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IPMZ – Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research

The IPMZ Speaker Series presents:

On the Relevance of Algorithms

Sophie Mützel
University of Lucerne

Monday, October 30, 2017
16:00-17:00
Andreasstrasse 15, Room 3.02

Algorithms impact our lives. They suggest which books we should buy next, on which roads we best get to work, and which news are of interest to us. Algorithms affect our awareness, shape our perception, and structure and sort the social. This talk focuses on the role of algorithms in the construction of social reality. In particular, the talk scrutinizes algorithms that have social consequences. First, I will discuss how algorithms that are part of our everyday lives function technically. I will then discuss the effects of algorithms. In a third part, I will highlight four research strategies on how social scientists can analyze such algorithmic systems. The talk concludes with some suggestions on how to cope with the challenges that algorithms pose to the social sciences.

Sophie Mützel is Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology, University of Lucerne. She teaches on the sociology of algorithms, big data and social media, as well as on metrics in journalism and the digital economy within the study program on "media and networks". Her research interests lie in the areas of big data and its analytics, in particular text analytics and network analysis, as well as economic and cultural sociology. She recently finished a manuscript on "Markets from stories". Professor Mützel studied Political Science at UC Berkeley, Sociology at Cornell University, and finished her PhD in Sociology at Columbia University. She then held a Jean Monnet Fellowship at the European University Institute, Italy; next taught and conducted research at Humboldt-University Berlin and at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. She has been a research fellow at Harvard and held a guest professorship at the University of Vienna.