

Summer Semester 2022

SDAC Guest Lecture Series

Four Questions of the Metaverse

Tom Boellstorff
University of California, IrvineMonday
16.05.22
18-20:00 c.t.
Via Zoom

Tom Boellstorff is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Irvine. A Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and former Editor-in-Chief of *American Anthropologist*, their research has focused on topics including digital culture, disability, game studies, globalization, nationalism, queer studies, and the history of technology. They are the author of *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (Princeton University Press); *A Coincidence of Desires: Anthropology, Queer Studies, Indonesia* (Princeton University Press); and *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human* (Princeton University Press). They are coauthor of the forthcoming *Intelligent Visions: The Intellivision System, Video Games, and Society and Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method* (Princeton University Press), and coeditor of *Data, Now Bigger and Better!* (Prickly Paradigm Press) and *Speaking in Queer Tongues: Globalization and Gay Language* (Indiana University Press). Professor Boellstorff's articles have appeared in venues including *American Anthropologist*, *American Ethnologist*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Current Anthropology*, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *Games and Culture*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, *Ethnos*, *GLQ*, *Media, Culture, and Society*, and *Visual Anthropology Review*.

“Metaverse” has become a central term for conceptualizing what is also sometimes known as “web 2.0,” the next stage in the evolution of the internet. In this talk, Professor Boellstorff will draw on two decades of anthropological research on digital culture to debunk the pervasive hype regarding the metaverse and suggest ways to better understand its potential. They organize this analysis around four questions: (1) How do we define “metaverse?” (2) What are the histories of the metaverse? (3) How do economics and governance shape the metaverse? (4) What are the futures of the metaverse? Through exploring these questions, Professor Boellstorff sets forth some key avenues for research, activism, and creative engagement with the metaverse as an emerging and consequential domain of human culture.

This event will be held via zoom.
Please contact Prof. Dr. Viola Thimm to register
(viola.thimm@fau.de).