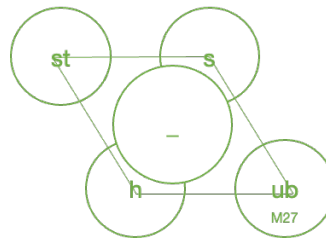


sts_hub M2027

Munich, 17-19 March 2027

Call for Contributions



Science & Technology in Liberal Democracies – in Need of Care?

What is the focus of the conference?

Science and democracy are interdependent and mutually supportive. The pair and its parts have been almost self-evident constituents of modern progress at least in its Euro-American variety. Over the last decade, this self-evidentness has come into question for multiple reasons – epistemic and geo/political alike. What makes good scientific practice? How does it relate to liberal democracy? How does technology fit into this relationship? While STS has been grappling with these questions for 50 years, our answers have been neither clear enough nor loud enough to have any real impact on public discourse and political developments. If anything, STS has become less relevant squeezed between the dominant ‘science as guarantor of truth’ and ‘science as just another opinion’. Do our forms of research, critique, and engagement need to change? If so, how? Who needs to learn what and from whom and how?

What is the purpose of the conference?

The sts_hub M2027 opens a space for debate about the relationships between science, technology, and liberal democracies. Its objective is to bring to the fore the clearest, most generative, most careful, most convincing, and most surprising contributions the field in its breadth has to offer. It is about clarifying for us where we stand so that we may engage confidently in the difficult debates ahead of us over the coming years. And it is about offering the range of our perspectives to the outside world. We will publish the revised plenary contributions and edited discussions - likely as a book.

What is the format?

The sts_hub is a format that brings together STS’s epistemic cultures as rooted within German academic institutions. It addresses first and foremost the members of its host associations: AK Politik, Wissenschaft und Technik in the DVPW, DGS Sektion Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung, GWTF, INSIST, Feminist STS, Kommission Wissenschaftsforschung in der DG für Erziehungswissenschaft, Netzwerk GenderTechnoScience, and stsing. It is open to guests.

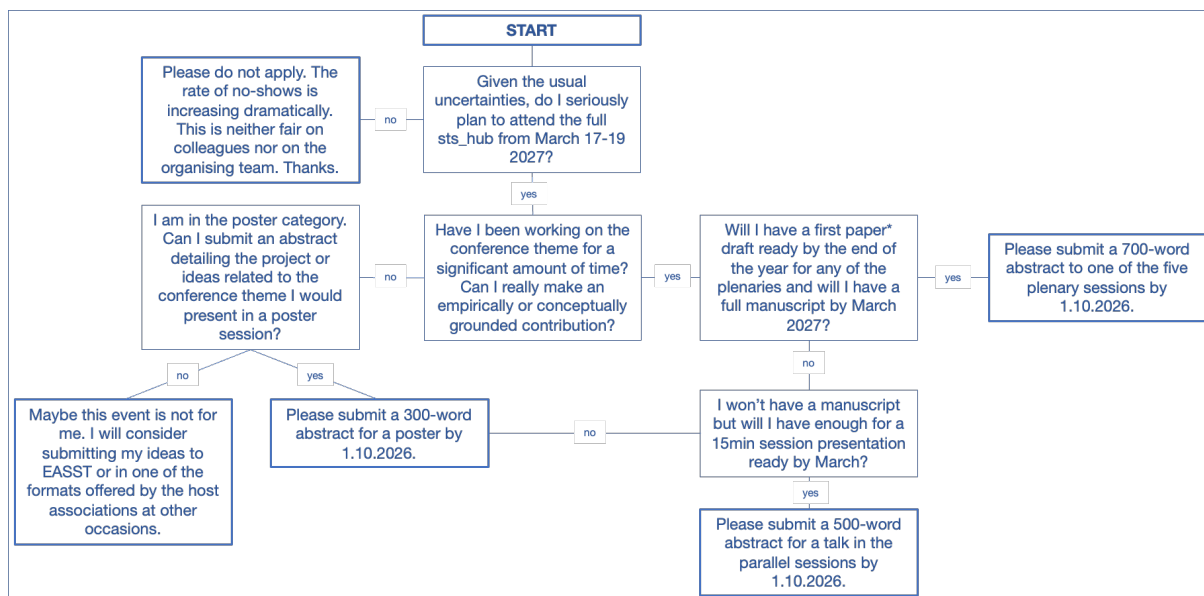
The sts_hub M2027 is guided by two principles: (1) Listening is often more important than speaking. In a world marked by sending, we rediscover the art of receiving. (2) We listen across the differences within the breadth of what STS and its constituents have to offer. This has consequences: The number of participants is limited to 300 to achieve a working atmosphere and keep logistics and costs manageable. Plenary sessions take priority over parallel sessions. Plenary sessions mix contributions from different communities within STS. The networking component is built around poster sessions. And before you ask: You will get an ‘active contribution’ certificate for your travel reimbursement no matter how you participate. A ‘listen only’ contingent exists open to everyone, but with reserved slots for MA/MSc students who may not be in a position to contribute actively yet.

How can you take part?

Limiting participation to 300 people necessarily means selecting among colleagues. This is delicate. We rely on your honesty and fairness. There will be 56 talks altogether in plenary and parallel sessions. We encourage co-authoring. We may ask you to consider a different format. Please work your way carefully through the following decision tree before starting to think about your submission



Figure 1 The (decision) tree of honesty and commitment



* Plenary presentations require pre-circulated full papers of 4000-5000 words. Please note submission sequence below.

