

re:generation

2025 ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE CENTER FOR DIGITAL NARRATIVE

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Director's introduction

The Center for Digital Narrative continued to thrive in 2025. After our 2023 annual report *>hello, world* and last year's *assembling intelligence*, the work of our early career researchers is well underway. This year, we present *re: generation*.

Re: generation, is, of course, a play on a significant CDN research theme – generative AI. We're working to better understand its challenges to society, its underlying narrative structures, its impacts on culture and aesthetics, and not least, how writers and artists might work creatively with it to shape new genres of narrative in the future in areas ranging from electronic literature to cinema to computer games. Researchers in the center are also working with computational narrative systems, forms of story generation that stretch back to the very beginnings of the history of computing, helping us to understand how storytelling and computation have long been conjoined, how thinkers have imagined and enacted storytelling machines, long before AI became ubiquitous.

But *re: generation* is about much more than humanities-based approaches to AI. It addresses what we consider to be the core mission of our Center: to enable and help drive the creation of a new interdisciplinary field. Our vision was to bring together researchers in fields like literature and narratology, digital culture, game studies, computer science, ethnography, and the arts, to enable an environment where theoretical and creative insights, research methodologies and practices could cross-pollinate to each field represented.

As an immigrant to Norway, one of the Norwegian words that has always enchanted me is *ting* – a word which not only means "thing", stuff, matter, but also, in a usage stretching back to the Viking age, the act of assembly, coming together, setting aside for a time inter-tribal conflict to meet and interact and decide upon matters of consequence. Today Norway isn't

governed by a congress or a parliament, but by the Storting — the big thing. Whenever our leadership group, or our steering board, or our advisory board, or our research groups, or our Wednesday lunch seminars gather to meet, or even when I see a mob of young researchers gathering in the lab for an end-of-workday Mario Kart tournament, I can't help but think *we've really got a good ting going on here*.

CDN is not only a ting where researchers from different disciplines break out of their silos to meet, but where researchers from all over the world gather. We have already hosted guest researchers and visitors from more than 80 different countries. During the summer of 2025, when we hosted our first Digital Narrative PhD summer school, early career researchers from 18 different countries met here in Bergen. We take seriously our goal of helping to train a new generation of researchers, and it was energizing to watch the zeal with which not only the PhD fellows who call the CDN home but those from many different parts of the world set up about sharing ideas and building networks which will long outlast the duration of the *ting* for which they gathered.

Re: generation is also about human generations. Ours is very much a trans-generational center where people of all generations, from those who can remember a life before everyone carried a computer around in their pocket, to those for whom "brain rot" is part of their everyday diet. At the CDN, senior researchers and staff work alongside post-docs, PhD fellows, MA-level research assistants in a research environment more non-hierarchical than most. We have hosted middle-school interns and visiting high school classes.



Scott Robert Rettberg
Professor and Center Director



Throughout the annual report, we have put a few boxes like these. Scan the QR code on your phone to open a page, allow the page to use your camera, and point the camera towards the annual report to augment the paper.

Photo: Eivind Senneset

CDN in short

RESEARCH ON NARRATIVES THAT SHAPE OUR FUTURE

The Center for Digital Narrative (CDN) is a Norwegian Center of Research Excellence dedicated to establishing digital narrative as a new, independent, and interdisciplinary field of study. Our mission is to move beyond the state of the art in digital humanities and develop new frameworks for understanding how stories are created, experienced, and transformed through technologies.

Narratives are fundamental to human existence. They shape how we understand ourselves, our communities, and the world around us. Narratives structure our individual and collective understanding of matters ranging from our ideas of the self to our understanding of the nation-state, to our perception and caretaking of the environment. Digital narratives, resulting from the interactions of human storytellers with algorithmic systems, have the power to change the way we think and adjust the trajectory of society.

Digital narratives are computationally driven forms of storytelling that increasingly define contemporary life. From conspiracy theories spreading on social media that influence our politics, through immersive story-worlds in video games, to AI systems generating fiction and code, digital narratives are now an unavoidable aspect of everyday life. Yet we lack a comprehensive understanding of how they work, what purposes they serve, and how they reshape culture and society.

Storytelling is no longer an exclusively human domain. Algorithmic narrativity describes the interplay between human understanding of stories and computer processes of all kinds, from analog narrative systems to generative AI models. Understanding algorithmic narrativity in its manifold forms is the core focus of all the research at the CDN.

CDN provides a theoretical and practical platform for understanding digital narrative. By combining theoretical inquiry, documentation of emerging genres, database infrastructure and publishing platform development, and creative experimental research into new narrative practices, CDN is building an international hub for cutting-edge, humanities-led research. We bring together scholars, artists, and technologists to explore how digital storytelling can illuminate, challenge, and transform the way we live.

3rd of 10 years



8 new CDN members in 2025



2 exhibitions

1 book chapter

15 peer-reviewed articles 35 talks

4 AR symbols in this report

re: generation

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Photo: Eivind Senneset

Four CDN Concepts

Floating Motif

“**Floating motif:** a motif that appears in an AI-generated story that is out of place or does not serve a function. Floating motifs tend to be tangentially connected to the generated text, as they originate in the training data but have been detached from their original context.

For example, in the analysis of AI-generated versions of the Norwegian folktale *Kjæresten i skogen* (“Sweetheart in the Forest”), the motif of the bird that warns the girl in the human versions of the story is repeated in the generated versions but no longer warns of danger, and lacks a clear function.”

– Anne Sigrid Refsum

Refsum, Anne Sigrid. 2025. “The Sweetheart in the Forest” and the Synthetic Storytellers. *Humanities* 14: 230. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14120230>



Scanned illustration from 1936 edition of Asbjørnsen & Moe: *Samlede eventyr. Norske kunstneres billedutgave*. Gyldendal Norsk forlag. In public domain.

Human Function

“The **human function** in generative AI-driven creativity is often neglected in literary discussions of generative AI. How the user prompts the system plays an essential role in what results from it. I often hear people discussing fears for the future of literature as if AI chatbots were spitting out fully developed novels. As of now this is still far from what LLMs can produce. Can ChatGPT provide a rudimentary story if you ask it to? Certainly. But because LLMs are designed to find the best average response to any given input, they are also oriented toward the banal and familiar. [...] without extensive human interaction to guide them, in their current manifestations LLMs are far too oriented toward producing average responses to achieve the level of originality a reader might expect from literature, as opposed to what one might expect from, say, greeting cards or pulp fiction.”

– Scott Rettberg

Rettberg, Scott. 2025. Shed Not a Tear for Literature in the Age of AI. *CounterText* 10: 221–29. <https://doi.org/10.3366/count.2024.0358>



Synthetic Probe

“In my article I describe how I probed a specific model (ModelScope Text-2Video) with a sequence of minimal prompts about China in order to map its representational repertoire and ended up with around a thousand outputs that allowed me to describe some interesting findings. [...] I was able to trace the videos produced to a specific training dataset (WebVid) which in turn was mostly scraped off the Shutterstock website, meaning that the aesthetic and representational decisions of stock image producers ended up determining how a text-to-video model depicts a country. These are very basic observations, but they would have not been possible by simply interviewing the model’s users or even the computer scientists behind it.”

– Gabriele de Seta

de Seta, Gabriele. (2025). Latent Walks: From Digital Folklore to AI Imaginaries // Gabriele de Seta. *Diffractions*. <https://diffractionscollective.com/2025/11/28/latent-walks-from-digital-folklore-to-ai-imaginaries/>
de Seta, Gabriele. 2024. “Synthetic Probes: A Qualitative Experiment in Latent Space Exploration”. *Sociologica* 18 (2):9-23. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/19512>.

Histobot

“A conversational agent driven by generative artificial intelligence (genAI) that simulates a person of historical record for educational and/or recreational use. Functioning as algorithmic narrators, these systems utilize large language models and persona-based interfaces to create a “simulacrum” of the deceased through text, voice, or avatars. While they offer interactive “edutainment” and are increasingly adopted by cultural institutions, they present significant ethical risks regarding historical accuracy, voice appropriation, and the potential distortion of collective memory.”

