chord and points to the kind of accessible ICT-based initiative which can start to shed light on a little understood activity that takes place on three quarters of all land in the UK.

Hungry For Data: Going Beyond The Local Fetish Through Food Traceability Interfaces

Marc Tuters (mtuters@gmail.com) & Denisa Kera (denisa.kera@gmail.com)

A recent American television program satirized the local food craze with the following sketch: a couple in a restaurant want a little more information about the chicken on the menu to which the waitress replies: "The chicken is a heritage breed, woodland raised chicken that's been fed a diet of sheep's milk, soy and hazelnuts". The diner then begins a barrage of questions: "Is that USDA organic, or Oregon organic, or Portland Organic?", "are the hazelnuts local?", "How big is the area where the chickens are able to roam free?". This anecdote evokes the increasingly politicized relationship between people and things and the failure of standard measures to adapt to this complexity. We argue that the diners in this scenario are not so much hungry for chicken as they are hungry for data. The humor thus arises from the juxtaposition between their ravenous appetite for data and the inappropriateness of the concept of "local" to properly address their concerns. Situated against the context of early "locative media" art experiments, this presentation thus looks at a number of new and emerging traceability projects that might better address their demands. Ultimately we argue for the potentially vital role of mobile context-aware technologies in facilitating an emerging "dingpolitik" (Latour '05). New standardized communications protocols make it possible for every single object on the planet to be part of the Internet of Things. As HCI designs for this Internet of Things allow for objects to be associated with metrics regarding their means of production, eaters might abandon concepts like "local" instead to treat their food rather as an assembly of issues, an approach developed by actor network theory. As location-awareness continues to develop and become standardized into what we might call a "locative apparatus", what emerges is a highly relational notion of proximity to objects. In addition to physically locating us in relation to them, objects become positioned in relation to one another, and crucially, through information visualization they become represented as gatherings of issues, in relation which we can position ourselves. The locative apparatus facilitates what Latour terms an empirical metaphysics in which the traceability interface reveal every object to carry with it its own unique chains of reference, thereby revealing the substance of "the local" to be composed of an endless variation of scales. As Paul Dourish has recently noted, HCI tends however to be narrowly conceptualized in terms of a neoliberal conception of the individual "user" as the ultimate arbiter of social change (Dourish '10). Our analysis introduces the concept of "generalized symmetry" from actor network theory which assigns humans and non-humans equal amounts of agency in order to consider the emerging Internet of Food. This approach displaces the typical focus from the eater onto a variety of scales, in order to account for the translation between which we offer the concept of "metabolic interaction design". In so doing, our approach problematizes both the concept of "context" as well as the notion of the "user" at the core of HCI. As Bruno Latour reminds us "context is what actors constantly do". What remains at issue, is the position from which to measure. The concept of "metabolic interaction design" allows us

to explore the notion of agency extending across a variety of scales from the ecological to the genetic, from farm-to-fork-to-phenotype.

Mediated Ethical Consumption: Coffee Activism and Online Spaces of Civic Engagement

Eleftheria Lekakis (e.lekakis@gold.ac.uk)

Ethical consumption has significantly shifted from the niche to the mainstream and has been met by success in the marketplaces of most advanced capitalist societies. A revolution in the market has been foretold. The evolution of consumer activism demonstrates that since at least the late 1970s, consumers in the UK have been showing that they are concerned about something more than price. In terms of consumer action, the historical wave which we are currently riding has been described as green or ethical consumerism (Lang and Gabriel, 2005; Nicholls and Opal, 2005). As such, we are concerned with ethical issues pertaining to social, environmental and trade justice. Consumer concerns have thus extended from reliable commodities (a disquiet of earlier decades) to responsible commodities. Moreover, a deterioration of traditional institutional settings for political engagement has been noted (Sennett, 1974; Marquand, 2004; Bauman, 2007) and the links between the market space and the political space have been drawn under the auspices of the politicisation of consumption (Nava, 1991; Micheletti et al, 2004; Littler, 2009). In this context, I problematise the mediation of ethical consumption as a crucial case of political communication for the information-raising, organisation and mobilisation of consumers around contemporary global issues.

