Call for Papers

Digitalization and Analytical Psychology

Theoretical and Clinical Explorations

An IAAP – IAJS in person joint conference

August 27th-29th 2026

University College London

"Considered on its own merits, as a legitimate human activity, technology is neither good nor bad, neither harmful nor harmless. Whether it be used for good or ill depends entirely on man's own attitude, which in turn depends on technology. The technologist has something of the same problem as the factory worker. Since he has to do mainly with mechanical factors, there is a danger of his other mental capacities atrophying." Jung, CW 18, para. 1406

"But technology, it is obvious, is based on a specifically rationalistic differentiation of consciousness which tends to repress all irrational psychic factors. Hence there arises, in the individual and nation alike, an unconscious counterposition which in time grows strong enough to burst out into open conflict." Jung, CW 11, para.443

DIGITALISATION, THEORETICAL AND CLINICAL EXPLORATIONS

CONFERENCE FOCUS:

Over the past 20 years, analytical psychology has reflected on specific therapeutic aspects pertaining to digitalization (see Merchant, 2016, 2023; Roesler, 2017; Wiener, 2021; Niesser, 2022 to mention but a few). Recently, the necessity of adopting online working modalities during the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted specific publications reflecting on the furthering of digitalization caused by lockdowns (Carpani & Luci, 2023). This conference wants to broaden the Jungian, post-Jungian and interdisciplinary focus and reflect on the process of digitalization itself, considering its multifaceted nature and all its branches, including Artificial Intelligence and online gaming. In line with a tradition of scholarly work dedicated to technology and communication (Jung, 1953; Romanyshyn, 1989), it seeks to address the following questions:

How can analytical psychology continue its therapeutic endeavor in settings that are radically different from those where it initially offered its services?

How does digitalization impact the therapeutic contract?

How does it affect the therapeutic relationship?

What are the unconscious meanings of digitalization?

How does technology used for political purposes exacerbate cultural complexes?

The etymology of digitalization derives from the Latin *digitalis*, meaning shaped like a finger and *digitus*, meaning finger or number. Implicitly, we could assume that the process of digitalization sees the use of fingers as central to obtaining the transformation of analogical materials into numbers (i.e. digitization). In medicine it refers to the use of medication derived from *Digitalis purpurea* to treat specific forms of heart failure. The shape of its flower reminds one of a thimble, easily fitted over a finger.

Digitalization emphasizes the use of touch and concentrates the movement of the body to the use of fingers and thumbs as primate skills. Fine motor skills performed by hands heavily rely on the coordination of fingers as agents of the nervous system, enabling vital functions in utilizing and manipulating objects such as writing tools that are essential to educational achievement.

In clinical settings, the concentration of bodily activities in the head and the upper torso emphasizes a different feeling embodiment from the traditional experience, downplaying the role of the rest of the body. Contrary to the traditional consulting room, online interaction contact is less embodied with less exposure to contagious unconscious affect. Does this eliminate the possibility of a spontaneous triangular relationship? The quickness of digital communication gives preferences to slick air brushed images, blanket statements, fake news and gamification in order to achieve the appearance of success, rather than delve into the reality of loss, shame and abuse. According to Adrien Hon, the head of *Six to Start* and inventor of *Zombies, Run!*, who recently developed a critical, Foucauldian understanding of digitalization, the process itself entails the fact that "in each smartphone there's one or more Panopticon" because the gamification of online spaces such as the one he invented entails a process of self-surveillance.

Furthermore, reactions to aspects of digitalization seem narcissistically wounded, and this conference questions whether psychotherapy suffers a similar defensive attitude, and whether this ultimately disempowers it in collaborating with those who, like Hon, are open to a more conscious and human use of digitalized tools.

Historically, the invention of new information technology has been a catalyst for change. The most important role of an information nexus is to weave networks that spread new belief systems rather than representing pre-existing realities. Printing opened large scale democracies and equally large-scale totalitarianism using information nexus to create new connections between large populations. McLuhan (1967) argued that the form of a medium embeds itself in the message creating a symbiotic relationship. An information nexus is not always based on truth and often privileges appearance over realty. History is recorded by the winners; the history of losers and loss becomes invisible. As networks grow in power and speed, correcting mechanisms becomes increasingly vital. Harari (2024) warns of a possible future scenario whereby apes, rats and other organic animals may become the only conscious entities because humans have created a non-conscious, powerful artificial intelligence that might extinguish the light of human consciousness itself and be unable to distinguish fact from fiction, for example, in the recent incidences of online cat-fishing.

Depth psychologies have had a strong countercultural impact, and analytical psychology has often raised critical voices challenging power relations. This conference invites us to reflect on how to do this effectively in the contemporary digitalized landscape. Jungian and post-Jungian psychology does offer tools grounded in the process of individuation, which can help face these challenges. Disassociated, lost 'shadow' traumatized aspects of the psyche become embodied as unconscious unsayable symptoms until they are given voice. Jungian analysis, in particular, gives space to inter-generational trauma where the inequalities of race, class and gender as 'losers' are given a voice and can combat the influence of sensationalist, dehumanizing, perfectionist, fake representations of the 'truth'. Singer's recent exploration of political technology and cultural complexes of the 2024 US elections is pertinent in this context.

This conference asks whether digitalization can be integrated by psychotherapy and considers the ethical implications and the benefits and/or limitations affecting clinical work. Equally, it welcomes abstracts investigating the contribution of analytical psychology in exploring the process of digitalization itself. Such contributions might illustrate what a Jungian or post Jungian psychologist or psychoanalyst has to say about digitalization and thus, for instance, approach it by means of archetypal transference and counter transference perspectives, or reflect on the implications for individuation, particularly in discerning the appearance of certain images as reality. The material presented may have sociological, political, cultural or literary and artistic relevance. Academic and clinical perspectives on such materials are both equally welcomed.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: December 7th 2025

We welcome scholarly proposals on the topics detailed above and other relevant to digitalization.

The 3 days conference will be held at University College London (UCL) August 27th-29th 2026.

What better venue for a conference on digitalization than the site that contributed to the implementation of the first international heterogeneous resource sharing network, the ARPANET, which played a significant role in the development of the Internet![1] First established in 1926, UCL was inspired by the radical ideas of Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian philosopher who invented the panopticon, the metaphorical value of which is still very much informing critical perspectives.

[1] https://www.ucl.ac.uk/engineering/computer-science/about/about-peter-kirstein/european-arpanet-50th-anniversary

We accept abstracts no longer than 300 words, in English, with a brief biographical note on the prospective presenter(s), their contact details and their professional or academic affiliations on a word doc file (not on a PDF) to the following mail address: *iajswelcome@gmail.com*

We accept one abstract per presenter(s).

We look forward to receiving your abstracts.

With warm regards on behalf the IAAP - IAJS joint conference team

Pilar Amezaga, Liz Brodersen, Marybeth Carter, Camilla Giambonini, Grazina Gudaite, Lynne Radomsky, Brigit Soubrouillard & Yasuhiro Tanaka