

# Vienna STS Talks

## Assetization as a techno-economic mode of governance: Unpacking the transformation of digital data into an asset

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**Date & time:** 26.11.2021, 5:00 pm,  
**via Zoom**

[https://univienna.zoom.us/j/96011135810?](https://univienna.zoom.us/j/96011135810?pwd=Ymd5dEN2c3BTNWtxTXM1VmtxMGEzZz09)  
[pwd=Ymd5dEN2c3BTNWtxTXM1VmtxMGEzZz09](https://univienna.zoom.us/j/96011135810?pwd=Ymd5dEN2c3BTNWtxTXM1VmtxMGEzZz09)  
Meeting ID: 960 1113 5810, Passcode: 762772

### **Abstract:**

Technoscientific capitalism is based on the asset form. And almost anything nowadays can be turned into an asset – that is, something that can be controlled, traded, and capitalized as a revenue stream, discounting future revenues in the present. Objects, experiences, life forms, bodily functions, intellectual outputs, and much more can be an object of this transformation, or assetization. Although assets can be bought and sold, the point is to get a durable economic rent from them rather than sell them in a market. Rent derived from ownership and/or control of asset. Analysing assetization helps us to unpack and understand the contingent nature of this process, thereby providing us with insights into how to intervene and at what points this intervention might be most helpful. As such, assetization can be considered as a mode of techno-economic governance, as much as an analytical tool for unpacking contemporary capitalism.

Kean D. Birch is an Associate Professor of the Department of Geography at York University, Toronto. He is interested in gaining a better understanding technoscientific capitalism and draws on a range of perspectives from science & technology studies, economic geography, and economic sociology to study it. His research focuses on on the restructuring and transformation of the economy & financial knowledges, technoscience & technoscientific innovation, and the relationship between markets & natural environments. He is currently researching how different things (e.g. knowledge, personality, loyalty, etc.) are turned into 'assets' & how economic rents are then captured from those assets - basically, in processes of assetization and rentiership. His most recent funded Project is titled "From entrepreneurship to rentiership: The changing dynamics of innovation in technoscientific capitalism" (SSHRC Insight Grant, 2018-2023).

