

**DRONE-TOPIA:
The (envisioned) potentials for utopia in drone technology**

Call for Panel Contributions

In this session we ask: Is there utopian potential within drone technology? How might the humanitarian, civil and commercial potential of drones be reconciled with their militaristic uses? Can the transfer of technology (as with the internet and blood transfusion), from military to civilian uses yield benefits in line with utopian ideals? Drawing upon drone prototypes and operations as broad as the transport of blood in Rwanda to the delivery of defibrillators in Canada, we are interested in critically engaging with such (envisioned) innovations as steps towards a technological utopia. As such, we ask: What is gained and lost in such innovations? How are constraints, from regulatory codes to the management of airborne mobilities, presented and necessitated in honing the drone's utopian potential? And how might our drone futures be presented as natural, settled outside of political debate or public participation?

We also solicit contributions that challenge uncomplicated imaginations of a drone-topia as somehow *out there* or *far off*, but at the time, doing work in the present. Drawing on wider understandings of utopia as both *disruptive* and *excessive* we might ask: in what ways can drone technologies demand change, revolution or social spatial alteration, and what dangers may come if they are foreclosed? What feelings come with visions and technologies of the drone future, which, as an alternative to their dominant imaginaries in conflict and warzones, may be pregnant with the settled, comforting feeling of an ideal future which the drone has brought into being? Might we find alternative affective materialities and mobilities of drones that are still discomfoting, unhomely and unsafe, but nonetheless utopian?

Drawing on emergent interdisciplinary scholarship considering the multiplicities of drone envisioning and employment, we welcome wide ranging reflections on non-combat drone use and potential. The session's suggested format will be 7/7 sessions, whereby each speaker will present seven slides in seven minutes, leaving time for discussions and exchange.

Submission

Please email an abstract (max 300 words) and presenter bio (max 100 words) to all session organizers (see below) by **April 12th 2017**.

Further information about the Mobile Utopia: Past, Present and Future conference can be found at: <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/t2mc2c/>

Session Organizers

Stephanie Sodero: s.sodero@lancaster.ac.uk

Anna Jackman: ahj203@exeter.ac.uk

Pete Adey: peter.adey@rhul.ac.uk