

ZeMKI-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

06.11.2024, 16.15 – 17.45 (CET)

Prof. Dr. Christian Greiffenhagen

(Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China)

with Rongyu Li (East China University of Political Science and Law), & Mark Perry (Brunel University London)

Resolving Ambiguity in Symmetrical Interactions: “Do I Scan You or You Scan Me?”

Abstract:

We examine mobile payments in China. App-based digital payment in China functions differently to most other card- or digital methods of payment in the rest of the world because QR codes are used, rather than near-field or cryptographic authentication. Because mobile phones have both an interactive display and cameras, QR codes offer users a symmetric model of control: payments can be initiated by either transactor, i.e., either in the normal way, by the seller, or in its novel form, by the buyer. While this functional symmetry offers flexibility around the organisation of the payment process, it also introduces interactional ambiguity, and users will need to do work to resolve the directionality of control. We use video analysis to examine the social co-ordination of QR-based store payments, showing how conversational, visual, spatial, and temporal cues are used to shape transactional progress and resolve interactional difficulties around this problem of ambiguity.

Bio:

Christian Greiffenhagen is Associate Professor at the Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where he leads the Video Analysis, Science and Technology (VAST) Research Group, which develops video-based methodologies to study how novel technologies change social interaction and social relations. Recent publications include “Quick opinions in mathematical peer review” (*ST&HV*), “The visibility of digital money” (*Sociology*), and “The disciplined customer” (*NM&S*).