– Lina Harder

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2024b. “Histobots. Echoes of History or AI Storytime?” Seminar Presentation. *AI and Narrative Seminar*, University of Bergen, Norway. Available online: <https://www.uib.no/en/cdn/172775/ai-and-digital-narrative>

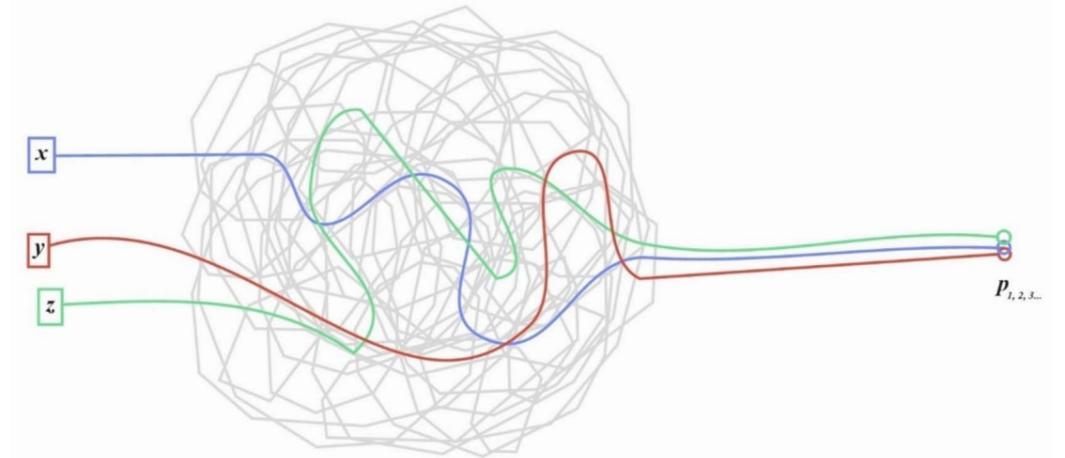
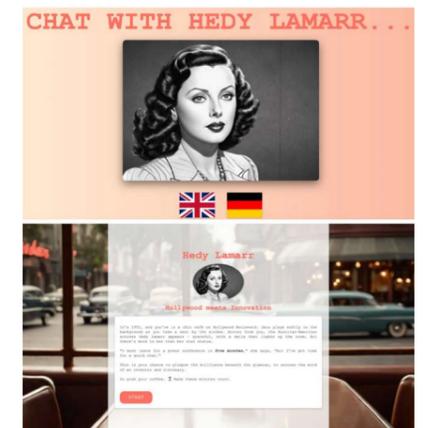


Diagram of synthetic probes (p_1, p_2, p_3) being launched alongside slightly different trajectories into a machine learning model’s high-dimensional latent space (central manifold), resulting in outputs (x, y, z) which can be analyzed comparatively and iteratively to speculate about how the probes’ trajectories reflect the model’s functioning.



Screenshots from Lina Harder’s 2024 version of the Hedy Lamarr histobot.

Understanding New Stories by Telling Them

HOW ARTISTS ARE REWRITING THE RULES OF NARRATIVE IN THE AGE OF AI

In a world increasingly formed by generative artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), and interactive media, the research project **Extending Digital Narrative (XDN)** at the Center for Digital Narrative engages with an ever-changing environment. This team of artist-researchers explores how creative experiments in emerging technologies can generate new insights into what it means to tell stories in the digital age.

Those in the XDN project immerse themselves in the tools of the future to understand how the narratives are shaped, undertaking artistic practice as a method of inquiry. Through five case studies, the team shows how hands-on experimentation reveal the hidden assumptions, biases, and affordances in these new technologies.

Reanimating the Past

LINA HARDER'S HEDY LAMARR CHATBOT

Lina Ruth Harder's project is a generative AI chatbot designed to simulate Austrian-American actress and inventor Hedy Lamarr. Visitors to the "More Than Meets AI" exhibition in Bergen could write with "Hedy", who presented herself in a 1950s-style virtual café. Users engage in short text conversations in English or German, discussing both Lamarr's life in Hollywood and her work on radio guidance systems for torpedos. "I call these histobots: conversational agents driven by generative AI that re-enact persons of historical record for edutainment purposes," Lina writes of her project. Harder's chatbot was more than a novelty act, it was a critical probe into how AI systems reconstruct historical figures. Even drawing on 64 carefully crafted prompts to encode Lamarr's voice and personality, the results were still riddled with "GPTisms" – hallucinated facts, anachronisms, and overly polished language. Despite being set in 1951, the bot would sometimes refer to smartphones.

The Lamarr chatbot became what philosopher Jean Baudrillard would refer to as a simulacrum, a copy without an original. The work highlighted how AI can distort historical memory, flatten complex lives into digestible, sanitized narratives, and reinforce existing cultural biases – especially around gender and race.

Harder counters the marketing for apps for similar historical chatbots, these are not "encounters with the past": "At best, they serve as probes. They reveal how storytelling bends when authored by algorithms, how platforms curate cultural memory, and how histories of yesterday and fantasies of tomorrow become entangled in infrastructures beyond our control."

Harder's work offers additional insight into a key finding of the XDN team – that building with AI is not a neutral act. For her, the point is not that the chatbot failed, but what its failures reveal. The project exposed how generative AI systems are shaped by training data, platform constraints, and the biases embedded in both.

Satire in the Latent Space

SCOTT RETTBERG'S "REPUBLICANS IN LOVE"

Scott Rettberg's "Republicans in Love" is a political satire told through text-to-image and text-to-video AI generation. Using platforms like OpenAI's DALL-E and Runway, Rettberg created hundreds of image-text pairs that show the absurdities of contemporary American politics, particularly the rise of Trumpist populism. Images are generated from a single prompt, surreal or ironic sentences like "Republicans in love, angry about the news, eating greasy cheeseburgers at the President's desk in the Oval Office, in the style of Caravaggio."

The results are strange, evocative, and often hilarious. In Rettberg's view they also serve as a form of "cyborg authorship":

"That is, the idea that storytelling with generative AI is ontologically different from traditional forms of writing, because both human intelligence and advanced computational processes contribute to the creation of the narrative experience."

He suggests text-to-image generation is not just a tool, but a new writing environment. The prompt becomes a kind of literary form – part aphorism, part performance. The AI doesn't just illustrate the text; it transforms it, adding layers of meaning and unpredictability.

As the technology evolves, so do the constraints. Later versions of DALL-E introduced content moderation and prompt rewriting, making it harder to produce politically charged or stylistically experimental images. Rettberg notes a shift toward photorealism and away from the surreal, glitchy aesthetics that once made AI art feel genuinely new. In addition to the satirical elements, he sees the work as "rapid media archaeology" capturing

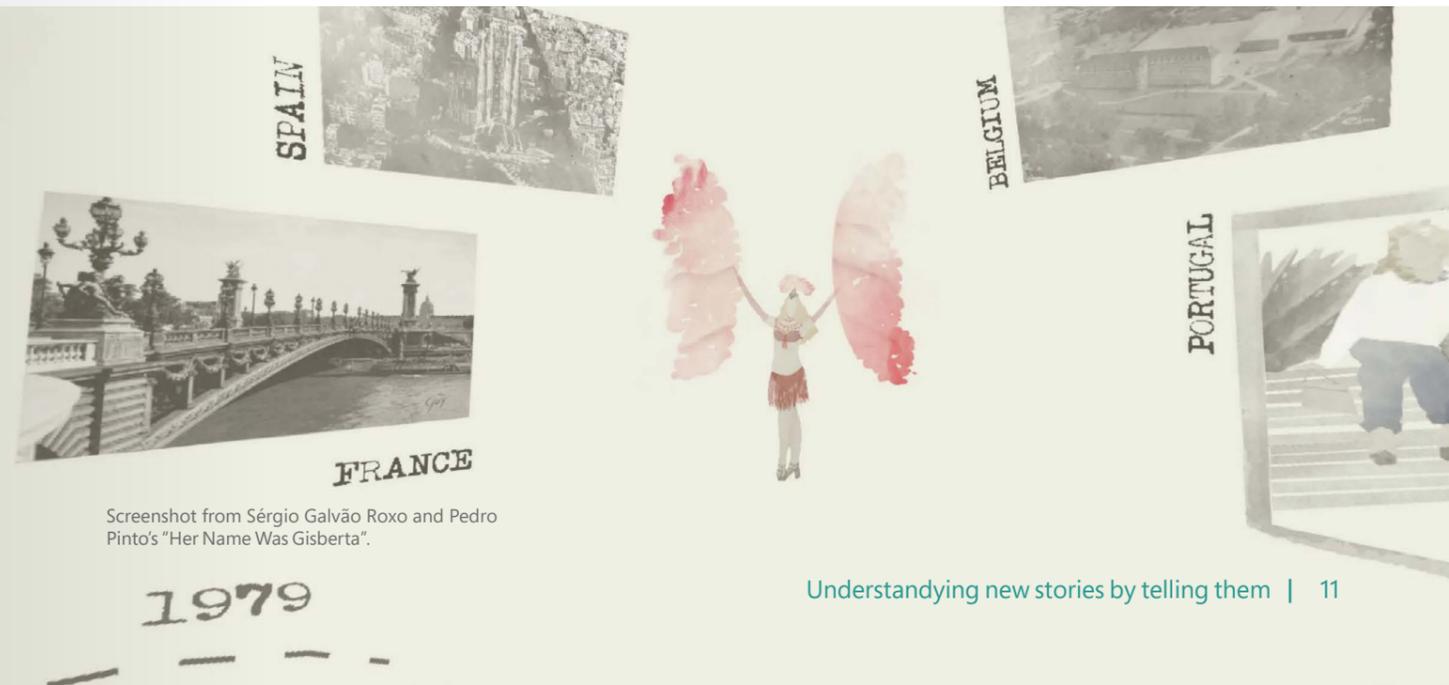
fleeting moments in the evolution of AI aesthetics – moments that may be lost to corporate sanitization.

