Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City

01-03 April 2016

Abstract Submission Form

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Automotive Risk Management in the Digital City: Sub-Subject Monitoring of Digital Roadways

2. Format: Written Paper

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6. Abstract (300 words):

This piece looks to rub poststructuralist and postmodern theory up against one aspect of recently enacted governmental legislation in automotive insurance in Ontario, Canada, with a focus on the digital devices that can now, as part of the recent changes, voluntarily be installed by policy holders in order to (hypothetically) lower insurance rates based on real-time automotive use on (thereby digitalized) city streets. It uses an embodied theoretical framework and engagement to look at the digital devices used, and the provincial legislation and private actors (i.e. insurance companies) that engender what I call the 'digital automotive governmentality of perfect safety'. This piece builds on recent work that looked at the introduction of wireless and mobile parking applications in the City of Toronto that focused on the privatization of the (digital) signs and (digital) subjects that have flowed from the work of Marshall McLuhan. It also builds on other recent work that looks at personalized and preventative digital medicine's attempt to engage in total risk and potential risk management at the sub/post-human level. This piece attempts to use these two poles to centre the frame onto the 'digital automotive governmentality of perfect safety' at

the individual level, a governmentality of the (sub-) self that relies on both macroscopic hyperreal visualisation of the subject, as well as an electronic body without organs that is out of subject, but not subjectivizing, control. This reconfiguration is particularly interesting I argue as it rewrites the configuration of a key site of the pre-digital city - 'automotive freedom' - whereby 20th Century North American Individualism had been hereto still enacted, in actuarial, street-way planning, and automotive discourses.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Graham Potts works at the intersection of everyday and popular (digital) objects, focusing on what they say about how we understand the self and subjectivity. He is presently works as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Trent University. He holds a PhD in Social and Political Thought from York University, an MA from the University of Toronto, and a BA from the University of Western Ontario. His previous publications can be found in *CTheory, M/C Journal, The International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, and *Problématique*. He is presently working on the monograph *Posthumanism Punk'd* and writing about love, cars, and other drugs.

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