Call for Papers - Digital Culture & Society (DCS):

The Targeting State: AI, Surveillance, and Predictive Power

Vol. 12, Issue 2/2026

Following the first issue of the 12th volume of Digital Cultures & Society on Critical AI: "Rethinking Intelligence, Bias, and Control" (eds. Reichert & Deiß) the second issue focuses on "The Targeting State: AI, Surveillance, and Predictive Power" (eds. Reichert & Hussein). In migration enforcement regimes across the Global North, AI-driven systems are increasingly institutionalized as technical-media infrastructures. Cases like the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the U.S. exemplify the convergence of large-scale policing with advanced forms of automated data processing, machine learning, generative AI, and the strategic deployment of commercially sourced datasets.
This issue examines the entanglement of artificial intelligence, surveillance infrastructures, and contemporary policing, bringing together interdisciplinary perspectives from critical AI studies, digital literacy, media archaeology, and political science. The contributors interrogate how algorithmic systems reconfigure the scale, scope, and operative logics of state power and conceptualize AI not merely as a tool of governance but as a constitutive element in the transformation of governmental rationalities, since AI-based policing systems are frequently trained on historically biased datasets, reproducing and intensifying racialized forms of discrimination and structural inequality. Hence, a central concern of the volume is the potential for critical interventions and media-political initiatives, exploring how practices such as counter-mapping and critical data activism might challenge or reconfigure these infrastructures of control.

This issue welcomes contributions that engage questions of migration regulation, automated border enforcement, and the expansion of computational governance under contemporary capitalism. We are particularly interested in work that examines how AI systems operationalize exclusion through predictive profiling, detention infrastructures, and anticipatory policing. Authors may consider how digital bordering practices intersect with histories of colonial administration, neoliberal governance, and the management of surplus populations under global regimes of mobility control.

We encourage submissions grounded in historical and digital materialism and dialectical materialist approaches that interrogate the political economy of data infrastructures and technological accumulation. How might algorithmic governance be understood not as a rupture from prior systems of domination, but as an intensification of capitalist relations through logistical optimization, extraction, and dispossession? We welcome analyses attentive to labour, class formation, platform economies, and the contradictions embedded within techno-solutionist state projects.

The issue also invites engagements with abolitionist thought, Black geographies, and critical spatial theory. We are interested in scholarship that explores abolition geography as a framework for resisting predictive regimes and imagining alternative social relations beyond carceral data systems. Contributions may address the spatialization of surveillance, environmental racism, digital enclosure, and the production of calculable populations through state and corporate infrastructures.

When sending their initial abstract, authors should state to which of the following categories they would like to submit their paper:

1. Field Research and Case Studies
2. Methodological Reflections
3. Conceptual/Theoretical and Historical reflections
4. Entering the Field (see http://digicults.org for more information on this category)

Deadlines and Contact Information:

• Initial abstracts (max. 300 words) and a short biographical note (max. 100 words) are due on: 15th July 2026
• Authors will be notified by 20th July 2026, whether they are invited to submit a full paper.
• Full papers are due on: 10th September 2026.

Initial abstracts and full papers should be sent to the issue's editors:

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Link to Vol. 12, Issue 1/2026 https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-7854-3/digital-culture-society-dcs/?c=312000168

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