Despite these challenges, Rettberg sees potential in AI satire as a form of resistance. While right-wing groups also use generative tools to spread propaganda, projects like "Republicans in Love" do offer a counter-narrative:

"If nothing else, I find the process of making these images cathartic, and a means to cope."



Photos of a set of the "Republicans in Love" images
Photo: Eivind Senneset



Screenshot from Sérgio Galvão Roxo and Pedro Pinto's "Her Name Was Gisberta".

One Artist, Many Voices

DAVID JHAVE JOHNSTON'S "MESSAGES TO HUMANITY"

What happens when a single person can make a film with no crew, no actors, and no studio? David Jhave Johnston's "Messages to Humanity" explores the question through a series of 30 short videos created using Runway's Act-One, a generative AI tool that maps a performer's voice and facial expressions onto animated characters.

Each video is a poetic, philosophical reflection on the state of the world – climate collapse, war, AI acceleration – delivered by a rotating cast of surreal avatars. Some are human, others alien or more abstract.

The videos are short, often under a minute, but they do not hold back. One message declares: "All narratives end. Bodies die. Civilizations collapse."

Johnston's project is both a technical experiment and a personal way to navigate a perilous present, while suggesting alternatives. It shows how AI can democratize filmmaking, allowing solo creators to produce larger narratives with several character.

But it also raises questions about authorship, identity, and the role of the artist in a world where anyone can become anyone. Are new forms of critical engagement needed now? What does it mean to speak to humanity through a synthetic face? What responsibilities come with that power?

Act-One, Johnston argues, represents a rupture in the history of cinema. What was once a time-consuming process of cameras, scheduling, actors, direction and time – generative AI replicates a significant subset of the endeavour through one person. The technology does not erase barriers, but it lowers them dramatically. But is it as good as the studios?

Johnston answers: "Yes and no. For those on a limited budget, it is impeccable; for those with a studio budget, it is of questionable quality."

Empathy Through Immersion

SÉRGIO GALVÃO ROXO'S "HER NAME WAS GISBERTA"

In "Her Name Was Gisberta," Sérgio Galvão Roxo uses VR to tell the story of Gisberta Salce, a Brazilian trans woman murdered in Portugal in 2006. The project is a powerful example of how immersive media can foster empathy and social change.

The VR documentary places viewers inside Gisberta's world, from her childhood to her tragic death.

Using 360-degree animation and narration by a Brazilian trans voice actress, the experience invites users to "storylive" her life. The goal is not to shock, but to humanize and create a space for reflection, understanding, and emotional connection.

Roxo draws on research in social psychology and human-computer interaction to design the experience. He employs "virtual reality perspective-taking" techniques, allowing users to see the world from Gisberta's point of view.

"The feedback was seen as cathartic for some viewers, as the frequency of viewers crying indicated a form of emotional release from the weight of the project, confirming its potential to breach barriers," writes Roxo.

"By addressing empathy from another perspective, we can see it not as an innate or predetermined quality, but as a "muscle".

The project is also a memorial. It honours not just Gisberta, but over 1600 victims of transphobic violence in Portugal and Brazil.

Roxo's next project will build on this work, using VR to document and raise awareness about the practices commonly known as conversion therapy in Europe, with testimonies from survivors.

The project was launched summer of 2025, as the website survivingsogice.eu¹ (read more on page 29).

Rethinking LLMs in Games

HAOYUAN TANG'S NARRATIVE MECHANICS

In most modern games, players interact through actions – moving, fighting, exploring – not through dialogue. Writing natural language as a player is quite rare.

While many game developers explore how to add chatbots into non-player characters (NPCs), Haoyuan Tang takes a different approach: what if AI in games didn't listen to what players say, but to what they do?

"Games are very good at providing structure without language," writes Tang. "LLMs, by contrast, are very good at producing language that doesn't necessarily require a specific structure."

Tang is developing a prototype in Unreal Engine 5, which logs the player's actions translating them into narrative prompts for a large language model. The goal

for the AI is to generate story content – dialogue, environmental descriptions, character reactions – to fit the player behaviour.

"In this view, AI is treated as a narrative agent," writes Tang, embedding AI within the game's existing logic, rather than forcing it to speak a language the game doesn't understand.

The approach depends not just on technical sophistication, she writes, but on careful design. The AI must be tuned to the genre, platform, and player expectations. A poetic NPC might work in a fantasy RPG but feel jarring in a horror game.

Why Practice-Based Research Matters

If we want to understand how AI and immersive media are changing the way we tell stories – and the way we understand ourselves – we need get our hands dirty.

The XDN team's work challenges traditional boundaries between art and scholarship. In many academic settings, creative practice is still seen as separate from "real" research. But as the authors argue, when it comes to studying emerging technologies, theory alone isn't enough:

"Going under the hood, and actually creating creative work in these environments, offers a deeper understanding of how the technologies themselves are evolving, and allows for more insight in their constraints and affordances for narrative."

By building, testing, and performing with AI and XR tools, these researchers gain insights that would be impossible to obtain from the outside. They show that storytelling is not just about content, but about platforms, interfaces, and infrastructures. And they demonstrate that the future of narrative will be shaped not just by writers and artists, but by engineers, designers, and algorithms:

"We advocate for bridges between theory and practice, particularly as new media, games, AI, and XR continue to reshape storytelling."

About the Authors

• **Lina Ruth Harder** is a PhD Fellow at the Center for Digital Narrative, University of Bergen, exploring AI-driven historical personas and the ethics of digital memory.

• **David Jhave Johnston** is a postdoctoral researcher and digital poet at the Center for Digital Narrative, known for his experimental work in AI-generated digital poetry

• **Scott Rettberg** is the Director of the Center for Digital Narrative and a pioneer in electronic literature

• **Sérgio Galvão Roxo** is a PhD Fellow at the Center for Digital Narrative and film maker, focusing on immersive media and VR as tools for social education and activism.

• **Haoyuan Tang** is a PhD Fellow at the Center for Digital Narrative, researching the integration of generative AI into video game narratives through player interaction.

Based on article "Extending Digital Narrative with AI, Games, Chatbots, and XR: How Experimental Creative Practice Yields Research Insights" in *Humanities*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/h15010017>

2025 CDN Digital Narratives Summer School

In June we held the first CDN Digital Narratives Summer School, which will be a biannual event. What a week! We welcomed 30 PhDs from 20 countries. With exceptional keynote speakers and facilitators, as well as the only week of great weather in June, the event turned out even better than expected.

“It has been a fantastic exchange of ideas, and a major contribution to our goal to contribute to early researcher training and to help build an international field in digital narrative,” says CDN Director Scott Rettberg.

After seven workshops, essay feedback sessions every day, various meetings with local wildlife, and four brilliant keynotes (short versions below, available in full on our YouTube channel) from Maria Mäkelä, Alexandra Saemmer, Yudhanjaya Wijeratne and D. Fox Harrell, we were quite happy, and look forward to the next one in 2027.



Workshops

The summer school's afternoons were dedicated to intensive workshops, where participants chose between creative and critical tracks led by an international roster of experts. These sessions, facilitated by Jason Nelson, Alinta Krauth, Jill Walker Rettberg, Nick Montfort, Scott Rettberg, David Jhave Johnston, Mark Amerika, Caitlin Fisher, Gabriele de Seta, Lin Prøitz, and Henry Mainsah, provided hands-on training in the tools defining digital narrative research. From “slow reading” pioneering hypertexts like *Afternoon*, a story to practicing qualitative digital ethnography, the workshops bridged the gap between abstract theory and applied practice.

Creative experimentation was a hallmark of the program. Students engaged in locative storytelling by mapping narratives onto the physical landscape of Bergen, explored XR content creation to build “magical objects,” and experienced AI filmmaking and LLM-driven Platonic dialogues to reimagine scholarly communication. Technical literacy was further grounded in sessions on hand-

coded text generation, where participants modified Markov processes and Python scripts to demystify the logic of algorithmic writing.

The participant survey revealed deep appreciation for the supportive environment, with one student calling it a “loving, open, and kind community” that countered the typical isolation of a PhD. Another described the experience as the “BEST TIME OF MY LIFE,” specifically praising the facilitators as “friendly, professional, dedicated, and open”.

Beyond the social bonds forged, the academic impact was significant. Participants reported learning “new ideas and ways to think about the digital landscape” and gaining “new perspectives to our thinking processes”. One attendee noted that the program helped them “regain the human part of us as researchers,” allowing them to reestablish warm, lasting connections within the academic community.



Keynotes

Alexandra Saemmer

PUNK DISRUPTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In her talk, Alexandra Saemmer explored the concept of **“punk poetics on social networks,”** examining how literature manifests on massive commercial platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok.

She noted that while capitalism quickly integrates and monetizes marginalized voices such as Rupi Kaur, true punk aesthetic emerges from disruption. Saemmer argues that the quality of these pieces is not intrinsic to the writing itself, but tied to the reader's individualized behavior.

