

TRACK 36. PRACTICES AND THE ENVIRONMENT: PERFORMING SUSTAINABILITY AND DOING STS

This track focuses on sustainability technologies as practices, including the practices of innovation, governing and consumption that underlie sustainable and unsustainable behaviours, and the adoption of behaviours that are held to be more sustainable (for example, lower energy consumption, choosing particular modes of transport and waste reduction). Our interest in sustainability as a practice emerges in part from Elizabeth Shove's observation that unsustainable patterns of consumption are inscribed in every day, taken-for-granted human activities. Employing Theodore Schatzki's notion of practice as a nexus of temporally emerging, tangled, differentiated and dispersed performances, sayings, emotions, technologies, people and things, we ask what kinds of understandings, procedures and engagements mobilize and stabilize practices of sustainability. Further, rather than bracketing sustainability technologies as discrete entities, we ask how a practice-based approach might help us to understand their social shaping within practices. Finally, we ask what a practice-based approach means for doing STS.

We welcome theoretical and empirical papers. Suggested contributions might include, but are not limited to, the following approaches, topics and questions:

- Advantages and disadvantages of a practice-based approach to sustainability
- Social learning and behaviour change; the evolution and adoption of sustainable practices
- The role of institutions in performing sustainability; governance, policy and planning
- Interactions of lay, expert and professional practices of sustainability
- Practice-based approaches to socio-technical systems of sustainability
- Research methods for STS studies of practices
- Case studies of sustainable technologies
- The role of community in sustainability practices
- Normativity and analytical-distance in STS studies of sustainability practices
- The politics of sustainability practices; public participation and democracy
- Language and discourse of sustainability practices
- The role of technology in the performance of visions and expectations (un)sustainability,
- Sustainable technologies as practices
- Global, cultural and gendered variations in (un)sustainability practices

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent by email (following website instructions) by 2010 March 15th.

Convenors

Ruth Rettie is a Reader at Kingston University Business School and Principal Investigator of CHARM. Her research interests include sustainability norms and practices, the sociology of new communication technologies, social norm marketing and qualitative research methodology. (www.kingston.ac.uk/charm)

Kevin Burchell is a Senior Research Fellow at Kingston University. His research interests include sustainability norms and practices (see CHARM), and the 'science and society', 'public participation' and 'public engagement' agendas. (<http://business.kingston.ac.uk/staff.php?userid=KU43443>)

Eleonore Pauwels is a research scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Her research interests include questions at the crossroad between STS, emerging technologies and sustainability, citizen participation in technical controversies, and the epistemology of regulatory and social scientific experiments. (http://pewnanotechproject.org/about/leadership/staff/eleonore_pauwels/)