ESIL INTEREST GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND TECHNOLOGY

Call for Papers

When Renewal Repeats: The Dis/Continuities of International Law and Technology

ESIL Annual Conference – Vilnius 2024

Wednesday, 4 September 2024
(hybrid format)

We live in a world that is increasingly shaped by digital technologies. Technological transformations have enabled new forms of social life and order, new modes of political agency, relationality, and resistance. While much public, legal, and policy discourse around developments in digital technologies emphasises their newness and the radical social shifts they entail, these transformations did not derive out of thin air. They have long historical trajectories, they are inextricably tied to existing patterns of power and political economy, and embedded in existing socio-technical infrastructures, all of which have long had a complex dynamic with international law. Accounts that highlight the epochal changes of the digital era risk overlooking these material continuities, thereby contributing to neoliberal discourses of agility and disruption.

Yet, recent developments have also shown that the scale and velocity of data accumulation, data analytics, algorithmic regulation, and artificial intelligence are presenting challenges that may require rethinking some of the conceptual configurations at the core of international law and global governance and could also invite the emergence of new concepts or new forms of law-making. When facing these challenges, however, all too often familiar patterns emerge, particularly where calls for legal reform and renewal in the face of new technologies risk "absorbing the critical potential [of disciplinary renewal] into a familiar disciplinary common sense".[1]

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[1]   David Kennedy, *When Renewal Repeats: Thinking Against the Box*, 32 N.Y.U. J. Int'l L. & Pol. 335, 335 (1999-2000).

Centred around the theme, ***When Renewal Repeats: The Dis/Continuities of International Law and Technology***, the ESIL Interest Group on International Law and Technology invites the submission of abstracts that engage with, but are not necessarily limited to, the following themes and questions:

- Do technological developments require conceptual reconfigurations or rethinking of foundational concepts of international law such as sovereignty, jurisdiction, territory, states, subjects, international legal personality?

- In what ways does analysing the interaction between international law and technology risk repeating old debates on structure and agency? In what ways might new avenues for this debate take shape?

- In what ways are particular technologies – ranging from platforms, encryption and AI to quantum and robotics – posing new challenges for the field of international law and how might they be exposing, deepening, or replicating existing societal fissures?

- In what ways are digital technologies giving rise to the emergence of new concepts (e.g. new rights, new harms)?

- Are technological developments creating opportunities for new actors and organisations to influence the development of international law or to increase/decrease the influence of existing actors and organisations? To what extent are digital technologies bolstering new forms of law-making?

- What critical avenues are opened up by focusing on dis/continuities of international law and technology? What constitutes (new forms of) critique of international law in this context?

- Does analysing the intersections of international law and technology illuminate new ways of imagining the role of international law(yers) in history, in the present, and in the future?

- In what ways are technologies generating new, for example computational, ways and methods of seeing international law?

Time and Location

Date: Wednesday 4 September 2024
Time: *TBC*
Place: Vilnius
Format: Hybrid

We aim to organise the presentation and discussion of the selected papers via a format to be collectively agreed upon by the selected participants.

Call for Papers for *Agora* & *Workshop*

In addition to the pre-conference Workshop, the ESIL Interest Group on International Law and Technology will be submitting an Agora panel proposal around the theme ***When Renewal Repeats: The Dis/Continuities of International Law and Technology***. The submitted abstracts will be considered for the Agora and the Workshop. The selected abstracts for the Agora will be notified and will be included in the Agora proposal. In the event that the IG Agora panel proposal is not selected by the ESIL programme committee, authors will have the opportunity to present their papers at the pre-conference Workshop.

The aim of the Agora and Workshop is to foster an interdisciplinary exchange with leading experts from diverse academic disciplines and communities of practice. The IG co-convenors will take the decision of acceptance and the applicants will be informed by the end of January / early February 2024. There may be a possibility for select participants in the Agora and/ or the Workshop to publish their papers as part of a symposium.

Guidelines

ESIL selection criteria:
- Originality
- Relevance to the theme; and
- Diversity criteria

How to submit:
- Abstract (max. 400 words) in PDF format
- Submission deadline: **23 January 2024**
- Decision announced: **end of January / early February 2024**
- Abstracts and/or any queries about this call should be sent to ESILIG.Technology@gmail.com

Important Information

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Selected speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some ESIL travel grants and ESIL carers' grants will be available to offer partial financial support to speakers who have exhausted other potential sources of funding. Further information, including deadlines for grant applications, is available at the links provided.

Please see the ESIL website and the Conference website for all relevant information about the conference.

All participants at ESIL Interest Group workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference. There will be an option to register to attend only the IG workshops; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

Selected speakers should indicate their interest in being considered for the ESIL Early-Career Scholar Prize, if they meet the eligibility conditions as stated on the ESIL website. The ESIL Secretariat must be informed of all selected speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize before 30 April.

Your convenors:

Stefania Di Stefano
Rebecca Mignot-Mahdavi
Barrie Sander
Dimitri Van Den Meerssche
Roxana Vatanparast