“The literary nature of their work is not inherent to their writing. It comes from the clash that occurs within the network's ecosystem and is it is profoundly linked to the notion of the profile.”

Poetic fragments achieve meaning by standing out against the surrounding “nonsense” and “fake authenticity”. To analyze this dynamic, she proposes the “feed cut” methodology, inspired by William Burroughs' cut-up technique, to reveal poetic convergences and the network's atmosphere. Copying small sentences from the posts in a feed, pastes it to a separate document to be repositioned as a sort of poem. Even though fractured and diverse, the algorithmic nature of most modern social networks makes it so that this also tells a little story about the creator, another person would not have the same feed.

This inspired many of the participants and CDN members to make their own “feed cut” poetry.

Yudhanjaya Wijeratne

THE FUTURE OF CREATIVITY IS HUMAN PLUS MACHINE

Yudhanjaya Wijeratne discussed the **“Machine as Provocateur,”** focusing on how generative systems exploit **apophenia** – the human tendency to perceive meaningful patterns in random noise.

“I'm exploring a latent space, I'm almost a photographer as opposed to a painter.”

He shared his personal journey creating narratives using complex mathematical and programmatic systems, like the Mandelbrot set and planet generators. Wijeratne views as a “photographer” exploring a space defined by

code. He terms these systems “ludic engines,” characterized by procedural rhetoric, ritualistic interfaces, and essential ambiguity, which together invite storytelling.

Games like *Dwarf Fortress* (noted for its many complex and unexpected emergent interactions) and *Minecraft* are cited as prime examples of successful ludic engines, supporting his conclusion that the future of creativity is human plus machine.

He has used his methods for authoring the novel *«The Salvage Crew»* and its sequels in cooperation with LLMs.

Maria Mäkelä

I AM JUST SHARING WHAT SOMEONE ELSE TOLD ME

Maria Mäkelä analyzes qualitative methods for studying social media discourse, specifically targeting the critical rise of the “story economy” in the 2010s.

She criticizes the reliance on “campfire rhetoric” by consultants who promote the idea of universal stories and equate narrative instantly with authenticity. Mäkelä posits that contemporary stories function as exemplary models, serving as ad hoc moral doctrines rather than strictly being factual or fictional.

This dynamic leads to the “viral example,” where individual anecdotes, such as the “Jimmy moment” (political

polarization from experiences in people’s own neighbourhoods) or the “17 diapers” (motherhood struggles on TikTok), rapidly scale from subjective experience to representativeness and normativity.

Even when people are told the stories aren’t true, they respond with “well, they could have been true!”.

She emphasizes that the dominant story logic today involves sharing rather than telling, which subsequently detaches the individual from narrative responsibility.

D. Fox Harrell

SPARKING SOCIAL CHANGE WITH COMPUTING SYSTEMS

D. Fox Harrell advocates for using computing systems and virtuality (including AI-generated media and extended reality) to express human subjectivity, create diverse cultural productions, and spark positive social change.

He highlights the massive economic influence of video games compared to film and sports. Harrell showcases analytical work using archetypal analysis on games like *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* to expose deep-seated biases in the system, demonstrating that certain character types (like female or non-white male characters) cannot

be optimized for strength or intelligence archetypes, effectively building a “part system” into the data.

His design work, such as the VR projects *The Enemy* (humanizing war combatants) and *Sunken Rising* (using metaphor to engage with systematic racism), aims to promote critical reflection and social reimagining.

“Computing systems can be used to express human subjectivity, help create diverse cultural productions, including art and media, and to spark positive social change!”



See all keynote presentations on our Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/@CenterforDigitalNarrative



This is Nils. He is a local who often wanders around the campus, sometimes jumping in open windows to our offices.
Photo: Eivind Senneset.

2025 Activities

EXHIBITIONS



Poster design: Valeria Antezana Acosta | Image: Sachiko Hayashi



Photo: Drew Keller

An Eye for AI Cinema

For 25 years, Bergen International Film Festival (BIFF) has been a space for movies of all kind, large and small, fiction and documentary, traditional and experimental. This year, as in 2024, CDN hosted an exhibition in cooperation with the festival.

An Eye for AI Cinema was curated by the Extending Digital Narrative (XDN) team at the University of Bergen's Center for Digital Narrative and presented at USF Verftet during BIFF.

Researcher David Jhave Johnston led the curatorial team for the show, based on his extensive research into multimodal generative AI-based creativity. The exhibition posed critical questions about AI's impact on cinema: Is artificial intelligence destroying cinema as we know it? We will understand AI films as narratives in the same way that we do conventional films? Are we entering the age of computer-generated DIY film?

The curators recognized that AI brings tumultuous changes to the established film industry while simultaneously creating new opportunities for independent filmmakers and potentially birthing new genres of moving image art. It provided an early glimpse into innovative experiments with AI technologies that may redefine how movies are made in the future.

About 600 visitors viewed the exhibition over the course of the week. Events associated with exhibition included a soft opening on October 15th, a vernissage and panel discussion with artists and curators on the 17th, and curator-guided tours on the 22nd. Curators David Jhave Johnston and Scott Rettberg discussed the exhibition during an episode of the Off Center "AI Update" podcast and Drew Keller produced a video featuring a walkthrough of the exhibition and a panel discussion with AI filmmakers available on our [YouTube channel](#)².

For questions about the exhibition or to express interest in touring the exhibition to your gallery, please contact Director Scott Rettberg (scott.rettberg@uib.no).

We are keeping this collaboration going, and will curate an exhibition on extended reality narratives with BIFF in October 2026.



An Eye for AI Cinema - Panel discussion exploring the impact of AI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdGOuN-Q_0B8

Intimate Atmospheres

Alinta Krauth and Jason Nelson's exhibition *Intimate Atmospheres* took place October 20-24.

It invited audiences into the subtle and often invisible world of microclimates – the localized environmental conditions that shape biodiversity and forest health across Nordic ecosystems. Drawing on scientific research from the "Understanding the role and interplay of forest microclimates for successfully balancing productivity and biodiversity among Nordic forest landscapes" project through Nordic Forest Research (SNS), these artworks transform quantitative climate data into sensory, aesthetic, and participatory experiences.

This exhibition was a culmination of collaborations between the CDN's AiR node, invited digital artists, and scientists from The Norwegian Institute of Nature Research. The work has been funded by Nordic Forest Research.

Intimate Atmospheres reframes the act of data collection as a poetic and philosophical gesture, an invitation to witness otherwise unseen microclimactic shifts, where data can become material: it vibrates, hums, shimmers.

The exhibition asks: what happens when science speaks through art?



Documentation photos by Andreas H. Opsvik

GRANTS AND AWARDS

• May 2025: **Jill Walker Rettberg** inducted to the **Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters**

• August 2025: **Jason Nelson** awarded **Maverick Awards at Electronic Literature Organization ELO2025 Conference** (read more on page 20)

• October 2025: **Jill Walker Rettberg** and **Hanna-Riikka Roine** receive **Peder Saether grant** for project NarrAltion: Bridging Humanities and AI with Nina Begus at UC Berkeley, continuing ongoing collaboration (3rd Peder Saether grant to UiB Digital Culture staff)

• November 2025: **Scott Rettberg** and **Odile Farge** awarded a **Norske universitetscenter i Paris grant** for an upcoming researcher stay at CDN

• December 2025: **Lina Harder** awarded an **NFR mobility grant** for research stay at Utrecht University

• December 2025: **Jason Nelson** and **Alinta Krauth** commissioned by **Open AI** for art for their new Sydney offices (see page 27)

CDN at the 2025 Electric Literature Organization Conference



The Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) has been at the forefront of exploring the intersection of literature and digital technology since its founding in 1999. Dedicated to the creation, preservation, and study of born-digital literary works, the ELO has cultivated a vibrant global community of artists, scholars, and technologists.

Rettberg Rock and Rolls

The 25th ELO conference in Toronto, Canada in July, named “Love letters to the past and future” marked a significant milestone – bringing together voices from across disciplines to reflect on the past, engage with the present, and imagine the future of electronic literature.

The opening keynote was by CDN Director Professor Scott Rettberg, founder and former leader of the ELO, reminiscing about the 25- year history of the international non-profit organization, under the title “It’s been a long time since we rocked and rolled”.

“It is useful to think of ELO as an evolving community,” Rettberg explained, highlighting the events that led to ELO forming, the early days of the organization and its artists and academics, sprinkled with archival pieces and “embarrassing anecdotes”.

Celebrating 30 years of *ebr*

Part of the conference was a celebration of 30 years of *electronic book review*, one of the first literary journals to be invented online.

In a panel moderated by Lai-Tze Fan, co-founder Joseph Tabbi, current managing editor Anna Nacher, as well as Ewan Branda and Tegan Pyke, discussed its history, and launched the new design of the website, done from the ground up, managed by CDN Technologist Colin Robinson.

Earlier this summer, we celebrated Joseph Tabbi and *ebr* with Joefest, a seminar and exhibition to 30 years of *ebr* history.