In my analysis, I map out representations of what I call 'coffee activism' (fair and solidarity trade activism centred around the commodity of coffee, which is the second most valuable exported commodity of the global South) and ethical consumerism in an online context to better understand the nature of contemporary mediated civic engagement. Data compiled through various online and offline methods and predominantly drawn from the urban space of London are cross-analysed in terms of the nature of ethical consumption, its relationship with civic engagement, as well as the mediation of that relationship. Particularly within the cities, consumers are demonstrating a certain type of 'cosmopolitan caring' (Littler, 2009) which was stably evident even during the credit crunch, as sales of fair trade products were not as challenged as sales of environmentally friendly produce. Certain conclusions can be drawn in relation to the online spaces of information and the importance of their readings mainly in relation to offline spaces. The use of the internet from various organisations involved in the communication of the cause of fair trade is not structurally as interactive or engaging. While the majority of the interviewees celebrated the internet as the first space they turn to in order to become informed. This type of online civic engagement was fragmented and reduced to fleeting interaction with already familiar websites such as the Fairtrade Foundation's website and Google.

In the mediation of ethical consumption, the more stable ports of call which inform, organise and mobilise consumers are in actuality their offline spaces of associations. Social spaces, spaces of worship and spaces of education are more likely to mobilise and to further engage citizens in coffee activism. The relationship between faith groups and the fair trade movement has been particularly significant, as it attaches its strong moral position to the ethics of consumption which complies with the dominant fair trade narrative. Therefore, the grassroots mobilisation of the fair trade movement has also impacted on its mainstreaming. The less personal, online, associations of the majority of citizens appear to be unexplored in relation to their engagement with ethical consumption. While coffee activism has grown immensely over approximately the last five decades and its sustainability seems more secure than other commodity cycles, its mediation remains highly personal and localised.

Critical Approaches to Food Culture and Communication

Sonia Massari (sonia.massari@unifi.it)

Disciplines definitions are changing, and so are the expectations for people working in the many aspects of gastronomy. Around the world, the interconnections between food and society, food and markets, food and culture, and certainly food and politics are starting to be seen and very strongly felt. This paper has two main goals:

1) Teaching food studies – new discipline: I will present part of my research and works on the methodologies used to teach to foreign students and instructors about food, culture and communication. Many institutions of higher education have acknowledged the interest that students constantly show for all things food, and have included food-related topics and classes in their curricula, both on campus and in their educational activities abroad. The food traditions and customs of a foreign country often offer an immediate entry point for students to immerse themselves in the local environment, and instructors can use the students' experiences and observations as occasions to introduce social, historical, and cultural elements. We can observe food and its historiography, but it is more. Food has contributed in a powerful way to the redesign of social relationships in the world and to their symbologies, and this is true consistently for every time, culture, and place. Although in a diverse way, nutrition in human beings is in the middle, between progress and archetype. Human culture is manifested and revealed through food: its use, significance, roles, and mores; and so food affects cultural paradigms. At the same time, defending food as an anthropological act is both traditional and modern and bears witnesses to its place in history and culture. This perspective is not evolutionary; it is actually almost a-historical. Following, I will offer many narratives that support this opinion.

2) What we consume, how we acquire it, who prepares it, who's at the table, and who eats first is a form of communication that is rich with meaning: how

technologies and new socialization media can influence or modify usual human activities and behaviours related to food experiences? I will present part of my PhD research, which aims to look at the cognitive value of sensibility and sensorial and, through a deepening of categories of aesthetics, to release prejudices around the hierarchy between “culture” and “material culture”. Discover attitudes, practices, and rituals surrounding food — windows into our most basic beliefs about our world and ourselves. The fusion of computer science with art has the potential to profoundly change the nature and the form of our experience. In addition to smart devices that people can carry, the instrumentation of the environment with sensors and displays means that physical spaces can respond to a person’s context and actions opening up the potential for new forms of interactivity and delivery of media. As we move towards a world where access to information and services happens on the move and within instrumented spaces then opportunities arise for new kinds of interaction based on memory, culture and context. By opening up the possibilities so that anyone can design and create new experiences, we are able to see what kinds of new food experience could emerge.

