11TH STS ITALIA CONFERENCE

8-10 September 2027

Città della Scienza, Naples, Italy

Surfing or Navigating Sociotechnical Change

Agency, Power and Collective Imagination

CONFERENCE THEME

Sociotechnical transformations participate in reshaping practices, institutions, networks, identities and environments, and in continually redefining the boundaries of what becomes thinkable, desirable and possible – alongside other social, political, economic and cultural dynamics. Generative artificial intelligence is reorganising work, education, knowledge production and relations of trust, while its material infrastructures intensify demands for energy, water and data. Ecological and energy transitions are reconfiguring territories, modes of production and multispecies relations; innovations in biomedicine and digital health are redefining bodies, care and responsibility; and data, mobility and security infrastructures are redistributing capacities to act across institutions and communities. These developments are entangled with shifting geopolitical orders, transforming diplomacy, warfare and peace negotiations. They are a combined result of – and contribute to reconfiguring – how collective problems are defined, how decisions are made and which alternatives can be imagined. At the same time, technoscientific change is increasingly presented as rapid, disruptive and inevitable; collectives seem constantly called upon to catch up with the next wave.

Under what conditions, through which assemblages and within which power relations can collectives shape sociotechnical trajectories?

Surfing and navigating sociotechnical change should not be understood as mutually exclusive alternatives. Surfing may involve situated capacities to respond, adapt and improvise within processes already under way. Navigating refers to collective attempts to orient their directions, purposes and consequences, without implying full control. Collectives may move between, or simultaneously inhabit, these modes, while power asymmetries shape their unequal capacities to act and their vulnerabilities. This tension also concerns the STS community itself. Recent debates have highlighted the risk that STS may follow successive waves of innovation, adopting the vocabularies, categories and agendas of technoscientific actors. How can STS develop analytical tools and matters of concern that reveal relationships, scaling processes, politics and possibilities beyond those recognised in dominant technoscientific discourses?

The 11th STS Italia Conference invites contributions that explore these questions across the multiple sites in which sociotechnical trajectories are imagined, negotiated, contested and enacted: from environmental transitions to health, from education to work, from security to care, from human-machine relations to multispecies worlds, from the interoperability of data infrastructures to artificial intelligence development.

STS Italia APS
Società Italiana di Studi su Scienza e Tecnologia

The conference also invites reflection on the role and responsibilities of STS through dialogue with other research traditions and situated perspectives, including those from peripheral, marginalised and postcolonial contexts. How might these encounters reframe STS questions and practices, and expand collective capacities to imagine, negotiate and navigate more democratic, just and care-centred sociotechnical trajectories?

CALL FOR PANELS

STS Italia invites panel proposals for its 11th Conference, "Surfing or Navigating Sociotechnical Change? Agency, Power and Collective Imagination", to be held **from 8 to 10 September 2027 at Città della Scienza in Naples, Italy**. We welcome open panels that will receive paper proposals through the subsequent general call for abstracts. Proposals should include a title and a concise account of the panel's focus and questions. Depending on the number of accepted contributions, a panel may extend across multiple sessions. Alongside conventional paper sessions, alternative panel formats are also welcome, providing diverse opportunities for exchange and participation, including roundtables, workshops, collaborative discussions and performances. Please explain the proposed format and any specific requirements in the panel description. Panel proposals are encouraged to engage with the conference theme through empirical research, conceptual inquiry or methodological reflection.

Relevant topics include, but are not limited to:

- Agency, adaptation and collective action in sociotechnical change
- Power asymmetries, inequalities and uneven capacities to shape technoscience
- Sociotechnical imaginaries, expectations and contested trajectories
- Artificial intelligence, algorithmic organizing, and digitalization of work practices
- Data infrastructures, interoperability and platform governance
- Ecological and energy transitions, climate justice and multispecies relations
- Biomedicine, digital health, bodies and practices of care
- Geopolitics, diplomacy, warfare and infrastructures of peace
- Public participation, democratic experimentation and technoscientific governance
- Resistance, appropriation, maintenance and repair
- Feminist, postcolonial, decolonial and disability perspectives on technoscience
- Situated knowledges, epistemic justice and marginalised contexts
- Historical trajectories, sociotechnical pasts and alternative possibilities
- STS methods, analytical tools and the politics of research agendas
- Interdisciplinary encounters, public engagement and STS interventions

PANEL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Panel proposals must be submitted through the conference's ConfTool platform, accessible via the STS Italia website.

1. **Create an account** on ConfTool STS Italia 2027. You must create a new account specifically for this conference: accounts used for other conferences are not valid.

2. **Log in and select your proposal format**, following the relevant instructions. All formats require a title, a description (abstract) of up to 500 words in plain English, and up to five keywords:

- **Panel**: outline the panel's theme and content.
- **Roundtable or workshop**: outline the content of the roundtable or workshop and list up to five expected participants.
- **Collaborative discussion**: outline the theme and explain how the discussion will be organised (e.g. floating chair, pitch or interactive forum).
- **Performance session**: outline the theme and describe the proposed spatial setting (e.g. a conventional stage–audience arrangement or another fixed, semi-fixed or informal setting).

3. Complete and submit your proposal by **17 December 2026** at 23:59:59 CET.

Each person may submit **only one proposal**, regardless of the format selected.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- **English** will be the official language of the conference.
- The conference is planned as an **in-person event**. Information regarding access, accommodation and available services will be published with the call for abstracts.
- Participation is subject to a **registration fee**. STS Italia supports an affordable fee policy.
- Information on registration rates, payment instructions and available grants will be announced on the **STS Italia website** before registration opens.

KEY DATES

Call for panels

Proposed launch: **Tuesday 10 November 2026**
Deadline for submission: **Thursday 17 December 2026**

Call for abstracts

To be announced soon.

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

MARIA CARMELA AGODI and **ILENIA PICARDI**, *University of Naples Federico II*

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ORGANISED BY

STS Italia — The Italian Society for Social Studies of Science and Technology brings together researchers studying the social, cultural and political dimensions of science, technology and innovation. www.stsitalia.org. For any info please contact **conference@stsitalia.org**.

CONFERENCE PARTNER AND VENUE

The conference will be hosted at the Congress Centre of **Città della Scienza**, located in the former industrial district of Bagnoli, near the seafront in western Naples.
Città della Scienza is a centre for science communication, education and public engagement, bringing scientific knowledge into dialogue with society through interactive exhibitions, educational activities and cultural events.
Combining a science centre with spaces for conferences and cultural exchange, it offers a stimulating setting for encounters among researchers, educators and wider publics. Its location within a landscape marked by industrial change makes it a particularly meaningful venue for reflecting on sociotechnical transformations, their material legacies and the collective possibilities they open up.

FONDAZIONE IDIS
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