Jason Nelson – an ELO maverick

This year’s 2025 Electronic Literature Awards were announced at the ELO conference. ELO gives four juried awards that come with a cash prize and the esteem of the international e-lit community.

The Maverick Award was given to CDN Professor Jason Nelson. The jury writes:

“The confusion Jason’s work sparks is a generous, friendly confusion, hilarious and serious at the same time. Throughout decades of award-winning work – appearing on screens, in quirky physical objects, and stunning visuals projected onto huge architectural spaces – Jason has accurately assessed the norms and expectations of current digital culture. Then he has set about systematically breaking those norms and frustrating those expectations. The result is insight. And laughter. Jason’s work always shows you something you hadn’t witnessed before in digital culture, and inside yourself.”

The Marjorie C. Luesebrink Career Achievement Award was awarded to Bertrand Gervais, Professor in the Literary Studies Department at the University of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). The N. Katherine Hayles Award for Criticism of Electronic Literature was awarded to *The Culture of Neural Networks: Synthetic Literature and Art in (not only) the Czech and Slovak Context*, by Karel Píorecký and Zuzana Husárová. The Robert Coover Award for a Work of Electronic Literature was awarded to *Espejo de Carne*, by Benjamin Escalonilla Bodayol.

OUR PODCAST

Decoding Digital Narrative in our Podcast Off Center

The Center for Digital Narrative’s (CDN) podcast, **Off Center**, spent 2025 diving deep into the intricate relationship between storytelling and automation, exploring everything from the genesis of digital literary fields to the socio-political fallout of global AI saturation.

Through its series of interviews and spin-offs *The AI Update* and *ALGOpod*, the podcast maps the evolving landscape of digital culture, creativity, and controversy.



The Digital Child, Governance, and Performance

The year began with critical discussions on AI ethics and governance, featuring Professor Tama Leaver from the Centre for the Digital Child. In Episode 35, Leaver tackled Australia’s controversial plan to ban social media for children under 16, which was set in effect December 2025.

Leaver expressed strong skepticism regarding the policy’s efficacy, stating plainly: “I’m very cynical in my take, I think young people will be adept VPN users, if they’re not already, within minutes”. He argued that the ban risked doing more harm by ignoring the necessary cultural work. They also discussed AI in schools:

“My biggest fear is listening to the hype around the idea of the “personalized AI tutor” that every big AI company desperately wants to sell to every educator in the world.”

Leaver’s research further exposed the inherent biases within generative AI’s training data, particularly concerning national identity. When studying AI representations of Australian identity, he found the results were consistently reductive:

“Australia can only be a cliché in all of these images [...] You tend to get either very poor looking kids in very rural bush settings, or you get people who are wearing oversized akubras (Australian cowboy hats) and have olaroots. But there was there was no real way for Australianess to be a balanced metropolitan image.”

This demonstrated that the corpus available is skewed towards stereotypes that “really sitting in 2024 and in 2025 looks quite problematic”.

In March, the focus shifted to performance technology with Episode 36, Digital Puppetry with David Bithell, who was a Fulbright Scholar at the CDN in the spring.

Bithell detailed his project *Matters Dark and Luminous*, which explores hybrid performance environments. He explained that this environment is meant “for performances that are meant to be not huge concert hall performances but are meant to be for gatherings of 15-30 people at a time. Thinking of it kind of like a 21st century campfire”.

Bithell combines procedurally generated animations and live electronic music with physical marionette-style puppets controlled via servo motors. Digital, but still very human. His setup allows him to track physical movements, controlling a puppet with his actual hand, but through many layers of technology.

Bithell describes his work as “emulation of a live performance – in using technological tools to aid in that rather than having technological tools that sort of get in the way of the humanness of a performance”.

Algorithmic Folklore and Digital Black Boxes

Mid-year saw the launch of a new sub-series dedicated to the CDN's Algorithmic Folklore (ALGOFOLK) research project. *ALGOpod #1* (Jun 4) was the inaugural podcast from this project, featuring sociologist Joan Mukogosi. Mukogosi, who co-authored the earliest known essay using the term "algorithmic folklore," explained the strategic processes teenagers employ to understand platforms like TikTok.

She described observing users "piecing together how they thought that the platform worked" and "sort of in that process making up these myths and these stories about how the algorithm worked".

Users rely on "anecdotal sharing", such as: "I posted this video and I used this word and it got no views, but my other videos where I used this word it got a thousand views". Mukogosi connected this behavior to Afrofuturist principles:

"Afrofuturism allows us to imagine the world as might be, right? It gives it gives you a sense of power where it might not otherwise exist. They are imagining platforms as what they could be, right? What they might be!"

AI, Cinema, AI Cinema, and the Cyborg Author

Autumn brought reflections on AI's rapid integration into creative fields, spanning film and literature. *The AI Update XV* covered the Bergen International Film Festival (BIFF) 2025 exhibition, *An Eye for AI Cinema*, which ran in October (read more on page 18).

The exhibition showcased hybrid films and films entirely created using generative AI tools, alongside AI-generated posters by the CDN crew exploring the various problems and quirks involved in using AI to generate visual entertainment.

Discussing the limitations of current AI filmmaking Rettberg and Jhave Johnston noted that at the moment there is a "limitation point around the 15-20 minute mark. You have a collapse of what they call in language models context rot", meaning that in cinematic forms

"consistency, characterization, you know, continuity, all of it's really hard to capture and keep that going".

In *Episode 39*, sci-fi novelist Yudhanjaya Wijeratne, keynote speaker at the 2025 CDN Digital Narrative Summer School (see page 13), discussed his collaborative writing process for the 2020 novel *The Salvage Crew*, and its sequels.

He essentially created what he calls a poetry machine to act as a creative partner, trained on Tang Dynasty poetry:

"I was treating myself as the large language model and these things as prompts", he says, inspired by the "cyborg hypothesis" – the idea that the future was not human versus machine, but human plus machine.

Wijeratne generated "odd combinations that triggered my own apophenia", which he describes as "our tendency as humans to create stories out of random noise", to weave his narrative.



From Cybertext to Material Survival

The philosophical backbone of digital culture was addressed by game theorist Espen Aarseth in *Episode 40*. Aarseth reflected on his foundational work, *Cybertext*, defining the term jokingly as "just a fancy word for something that is dynamic".

Cybertext has been cited as the origin point of the field of game studies, but Aarseth insists it required more than a single influential book, it demanded "a lot of human leg work" and was ultimately made by people who got together at conferences.

The discussion also shifted to modern challenges, pointing out that the world today "by all, you know, old measurements, all benchmarks, look pretty horrid, actually. There's a lot going on and 90% of it is not that good".

Faced with climate change and the rise of fascism, he concluded that education must pivot:

"My preliminary conclusion that we should try to change, go away from the digital a little bit. Step back from that focus and try to go back to the material world", emphasizing practical skills and leadership for the future.

The 2025 season of *Off Center* painted a comprehensive picture of a digital world characterized by both immense creative opportunity and profound structural anxiety. From the intimate digital puppet stage to the vast, ethically murky data corporations, the podcast consistently pointed that the most compelling narratives are emerging not despite the technology, but in critical response to it.

The podcasts are hosted by CDN Director Scott Rettberg or ALGOFOLK project lead Gabriele de Seta, and were produced by Esteban Piedrahita and Jack Pyke. Available on Spotify, wherever you get your podcasts.



23 episodes in 2025

- 21 Jan: The AI Update IX: **Predictions for 2025 in AI and Narrative**
- 28 Jan: Episode 33: **Interspecies Communication and New Media Art** with Alinta Krauth
- 6 Feb: The AI Update X: **O3**
- 11 Feb: Episode 34: **Output**
- 18 Feb: The AI Update XI: **AI Alien Simulation Worlds**
- 25 Feb: Episode 35: **The Ban on Social Media, AI, and the Digital Child** with Tama Leaver
- 4 Mar: The AI Update XII: **AI Fascism**
- 11 Mar: Episode 36: **Digital Puppetry** with David Bithell
- 18 Mar: The AI Update XIII: **AI and Research**
- 27 May: Episode 37: **Algopod with Gabriele de Seta, interviews by CDN middle school interns David and Benji**
- 4 Jun: ALGOpod #1: **Joan Mukogosi**
- 22 Sep: Episode 38: **e-lit in India** with Samya Brata Roy
- 29 Sep: The AI Update XIV: **AI and Writing**
- 6 Oct: Episode 39: **Tech-assisted Novels** with Yudhanjaya Wijeratne
- 14 Oct: The AI Update XV: **An Eye for AI Cinema @ BIFF 2025**
- 21 Oct: ALGOpod #2: **Guro Flinterud**
- 4 Nov: Episode 40: **From Cybertext to Video Game Studies** with Espen Aarseth
- 10 Nov: ALGOpod #3: **Minna Ruckenstein**
- 17 Nov: The AI Update XVI: **Anthropic Copyright Settlement**
- 1 Dec: Episode 41 - **Digital Art and Meaning** with Roberto Simanowski
- 8 Dec: The AI Update XVII - **Incest Economy**
- 15 Dec: ALGOpod #4: **Nick Seaver**
- 17 Dec: **Christmas Special Holiday Extravaganza Show**



About Off Center podcast
<https://s.cdn.uib.no/offcenter>

CDN IN THE MEDIA

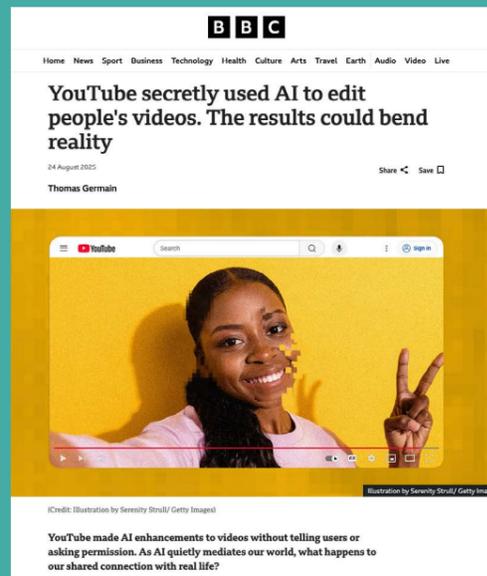
CDN appeared in over 50 articles throughout the year, highlighting the Center for Digital Narrative’s role as both a national and a global voice in the intersection of technology and culture.