Cultivate Oxford

Dan Betterton (danbetterton@gmail.com)

Oxford-based Cultivate is a start-up social enterprise that will bring fresh, local, organically-grown food direct from farmers to the city and surrounding communities. Co-founder and director Dan Betterton will describe where Cultivate came from and what the organisation aims to achieve in the short-term. This will include experiences of ICTs use at the micro-level. Dan would then like to use the remainder of the presentation to explore how Cultivate might contribute to, and interact with a wider movement of food re-localisation and innovative community-owned enterprise. How can ICTs support at this macro-level?

Kitchen Stories: ICT and imagined eating practices in 2050

Anna Davies (DAVIESA@tcd.ie) & Jessica Pape (consensus@nuigalway.ie)

A key criticism of conventional policy responses aimed at promoting sustainable consumption, including sustainable food consumption, is that they yield only incremental changes rather than broader socio-technical shifts which are necessary for sustainability. Due to the limitations of current approaches, it is argued that imaginative, exploratory and collaborative techniques are needed to develop social and technological innovations. Participatory backcasting techniques are increasingly being used for such purposes and one variant has been employed in the CONSENSUS project which is examining sustainable consumption in Ireland (see www.consensus.ie and Figure 1). This paper interrogates the findings of the research conducted with a range of

stakeholders, researchers and citizen-consumers in terms of their visions of what sustainable eating practices might be in the year 2050. Specifically the role for, and desirability of, increased ICT interventions in these sustainable eating scenarios are drawn out for further consideration.

In January 2011 18 stakeholders including supply-side actors, demand-side representatives, researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators and policy-makers, participated in an initial visioning workshop. More than 100 individual ideas were generated that were subsequently clustered, prioritised and formed into three scenarios that demonstrated differing levels of social, organisational and technological change: 'Smart Kitchen' (high levels of technological development); 'Communal Eating' (high levels of behavioural change); and 'Educate and Incentivise' (high levels of organisational change). A significant number of ideas within the scenarios either envisioned direct use of improved ICT interventions in creating more sustainable eating practices or relied on enhanced ICT frameworks to co-ordinate responsible eating practices. For example, on-line ordering of green products sat alongside smart ordering devices that permitted exact quantities of food and rapid delivery. Another idea involved a community-based crop-sharing ICT tool that would link up micro-producers to share their surplus production from living walls, roofs and balconies. In addition intelligent fridges that monitored their contents, created menus and highlighted food about to move beyond 'best before' dates were integrated with intelligent mobile phones for use when shopping. Smart scanning apps which could provide extensive detail on food production, composition, origin, transport, carbon consumption and other environmental considerations were also central to many discussions. However, when the ICT elements of the scenarios were considered during feedback sessions and citizen-consumer workshops there was a certain amount of ambivalence about their desirability. The rapid relay of information and the connections between purchasing, storage and potential wastage were seen as positive, but there were concerns about how some interventions might reinforce individualist approaches to eating and serve to further distance citizen-consumers of the future from food production. Equally there was a feeling that the focus on information provided by a highly technological approach, including ICT devices, without other interventions across the regulatory and behaviour change arenas, were likely to be insufficient to create more sustainable eating practices across households.

The Impact of Television and ICT Use on Communal Eating Patterns, Diet and Health

Charlotte De Backer (Charlotte.DeBacker@ua.ac.be)

Introducing a collection of works about the connection between food and kinship in South East Asia, Janowski (2007:4) writes: "The link between food and kinship, particularly at household level, is more or less an implied or assumed given cross-culturally within all academic disciplines (despite the

difficulties of defining kinship); those who are close kin, and especially those who live together, eat from a common pot almost by definition (although they do not always sit and eat together).”

But how much of this still holds in many Western or Westernized societies today? Especially in societies that have replaced the ‘French’ way of eating – i.e. with a strong focus on the social aspects of dining together- with an ‘American’ food trend – i.e. seeing food merely as the fuel to feed the body. Traditional shared home-cooked meals are increasingly being replaced by individually catered pre-processed meals, that are often consumed alone or in the presence of only a few family members. This gives reasons for concern, as it is widely documented that eating in front of a (television) screen negatively impacts diet and health. In addition, the decline in shared home-cooked meals has also been linked to decreases in psychological wellbeing, academic success and overall life satisfaction.

