**Ludic Technologies: A Dance with Complexity**

What do artists-(h)activists like jonCates, etoy, Jaromil, The Yes Men, Helen Nissenbaum, and Jon Satrom have in common? The short answer is: culture jamming. The slightly longer answer is: the use of ludus, or rule-based strategies, and *paideia*, improvisation-based tactics, digital *détournement*and *la derive* (the drift).

The main idea behind this workshop is that AI, as used in administration, banking, education, the gig economy, and many other spheres of life, is both an invisible (and invisibly violent) hegemonic force, and an ‘alien’ form of thought, to borrow Joseph Weizenbaum’s expression. Our current cultural experience is one of simultaneous over-determination (black-boxed AI procedures arriving at unfathomable conclusions such as ‘automatic’ bank account termination or ‘automatic’ health insurance claim refusal) and indeterminacy as constant change.

In this workshop, we’ll explore how ludic technologies, seen as

material and immaterial transformation techniques and methods, can navigate this paradox. The workshop is limited to 16 participants and divided into three parts:

**I: Paths and Detours**

As preparation for this part of the workshop please perform and document (in several images, sounds, a drawing, notation, or similar) Ken Friedman’s 1967 event score *Unfinished Symphony*: “Find Something. Carry it out to its logical conclusion”. An event score is a performative instruction that can be realised in any medium or combination of media. The presentation shouldn’t be longer than 2 min and you should be able to share it with us by sharing your screen. Please also reflect on the following question: what is the relationship of cause and effect, intention and accident, stasis and development in the piece you created?

**II: Distributed Agency**

After a presentation (from NL) on ‘alien thought’, as based on action, reaction and distributed agency, supervised and unsupervised machine learning, contemporary ludic strategies and improvisational tactics that employ alien thought will be analysed. You will then be asked to compare, in two groups, the embodied/multisensorial/digital experience of creating the above piece and reflect on how environments, media and sequences think, how the different agents of thought/action come into being and how they behave. This will be followed by a plenary discussion, and a presentation (from NL) on the semantics of code writing.

**III: Encoding Ludicity**

After a discussion of the different modes of machine learning and their relationship to programming – in software such as wekinator, which learns in real time – you will be asked to brainstorm, in two groups, the combination/enmeshment of simple code semantics (no prior experience of code writing is necessary) and actional thought based on distributed agency, (rule-based) ludic structures, and (non-rule-based) improvisation. We’ll share these conceptual sketches in a plenary session and reflect on the creative as well as social, cultural and economic possibilities (or constraints) of integrating detours and drifts into AI systems given that the shortest definition of ‘intelligence’ is probably: a subtle dance with novel complexity.

If you have any questions about the workshop please contact: [n.lushetich@dundee.ac.uk](about:blank)