Jill Walker Rettberg has emerged as a public intellectual and critic of contemporary AI. In August her expertise was featured in a BBC Future investigative report titled “YouTube secretly used AI to edit people’s videos. The results could bend reality”. The article addressed how the platform used AI to modify creator content without permission, raising serious ethical concerns about transparency and the potential to distort digital reality. This article was quoted in at least 20 articles on six continents and was part of a strong year for global outreach that included analysis of the “Great Language Flattening” in *The Atlantic* and features in *Newsweek* regarding viral social media trends.

Following these international highlights, the Center sparked a major national debate in Norway initiated by Jill Walker Rettberg’s November 5 op-ed in *Aftenposten*, titled “Nå er det nok. Stopp bruken av kunstig intelligens til kunnskapsarbeid” (Enough is enough. Stop the use of AI in knowledge work).

This critical stance led to a series of replies and high-profile media engagements, including an interview with *Klassekampen* on November 11 where Rettberg warned the government that “it is dangerous to introduce this technology uncritically”. These interventions joined other significant domestic contributions, such as warnings about viral deepfake videos of Erling Haaland on TV2, a deep dive into how TikTok acts as a mirror to our identities, and commenting on how women are criticized in social media in glossy national magazine *Se&Hør*.

From top to bottom:
Facsimile from Klassekampen, BBC, Aftenposten and TV2.



Launching the Living Glossary of Digital Narrative

The Center for Digital Narrative (CDN) formally launched its Living Glossary of Digital Narrative on March 14, 2025, developed in collaboration with the University of Stuttgart. This open-access platform is intended to provide dynamic, peer-reviewed definitions for terms “specific to digital narratives”, aiming to structure the emerging academic discipline.

CDN Director Scott Rettberg opened the launch, celebrating the event as one of the first major knowledge platforms to come out of the center and its collaboration with Stuttgart.

The philosophical foundation of the glossary was strongly influenced by Professor Joseph Tabbi, who stressed that the primary purpose is that “communities are the primary thing that we’re building, not texts”, viewing the project as a means for “colleagues to build a field”. Tabbi also emphasized that the focus of this scholarship is the “social familiar relationship” defined by the phrase “making kin,” which he said is like “generating life”.

Sibylle Baumbach of University of Stuttgart, clarified the scope of the project, emphasizing their motivation for starting it: “well there’s nothing really out there that is devoted to digital narratives so let’s do something!”.

For postdoctoral fellow and PAIG leader Hannah Ackermans, the “living” nature means that “we don’t have one collection of these are the terms that we need... This is an ongoing conversation”.

CDN Research Technologist Colin Robinson summarized the ambitious goal for the tool’s reach: “I want the glossary to be used everywhere”, ensuring its technical integration so that “the glossary is where you already are” when reading content across the web.

The glossary is continually updated with new peer-reviewed terms, now counting 15, among initial seed entries. Employees and guest researchers from different electronic literature adjacent fields are encouraged to write an entry as part of their stay.



Joefest

CELEBRATING JOE TABBİ AND 30 YEARS ON THE BLEEDING EDGE OF DIGITAL LITERATURE

2025 saw the retirement of CDN Professor Joe Tabbi, and in his honor we celebrated Joefest, a seminar at the University Library dedicated to his research career and the 30th anniversary of electronic book review, the journal he co-founded in 1995. The journal stands as one of the first scholarly open-access journals available on the web and remains a central locus for cutting-edge critical discourse in digital literature.

The celebration highlighted Tabbi's pioneering role, particularly his foresight regarding the intersection of literature and technology. Mark Amerika, an early innovator in hypertext writing and digital art, co-founded ebr with Tabbi. In his presentation Amerika recounted how they "brainstormed its inception" under the auspices of his online publishing venture, AltX. Their vision was rooted in shared intellectual passions, Amerika noted:

"We had a common set of interests, postmodern literature, post structuralist philosophy, and this new technology that we thought would change everything – the internet."

Ole Thomassen Hjortland, the Vice Dean of Research at the Faculty of Humanities, noted that Tabbi's introduction to the journal's very first issue in 1995 was a "prescient reflection on the nature of writing and the nature of books just at the dawn of the internet". Tabbi's opening statement of the first ebr issue immediately challenged prevailing fears about literature's obsolescence:

"To introduce an electronic book review in the very medium that is reducing book technology to a museum piece is to confront some of the more persistent cultural contradictions of the past few decades."

Tabbi's dedication to this evolving field continues through the next generation of editors. CDN Director Scott Rettberg explained that after longtime managing editor Will Lurz could no longer continue, the journal faced "a little bit of a crisis in terms of how is this journal going to be edited and managed into the future". The CDN stepped in to support the journal, reconstituting the editorial board, developing a new web platform, and integrating CDN PhD fellows and research assistants into the editorial team.

Anna Nacher, the new managing editor, praised Tabbi's character and mentorship and how he fostered "networks of care":

"Joe is an ideal mentor and ideal academic in terms of what we do need right now in this society. I'm completely convinced that if we could somehow mysteriously multiply Joe and have much more, you know, Joes... It is impossible, because Joe is one and only, but if this kind of attitude somehow miraculously became more widespread, both academia and the society would have been much better placed than it is right now. What we need is attentive reading, welcoming attitude to newcomers, constant and ongoing intellectual curiosity, and the willingness to serve."

The keynote address, delivered by novelist Steve Tomasula, considered Tabbi's major books to be a unified critical project. Tomasula offered a high-level summary of Tabbi's contribution to the field:

"I consider his major books and see in them a manifesto developed across 30 years or a way for the novel to remain relevant in this post noaki and technical age."

Tomasula also cited an off-hand remark by Tabbi that encapsulated his hybrid identity: "I've always wanted to be a media theorist who writes in longhand".

CDN Director Scott Rettberg praised Tabbi for modeling "new ways of being a critical writer, an editor, and a cultural producer/provocator", emphasizing that publishing itself requires constant experimentation. The enduring legacy celebrated at Joefest is that of pioneering vision.

As Hjortland concluded, true innovation lies beyond established norms:

"Beyond the cutting edge there's something else. There is this more precarious and uncertain bleeding edge. The bleeding edge that's the home of pioneers and visionaries."

Joefest was accompanied by an exhibition of items from the electronic literature archives of the University Library, and the publishing of a pamphlet titled "30 years of ebr, 30 pages of annotations: Joseph Tabbi reflects on the value of a media specific practice."

Tabbi's work is being celebrated in an upcoming festschrift. The 2026 Joseph P. Tabbi Fellowship for International Researchers in Electronic Literature will give a guest researcher an opportunity to collaborate with our PAIG group in the autumn semester of 2026.

Opening of OpenAI's Sydney offices

In December digital artist and CDN Affiliate Alinta Krauth unveiled three new works commissioned for the opening of OpenAI's Australian offices in Sydney. These pieces explore how generative tools can shape cultural and creative narratives:

«It's been great to peek behind the curtain at OpenAI and workshop ways of using their tools that aren't about speed, profit, or efficiency, but rather how those tools are seeping into cultural and creative avenues,» says Alinta on the experience.

The exhibition featured:

- Resonant Systems I & II – video artworks blending hand-drawn Australian flora and fauna with AI-driven transformations (in images).
- Drift Vector Field – interactive experience created with CDN Professor Jason Nelson, exploring stages of biological, human, and AI growth.



First! The Joy of Publication

Some of our PhD candidates reflect on their first publications this year:



Tegan Pyke and Ida Martine Gard

SCARY BUSINESS: MASCOT HORROR AS PRODUCT AND REFLECTION OF PLATFORMISATION, *DIGRA PROCEEDINGS*

Tegan: “Scary Business” looks at the Web-first gaming genre of mascot horror, the ways its games reflect platform capitalism, and how, by engaging in nostalgic marketing practices, the games’ developers reintroduce heteronormative values into the children’s toy market.