Among other influences related to changes in daily life structures, the entrance of television in every household is considered as one of the key influences on the decline in traditional shared family meals - and time spent with family members in general. From some recent studies it further appears that other media, and especially ICTs, encourage children to regularly skip a meal or eat faster than usual to e.g. gain time to play digital games.

To further investigate the impact of television and ICT use on the eating habits of adolescents and young adults in societies with strong communal eating traditions, we (University of Antwerp, Belgium) recently set up a joint project with two Taiwan universities to collect data about ICT-use and food habits in these populations. Given the different cultural background of both countries, this cross-cultural set-up further allows us to control for individualistic vs. collectivistic influences on communal (food related) activities. By means of a quantitative survey, we wish to explore how often meals are being skipped, consumed at a faster pace, or combined with television-, internet- and digital game use. Controlling for potential influences of cultural background and parental mediation (using standardised scales), we will in the end investigate how this impacts the quality of the nutritional intake of the respondents (measured with a food frequency questionnaire).

Online Grocery Shopping, Multi-tasking and Activity Fragmentation

Jonathan Elms (j.r.elms@stir.ac.uk) & Alan Hallsworth
(a_hallsworth@btinternet.com)

Empirical retail research has been ongoing in the Portsmouth area for over 3 decades. The ESRC [2002-7] funded a revisiting of earlier studies and this, in turn was followed by PhD research(ers). The latter forms the basis of this presentation as it interfaces actual shopping activity with ICT activities. The practice of grocery shopping involves the purchase of a basket of “ordinary” goods (Gronow & Warde, 2001). Following the ESRC program, we found that

this mundane act of provisioning can be best understood as embedded in everyday household rhythms and routines (Jackson et al., 2006), intertwined within a nexus of related practices and habits – such as meal organisation, preparation and cooking (Miller et al., 1998). The inference is that the internet as a mode of shopping may offer very different consumption possibilities compared to purchasing non-grocery products that can be transported, experienced and consumed online (Wrigley, Lowe & Currah, 2002). Indeed, early market research reports found that the appeal for internet grocery shopping appeared to be limited particularly when compared to the purchase of other non-food product categories online (Key Note, 2001). However more recent findings suggest that a sizeable proportion of the UK population [between 11 and 13%] currently shop online for groceries on a regular (monthly or weekly) basis (IGD, 2009). These consumers tend to be from suburban, dual-income households who own or have access to one or more cars, typically aged between 25-34 years old, with children – and report that internet shopping for groceries offers them convenience and a minimal amount of effort, enabling them to spend more time engaged in other activities (Intel, 2009). In this paper we illustrate how consumers' internet grocery shopping practices, as well as their use of the internet more generally, enables a partial displacement of their everyday lives, and their use of space and time. Based on the findings generated from a multi-method, ethnographic study of four households, we demonstrate that this partial decoupling of activities, space and time manifest themselves in two interrelated processes – often referred to as in the time-geography literature as “activity fragmentation” and “multi-tasking” (Kwan, 2002; Dijst, 2004; Raubal, Miller & Bridwell, 2004). Whilst previous research has suggested that these dual processes could potentially lead to the blurring of the boundaries between the previously separated domains of work, leisure, entertainment and shopping amongst others (e.g. Couclelis, 2004; Lenz & Nobis, 2007) surprisingly there is very little empirical support for these processes. Consequently this study represents one of the first to empirically underscore this phenomenon and reveals that the extent and saliency of these processes appear to vary across different household circumstances and domestic situations as well as the individual informant's biographic trajectory. Moreover, rather than being a time saving activity (as suggested in prior research) shopping for groceries via the internet could be interpreted as a means to displace, reorganise and fracture time to coordinate the plethora of routines and rituals conducted within the household as well as the responsibilities which fall under the remit of domestic commitments outside of the home.

