The Future of Technology & Society

What do you think the world of tomorrow will look like? How do you want the future to look? In what way can you actively contribute to this from your field of expertise? These are the central questions in the minor Future of Technology and Society.

Today we live in what we considered the future 20 years ago. Could we have predicted what today's world would look like with the knowledge we had back then? Probably not exactly, but we might have gotten close. After all, we could have imagined it.

There are ways to anticipate and influence the future without having to predict it exactly. This is what we do in the minor Future of Technology and Society. Your creative talents, observations and assumptions will be a starting point to explore and investigate the future, while you conduct research into socially meaningful applications of technology, design thinking, co-creation, future literacy, and rapid prototyping.

During the semester you will work with an intercultural and interdisciplinary team on projects related to technology, future and society. In these projects you will design innovative concepts connected to the societal problems of the future. As you experiment with new technologies and apply them in designs, you learn about their impact and the implicit assumptions that come with them, as well as to think critically about them.

It is important to stay in touch with stakeholders and potential users, so an open and communicative attitude is needed. All students with a passion for technology, the future or society are encouraged to participate in this exchange programme.

Some examples of recent projects and topics that students were involved in:

- Developing a VR lab for physiotherapists.
- Using LiDAR technology to scan in crime scenes so that the police can use VR and/or AR to revisit and can more easily organize evidence and make it accessible.
- Using technology to make concert and theater venues more sustainable by for instance using AR and hologram solutions.
- The role of humanoid robots in society.
- Using VR to create a 'real' virtual classroom.

Outcomes

This programme gives you insight on the influence of technology on society and how you can apply this knowledge with Design Thinking to create solutions for future problems. You'll learn how to

prototype your ideas in a structured fashion and will share the results with an audience during a small symposium.

Contact

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Courses

Future

Credits: 10

In this course you will explore how technological developments have an influence on society and vice versa. By doing research, concept, and design, you will create both a prototype with new technologies and a learning experience of the process and prototype. Topics such as philosophy and ethics will be covered and connected to become more futures literate. Students will understand, interpret, and to reflect on the latest developments concerning technology and society. The aim of this course is to 'design for debate' by applying technologies into your design that are novel that serve as a mean to initiate the debate about the impact of technology on society. During the course you work individually so you can all develop your technical and Futures Literacy skills, starting from your own level with the goal to get to a higher level.

The course has two assessments:
An individual presentation of a prototype and poster of the vision forming and design process. You will use different lenses to form a vision on the future of a certain topic or area. For this future, you design an artefact that reflects your vision on this future to make it tangible. During the assessment, the artifact and the different lenses used are presented, using the prototype itself and a poster showing the different lenses used.

An individual assignment in which you create a tutorial for someone of your own skill level to start using a technology the student did not master before. The form of the tutorial is up to you (written, video, interactive, etc.) .

Project Technology and Society

Credits: 20

In this project the connection is made with a 'real' social task. You will work in a project group, together with stakeholders on a concrete problem or issue in the field of society, technology, and the future. You will formulate a design challenge and (hopefully) find a solution by following the Design Thinking method. The result is a detailed and substantiated design and prototype in which a new technology is used. But the experiment is not shunned, so failure is allowed!

Acquired knowledge must also be shared and as a designer you learn the most from the users for whom you design. Contact with stakeholders and collecting and sharing information is therefore very important. How do you collect information about possible issues and stakeholders? How do you keep in touch with the stakeholders and how do you research the various aspects that come into play when using the developed concepts? Finally, how do you share the knowledge gained with stakeholders, society, and future Future of Technology & Society students? This can of course be done in all kinds of ways, an event, an exhibition, a blog, a media production, a website, a newspaper article, a debate, etc. It is up to the creativity of the students to pick this up and work it out. During the project, you will learn to apply knowledge and methods to keep in touch with all stakeholders. You shape those methods by organizing investigations and organizing communication about your project.

Gates
The project is worth 20 credits. That is a very big chunk to fail on if you only hear about your result at the end of the semester. Therefore, we have built in so-called 'gates' to make sure you know you are on the right track and can adjust your work throughout the semester.

Assessment: project portfolio
As an assignment you work on an individual portfolio with work you have made during the project.

The portfolio will consist of various products and design, based on the deliverables which you are required to produce during the run of the project. All these deliverables are presented and given feedback as a formative assessment. Because of these formative feedback moments during the process, you will be able to monitor your progress and form a solid idea if you're on the right track during the project.