Honestly, pressing the submit button felt amazing! When a research topic is in my head it feels all so inter-

connected and tangled, getting it written down feels like torture. Getting to the end of that process, being happy with the result, and not having to think about it for a while was such a relief. I was so lucky to have Ida Martine writing with me and keeping me sane: I don’t think the article would exist without her!

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i2.2483>



Tom Legierse

TOWARDS A HOPEFUL UNDERSTANDING OF MASCULINITIES IN GAMING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION THROUGH KIND WORDS, *DIGRA PROCEEDINGS*

Tom: Addressing the shortcomings of the current understanding of men and masculinities in gaming, I offer an autoethnographic exploration of masculinity in gaming through Kind Words (lo fi chill beats to write to). The article works towards more hopeful understandings of men and masculinities in gaming that leave room to think about positive social change that involves men.

Hitting the submit button on this one was frightening. This is not just a provocative piece in that it tries to

challenge current theorizing on men and masculinities in gaming, it was also a methodological experiment for me that was deeply personal. It required me to be vulnerable, and more than ever before would I be reliant on readers that treated this with care and respect. Writing it was the easy part for this one, sharing it with the world was much more scary.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i1.2414>



Ella Marie Holi

FROM #BODYPOSITIVE TO #WEIGHTLOSSJOURNEY—EXPLORING WEIGHT LOSS NARRATIVES WITHIN THE BODY POSITIVE COMMUNITY, *FAT STUDIES*

Ella: The article looks at how five Nordic social media content creators attempt to position their weight loss journeys as body positive. The five content creators represent a larger shift in discourse around body positivity and weight loss that has taken place with the introduction of Ozempic and other GLP-1 medications, also known as “miracle drugs against obesity”, where a brief period of mainstream body positivity has given space to a new era of weight loss.

In the end, pressing the submit button was a relief, but I felt like I wasn’t quite ready to let go and could have kept polishing sentences and rewriting sections forever.

Overall, very happy to have been able to write and publish a whole article 1,5 years into my PhD project!

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2025.2554040>

SurvivingSOGICE Seeks Testimonies From Conversion Therapy Survivors in Europe

UiB launches Digital Platform amplifying survivor voices against conversion practices.

The University of Bergen’s Center for Digital Narrative (CDN) launches *SurvivingSOGICE*, a digital platform and human rights initiative dedicated to collecting stories about the practices commonly known as “conversion therapy” (SOGICE – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts).

“By documenting and preserving survivor testimonies, we are building both a space for remembrance and a powerful tool for advocacy,” explains Sérgio Roxo, project creator and PhD Candidate at the University of Bergen.

“This platform directly exposes practices that continue to cause profound harm to LGBTQIA+ individuals, while inspiring researchers, advocates, and creators to sustain

this vital conversation—particularly in our current challenging political climate.”

Despite being condemned and discredited by leading medical and psychological organizations worldwide, SOGICE continues to cause significant harm to LGBTQIA+ individuals across Europe and beyond.

SurvivingSOGICE addresses this critical human rights issue by centering survivor testimonies, curating essential resources, and building a comprehensive digital archive for research, advocacy, and education—with particular focus on survivors of these practices in Europe and those who have migrated to the continent.

“*SurvivingSOGICE* is fundamentally about creating visibility and recognition for those whose voices have been silenced,” says Roxo.

Website: www.survivingsogice.eu

SURVIVING
SOGICE SEXUAL ORIENTATION
& GENDER IDENTITY
CHANGE EFFORTS

A digital platform dedicated to raising awareness and promoting policy action on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts in Europe.

Together, we can shed light on these practices!

WWW.SURVIVINGSOGICE.EU

It is Time for an Interdisciplinary Network for Research on Gender and Games

We are living in a political moment globally in which research on gender is increasingly under pressure. Games studies scholars working on gender and games are all too familiar with these pressures and with the challenges that come with it. While #Gamergate is amongst the most illustrative historical examples of this, the violent harassment of scholars in our field, especially those who occupy marginalized identity positions, unfortunately still continues.

Besides the pressures from the outside, [Amanda Phillips](#)³ as critiqued game studies own history of being unwelcoming to feminist perspectives and the negging of marginalized scholars. [Kelly Bergström](#)⁴ further directs our attention to the 'blood on the tracks' of games and game studies, underscoring the exclusionary harms that these fields so often sustain themselves on. We must learn from these experiences, and work on creating sustainable and inclusive cultures around games and gender scholarship.

It is all the more challenging to create sustainable practices and cultures as Game studies scholars are scattered across universities and departments, and gender and games researchers maybe even more so. Thankfully, we regularly find each other at (inter)national game studies conferences and events. Gender and games researchers form informal ties within more formalized game studies networks, like DiGRA and its local chapters. However, we feel it is time to mobilize these ties into a more formalized space that centers gender and games in ways that are complementary to the already existing structures.

In this light we identify the need for scholars on gender and games to come together, form bonds and unite in a network of care. Such a network should bring together the various disciplinary traditions, theoretical and methodological approaches in order to think across



boundaries on how our work on gender and games can lead up to progressive change. The work we do is often regarded to be killing joy, but following [Sara Ahmed](#)⁵ we consider this productive. But when we kill joy alone, our efforts are more easily dismissed. Ahmed reminds us of a simple truth: "The more we are, the louder." Making ourselves louder is not just about making ourselves heard, it is about the force with which we make (and demand) progressive changes in the world.

The past year or so, together with Maria Ruotsalainen, University of Jyväskylä, we organized a series of three workshops focusing on gender and games in which we lay the fundamentals for the Interdisciplinary Network for Research on Gender and Games. The first workshop in this series, themed around feminist approaches to esports research, took place in November 2024 in Jyväskylä. We hosted our second workshop at CEEGS 2025 in collaboration with Robin Zingarelli Longobardi and Giulio Enea Bevione, where we will discuss future directions for research on gender and games. After that, we concluded our workshop series in Bergen with a 2-day event in November that highlighted doctoral research on gender and games funded through the Nordic Gender Fund.

With these workshops we have continuously considered two interrelated goals. Firstly, the workshops function

as standalone events that aim to further the individual works of scholars and the field as a whole. Secondly, we consider the connective tissue between these workshops to be their relation to the network. We envision the network to be a space in which the fruitful discussions and potential collaborations that spring out of these workshops can be sustained. Whether it is through reading groups, workshops, co-authored pieces, joint projects, or other forms of collaboration, we wish for the network to be a space in which scholars find a community from which they can build up their careers.

We cannot talk about this network without acknowledging the key role Usva Friman, Maria Ruotsalainen and Matilda Ståhl have played for us. By setting up a reading group on sustainable esports cultures after CEEGS 2022 they laid the foundation for what we aim to achieve with the network. To us, the reading group has exemplified the crucial importance of feminist communities from which we can draw a sense of belonging. We build on the informal bonds and ties that developed through and around this initiative to establish a formal space to which scholars can turn when seeking community and safety. We imagine this as especially important for junior scholars, who are affected most by the precarious existence that being a gender and games studies scholar can be.

In the coming years we will make moves to materialize the Interdisciplinary Network for Research on Gender and Games.

Part of it will happen through the workshops, but if you are reading this as a gender and games scholar; please reach out! Share your ideas, thoughts and hopes with us, and get involved in planning the network's launch in 2026. We are looking forward to it!

Contact us:

The network is established to foster inclusive, sustainable scholarly communities across disciplines, centering on feminist perspectives in game studies. It builds on informal ties and workshops to create a formal space for collaboration, support, and progressive change in gender and games research. The network aims to amplify marginalized voices and provide a sense of belonging – especially for junior scholars.

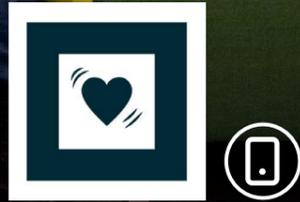
For more information, contact Tom Legierse or Ida Martine Gard Rysjedal.

- **Tom Legierse** (tom.legierse@uib.no)
- **Ida Martine Gard Rysjedal** (ida.rysjedal@uib.no)



Presented without comment.
Photo: Eivind Senneset.

The Center of the Center The Lounge



Our lounge, the central kitchen and discussion area in our building, is central to what we consider CDN. Several of our visitors say that the biggest thing they take back home from staying in Bergen is the things that happen here, most notably our Wednesday lunches and our Defrag Fridays – informal but center relevant and center adjacent happenings.

Some of the highlights of Wednesday lunches in 2025 include talk titles such as “Why does GPT 4 write sad American stories?”, “DIY video poetry”, “The Intersection of Humanistic Inquiry, Technology, and Historical Power” and “Crash course in Norwegian political parties”, as well as monthly roundtable discussions talking about current projects so the other people at the center know what each other are doing.

Defrags featured screenings of Sergio Roxo’s “Her Name was Gisberta”, board game evenings, Netprov sessions with friend of the center Rob Wittig, a zine workshop by Hanna Lauvli, and several video game presentations.