Formats

Plenary sessions

These are carefully curated sessions of 120 minutes. They feature four presentations of pre-circulated papers of about 15 minutes each with 60 minutes of discussion among the presenters and with the audience. The objective is debate around substantive input. We will adjust plenary scope and distribution according to submissions. We plan five plenary sessions altogether:

Plenary 1: Public science & technology

STS has long been experimenting with public science & technology formats. How have these shaped relationships with different publics? And given that 'impact' has become a difficult term and that public discourse has become more aggressive and antagonistic, with whom are we engaging and to what effect for whom? What can an engaged science look like today? In this panel, we invite everyone to explore the complicated relationships between science & technology in the making and its diverse publics.

Plenary 2: Environment, sustainability, climate, planet

Current evidence suggests that global warming, biodiversity loss, and chemical pollution are intensifying. At the same time, geopolitical upheaval and concerns that attention to environmental topics is taking a back seat to issues like artificial intelligence and security occupy many. What can our situated, relational understandings of science and technology in the making contribute to understanding and engaging with the natural and hybrid environments, and with the material basis of our living together in its broadest sense? How do these understandings relate to forms of power and statecraft, how to liberal democracies?

Plenary 3: Governance, politics, technology, innovation

A major topic in STS is the co-production of technology, scientific knowledge making and social order. In the spirit of reflexive research, we invite everyone to examine the impact of current political and economic upheaval on knowledge-making practices and the social contract of science and tech design. Questions that require further research include: Where do contemporary challenges and contestations of science and technology come from? How have public controversies over science become proxies for broader forms of socio-cultural contestation? How can and should liberal democracies govern tech and its underlying science?

Plenary 4: AI, algorithms, data, computing

Data-intensive AI floods all spaces of inquiry, with countless opportunities and concerns around echo-chambers, bias and divides, justice and fairness, accessibility and participation, environmental



costs, authoritarian governance and misinformation among others. How do we reconcile the acceleration in automated decision-making with the challenges posed by AI misuse for democratic societies and planetary health?

Plenary 5: Health, medicine, bodies, life

Liberal democracies are embodied in so many ways as emerging forms of medical knowledge, care, and health technologies shape biopolitical interventions and thus subject formation. How are notions of health and health in/equities shifting in late liberalism? How is life itself altered amidst xenobiological practices, synthetic biologies, neuroprosthetics, etc.? How do forms of personalised medicine and precision prevention rub up against local biologies and situated forms of health and embodied expertise? This panel invites contributions that address the multiple entanglements between un/healthy bodies, medicine, and liberal democracies.

Parallel sessions

We run four parallel sessions that will be curated bottom-up based on contributions, i.e. the call is thematically open, but we will try to group generative constellations. They will comprise 10min. presentations plus 5 min. questions. The objective is getting to know people and the breadth of perspectives and materials.

Poster sessions

Most people will be present with posters featured within a dedicated poster session plus lunch break. The main objective here is networking.

Deadlines and submission process

The deadline for all abstracts is the 1st of October 2026. Please download and use this [submission template \(acrobat reader\)](#). Submit to: stshub.ast@sot.tum.de Please read this document carefully and go through the decision tree above to decide how you will contribute. If we are oversubscribed, members of the host organisations will be prioritised. Please do consider joining any of these associations.

Plenary panels: deadlines and submission process

1.10.2026	Deadline: <700 words abstract for plenary talks
2.11.2026	Selections are communicated
15.01.2027	Submit manuscript structure and draft argument for plenary planning
1.3.2027	Submit full manuscript of 4000-5000 words
17.-19.3.2027	sts_hub
1.6.2027	Submit revised and formatted manuscript
Winter 2027	Book launch

Parallel sessions: deadlines and submission process

1.10.2026	Deadline: <500 words abstract
1.12.2027	Selections are communicated
17.-19.3.2027	sts_hub

Posters: deadlines and submission process

1.10.2026	Deadline: <300 words abstract
1.12.2027	Selections are communicated
17.-19.3.2027	sts_hub



Preliminary Programme

Wednesday 17th of March 2027

Time slot	Session Type	Title / Theme
12:30 – 13:00	Arrival	Welcome Coffee
13:00 – 14:00	Opening Session	Welcome, Opening Address, Org
14:00 – 16:00	Plenary I	4 Talks: 4 x 15min plus 60min discussion
tea & coffee		
16:30 – 18:30	Plenary II	4 Talks: 4 x 15min plus 60min discussion
18:30 – 19:30	Transfer to Gasteig	Apéro on the go
19:30	Performance	Robin – the true musical

Thursday 18th

9:00 – 11:00	Plenary III	4 Talks: 4 x 15min plus 60min discussion
breather, smokes, espresso		
11:15 – 13:00	Parallel Presentations	4 rooms, 15min., talks, 28 talks altogether
13:00 – 14:00	Brown Bag & Posters I	Future of STS – Future of the hub
14:00 – 15:30	Posters & Networking II	Poster strolling
tea & coffee		
16:00 – 17:45	Parallel Sessions	4 rooms, 15min. = 28 Talks
18:00 – 20:00	General Assemblies	space for hosting associations to meet (please approach org team)

Friday 19th

9:00 – 11:00	Plenary IV	4 Talks: 4 x 10min plus 40min discussion
tea & coffee		
11:30 – 13:30	Plenary V	4 Talks: 4 x 10min plus 40min discussion
13:30 – 14:00	Brown Bag & Closing	
14:00 – open end	Open slot	additional events: bottom-up (please approach org team)

Logistics

A website with details will be up and running soon. Conference participation will be free. Registration will open in due time via the website. The conference venue will be the TUM main campus on Arcisstraße in 80333 Munich. Please book hotels early to keep your costs down. We will try to initiate a couch surfing network.