THE McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology
Call for Working Groups 2020 - 2021

THE McLuhan Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto invites proposals for interdisciplinary working groups in operation from September 2020 until December 2021 (18 months). We aim to support working groups that pursue novel research activities concerned with the intersection of technology and culture under the theme of The Global SpillAge.

Taking inspiration from Marshall McLuhan’s notion of the Global Village, we will focus on the unfortunate effects of connection but also the new relations and possibilities for social change. In particular we are seeking working groups that will engage with the current technological and political dimensions related to anti-black and anti-Indigenous racism and the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Working groups will engage the challenges of the contemporary moment while drawing from the spirit of McLuhan’s attention to the medium. New groups will join our ongoing established working groups: BlackTechnoscience “Here”; Sonic Spaces: Critical Studies in Race, Technology and Global Migration; The Global South Feminist Media & Archives School Reading Group; Reprising Ursula Franklin’s Real World of Technology; and You’re Deactivated.

GUIDELINES
Speaking groups are comprised of faculty and graduate students from the University of Toronto. External members may be included at the discretion of the Working Group Convener.

Working groups are expected to undertake research, scholarly, and creative exchange at the McLuhan Centre not being pursued elsewhere on campus during the 18 month period. If working group endeavors are supported by other programs the working group application must make clear the intended research and outputs specific to the McLuhan Centre.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on physical gathering, the McLuhan Centre is prioritizing applications that emphasize publication and creative outputs, including the use of virtual platforms to host gatherings and events. All working groups will also contribute research updates to the McLuhan Centre’s monthly newsletter during the 18 month period.

This year we are introducing a separate category for interdisciplinary graduate student reading groups. These reading groups (no more than 8 participants enrolled at the University of Toronto) will be provided extra support and guidance from Professor Sarah Sharma (Director of the McLuhan Centre) as well as other affiliated media studies faculty from Arts, Culture, Media (UTSC), Institute of Communication Culture Information Technology (UTM), and the Faculty of Information (UTSG). Funds for these reading groups may be used to purchase books and provide honoraria to facilitate virtual “Meet the Author” events. Graduate Student Reading Groups should indicate topic areas/possible titles and significance of the subject matter to the theme of The Global SpillAge and the overall programming and thematic focus of the McLuhan Centre for Culture Technology.

FUNDING
This year to support changing working conditions our working groups will receive an extended funding timeline from September 2020 - December 2021. Working group funds can be used to support honoraria for virtual speakers, commissioned pieces for edited works, organizing virtual events, publication costs for research, and other related expenses. Funding can also be used for research travel where possible. Funds will not be provided for the purchasing of equipment or costs associated with professional training. The McLuhan Centre will also provide some administrative support during the year. We encourage interested applicants to reach out to mcluhancentre@gmail.com for any questions.

The funding options are divided into tiers to encourage a range of activity levels.

Working Group Tier 1: $8000 - $10,000
Working Group Tier 2: $5000 - $7000
Working Group Tier 3: $3000
Graduate Student Reading Groups: $1500 - $2000

Deadling to apply: August 1, 2020
Multiple working groups may be allocated funds in the same tier.
Online applications: www.mcluhancentre.ca/research