Creating Consumer Awareness on the Internet

Markus Schroeder (markusschroeder2004@yahoo.de)

Collective intelligence has been an essential part of Web 2.0 from its very beginning. Projects like Wikipedia or Creative Commons made their way from being some nerds' projects to become household names and being commonly

used in everyday life. These means of communication and creating collective intelligence are currently used for creating political awareness e.g. in the recent events in Arabia. How can these means be used to create not only political awareness but consumer awareness as well? In Germany the Federal Government funds a project called “lebensmittelklarheit.de”, which means “food clarity”. On this website consumers can post any concerns and complaints they have regarding food. This might sound like a superb idea of creating collective intelligence and consumer awareness regarding food and the way it is produced and sold. But as this project is supported by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Consumer Protection various legal problems are involved. Free entrepreneurship is protected by constitutional law as well as by civil law. From a constitutional legal point of view it is highly problematical, that a government supports a privately held website, while this website interferes the free market. There is no evidence given, that the allegations against the food industry and their products are true. Therefore, the food industry is very concerned about this website. Under German constitutional law it is permitted to caution consumers about food, if there is a potential risk of harm, which must be proved by quite a low level of evidence. This could lead the way of governing such websites. The consumers can upload their complaints. Analogous to the notice-and-take-down proceedings the food industry might dissent and give evidence, that the allegations are untrue. In case the allegations are untrue, the provider would have to erase these postings. But there are issues concerning the civil law as well. Firstly, there is the problem with libel cases. To these cases an analogous notice-and-take-down proceeding might apply as well. Secondly, there is the problem of unfair completion. Competitors can post false allegations against one another. This issue is known from review and rating platforms. This problem is not likely to be solved only by legal actions. An analogous notice-and-take-down proceeding might apply as well. But in practice one could not prove, that a posting was sent by a competitor instead of an individual consumer. But this problem might be solved by the market. The major players in the food industry will not be keen to harm one another. PR-campaigns to reduce the damage done are far too expensive and everyone is aware of this. Considering all of these aspects, this might lead a way to run a website, which is based upon consumer awareness, in a legally intangible way. This might help to transfer ICT-based citizen empowerment from political awareness to consumer awareness.

Drawing Attention to Food Industry Practices: Foodwatch.de and Consumer Food Governance

Tanja Schneider (Tanja.Schneider@sbs.ox.ac.uk) & Javier Lezaun
(Javier.Lezaun@sbs.ox.ac.uk)

The focus of this paper is a discussion of the role information and communication technologies (ICTs) play in food governance. The discussion is inspired and based on an analysis of the activities of ‘Foodwatch’ a German nonprofit and independent organization that seeks to draw attention to food

industry practices that are not in the interest of consumers. Foodwatch aims to foster transparency by informing consumers about food production and consumption issues and mobilising consumers to take action primarily through use of ICTs. A recent campaign, for instance, informed consumers about the growing trend of food commodity speculation (e.g. wheat, maize and rice) and its impact on food prices and the potential effects this can have. The campaign highlighted the involvement of Germany's largest bank, Deutsche Bank, in this form of trading and playfully invited consumers to send an email to Jo Ackermann, CEO of Deutsche Bank, asking him "Haende Weg vom Acker, Mann" translating roughly as "Hands off the field". Within a day concerned consumers had sent 10 000 emails to Jo Ackermann and several newspapers covered the foodwatch campaign and report on food speculation, which resulted in a response by Deutsche Bank saying they reassess their trading practices. Other recent campaigns by food watch focused on topics such as radiation, dioxins in food and food labels.

The paper considers foodwatch's activities as well as those of the consumers mobilized through foodwatch as qualifications, i.e. activities that attribute qualities to the products, activities and practices under scrutiny (see Callon et al 2002; Lezaun and Schneider forthcoming). As such the paper draws attention to the distributed and multiple practices of governance of food with a particular focus on the role consumers plays in the process of food governance in what has elsewhere been termed 'economy of qualities' (Callon et al, 2002) or 'economy of judgements' (Dubuisson-Quellier and Neuville 2003 cited in Dubuisson-Quellier 2010). Using the case of foodwatch the paper asks to what extent ICT-enabled food governance differs from other non-ICT-enabled forms of food governance and critically examines the prominent role consumers play in contemporary food governance.