Here are some of the people we have had the pleasure of entertaining the past year:

Steve Tomasoula
Professor Emeritus at Notre Dame College, USA:

“The Center for Digital Narrative at the University of Bergen, which hosted the conference, was another kind of dream. [...]This place is the future of narrative, not just digital narrative, given how AI, especially, is being integrated into all kinds of storytelling. [...] There was such synergy among these and many others that gave the conference the feel of a family or class reunion.”

Yolanda de Gregorio
Assistant Professor at University of Cadiz, Spain:

“Thanks for all your invitations to workshops, talks, lunches... Thanks for all the research talks at the corridors, coaches, offices, everywhere! Thank you for the office and my lovely colleagues at the office. And thanks to Alinta and Jason to invite me!!! After 6 months with you, I’m bringing with me a lot of things that you’ve taught me about AI, Digital Culture, Memes, etc etc. But also you teach me how to appreciate a ray of sunshine, the arrival of spring, enjoying hiking.”

Charlotte Ammer
Master student in exchange from University of Stuttgart and the Born Digital project, Germany:

“I feel incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to work with so many fascinating scholars, and experience the CDN for what it is- a place for people to come together. Thank you all for making my stay in Bergen and at CDN very special, I felt so welcomed and had a blast during the last 7 months. Looking forward to seeing you all again, in Stuttgart, Bergen, or anywhere else!”



We hired a musician for our summer school. While warming up, he saw our arcade machine, proclaimed “Wow, this used to be my game back in the day!” and played a game, putting him at the top of our Galaga list. Otherwise, Tom and Hanna are still battling it out for the Ms. Pac-Man lead.

GALAGA		
154320	.....	GNU
125020	.....	SRR
114230	.....	SRR
MS. PAC-MAN		
66190	.....	HHL
63440	.....	TOM
55970	.....	HHL

Making Workplace Culture Through a Mario Kart League



The CDN Driftsmidler League began as a workplace initiative during the “play!” festival in Grieghallen. What started as a simple interest in a Mario Kart tournament grew into a playful media ecology meant to spark engagement, community, and experimentation with AI.

After the initial tournament, which did not go well for our two teams, we launched a lunchtime Mario Kart league at the office. The competition is governed by a website that logs race results and calculates standings.

Numbers alone don’t build culture, and while friendly competition helps, we have used generative AI to transform basic race data and racer comments from our internal channels into short broadcast-style narratives that retell each week’s twists and turns.

With the launch of Season 1 in January 2026, the media ecology tries to make an engaging context to casual lunchbreak gaming into a shared cultural event – showing how AI can support genuine, low pressure teambuilding. break gaming into a shared cultural event pressure team building.



The two Mario Kart teams in the play! Festival: CDN Driftsmidler and CDN Pliktarbeid
Photo: Ola Roth Johnsen

Research Themes

Electronic Literature

LEADERS: PROFESSOR JOSEPH P. TABBI,
POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER HANNAH ACKERMANS

In 2025 we launched two key infrastructure projects in the electronic literature node. The Living Glossary of Digital Narrative was launched in March 2025, with peer-reviewed definitions of central terms in digital narrative. This project will grow with the centre. The project was founded by Prof. Joseph Tabbi at UiB in collaboration with Prof. Sibylle Baumbach at Stuttgart University. Prof. Tabbi retired during the summer of 2025, after multiple festivities celebrating his career as a pioneer in researching electronic literature and supporting the field. The Arts and Humanities Library is creating an archive of Prof. Tabbi's work.

The second launch was of the CELL project, "international, open access, non-commercial resource offering centralized access to literary databases, archives, and institutional programs in the literary arts and humanities scholarship. CELL currently includes 6 member organizations and has been designed to allow for the integration of many more. Our collaborative network has been developing the information architecture needed for making born digital creative works and scholarly criticism findable across databases, worldwide. A workshop was held for the CELL consortium in September that included representatives from most of the databases.

Computational Narrative Systems

LEADER: PROFESSOR NICK MONTFORT

We had AI artwork in the exhibit *Le Monde selon l'IA / The World through AI* at *Jeu de Paume* and two peer-reviewed journal articles. We also published three peer-reviewed articles in conference proceedings and gave two other conference presentations, in addition to giving nine invited talks (one of them in Shanghai) and participating in two invited panel discussions.

Pre-release code was online by the end of the year for three nubs from *Narrative Nubs*, the main research

To support our research activities, the Electronic Literature Research Group was reinstated after being dormant for a decade. The Research Group combines people in the electronic literature node and employees in the digital culture program who research electronic literature. Milestones by PhD researchers include the midway evaluation of Tegan Pyke and the guest lecture by Jasmine Matthey in the research group *Aesthetic and Cultural Studies*. A notable publication was CDN affiliate David Thomas Henry Wright's article that explores the use of the visual image in electronic literature written by Asian diaspora writers, which begins and ends with the Chinese character "biáng", which requires 58 brushstrokes and cannot be typed, despite being included in Unicode in 2015.

The Index – Consortium on Electronic Literature (CELL) <https://cellproject.net/>
The Living Glossary of Digital Narrative <https://glossary.cdn.uib.no/>
Ackermans, Hannah. n.d. "Let's Build a City: Introducing the Living Glossary of Digital Narrative." *Electronic Book Review*. <https://doi.org/10.64773/2133-4d82>
Wright, David Thomas Henry. 2025. "The Text Is Not Enough: Visibility in Asian Diasporic Digital Narratives." *Matlit Revista Do Programa de Doutorado Em Materialidades Da Literatura* 12 (1): 121–33. https://doi.org/10.14195/2182-8830_12-1_7.

project in *CNS* — initially developed by Montfort and two MIT collaborators. We also completed the hiring process for our postdoc, who joins the Center in January 2026, and advertised for the *CNS* PhD position. In 2026, an international seminar and exhibition on *CNS* is being planned to take place in Mexico City.

Montfort, Nick. (2025). "Generating Reports, Fiction, and Text That Sounds Good". *Cahier Voor Literatuurwetenschap*, no. 16 (December). <https://doi.org/10.62956/zhx38678>.

Extending Digital Narrative

LEADER: SCOTT RETTBERG



During 2025, the Extending Digital Narrative group continued its research on digital narrative in emerging platforms, mixing creative practice with critical analysis of storytelling in AI and XR platforms. Highlights included writing an article "Extending Digital Narrative with AI, Games, Chatbots, and XR: How Experimental Creative Practice Yields Research Insights" in *Humanities* and articles in for a gathering on AI and the creative condition for *CounterText*. Lina Harder advanced work and submitted articles based on her *Histobots* project. Creative works by XDN members were exhibited in venues such as the *Jeu Paume*, the *ELO* exhibition, the *ICIDS* exhibition and more. We also organized the exhibition *An Eye for AI Cinema* in collaboration with the *Bergen International Film Festival (BIFF)*. XDN members participated in conferences and invited lectures, including keynote talks at the *ELO Conference* in Toronto and the *Allit* conference in Prague. Our research outreach activity including interviews with digital narratives and the AI update series on the *Off Center* podcast.

We've also distributed professionally produced videos of our events, distributed on the YouTube channel, and a catalog of this year's exhibition. In 2025 our group expanded to include PhD researcher Sergio Roxo, affiliated researcher Drew Keller, and research assistant Pedro Martinez. Coming projects for 2025 include an international seminar on *Extending Reality* and a corresponding exhibition with *BIFF*, extensive database documentation of innovative works, a third edition of the touring exhibition *More Than Meets AI* in Chicago, and the submission of an edited special issue on AI and narrative.

Read more about XDN activity on page 18 (*An Eye for AI Cinema*) and page 10 (*Understanding New Stories by Telling Them*).

Harder, Lina Ruth, David Jhave Johnston, Scott Rettberg, Sérgio Galvão Roxo, and Haoyuan Tang. 2026. "Extending Digital Narrative with AI, Games, Chatbots, and XR: How Experimental Creative Practice Yields Research Insights" *Humanities* 15, no. 1: 17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h15010017>

Social Media and Network Narratives

LEADER: JILL WALKER RETTBERG

Social media has changed a lot in the last few years, but internet storytelling is as central to our research as ever. We ran workshops on methods for studying internet content both at the PhD summer school and at a workshop on the *4CAT* tool.

CDN scholars presented research on self-expression in social VR, on how algorithmic content moderation shapes the stories fat influencers can tell, and on shared stories about prompting LLMs at conferences including *Nordmedia* in Aarhus in August and the *Association of Internet Researchers in Brazil* in October. Research on internet storytelling is currently spread across multiple nodes and projects, including *ALGOFOLK*, *Understanding Masculinity in Games*, *XDN* and *AI STORIES*.

Holi, Ella Maria. 2025. "From #bodypositive to #weightlossjourney—Exploring Weight Loss Narratives within the Body Positive Community." *Fat Studies* 14 (3): 263–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2025.2554040>

Rauchfleisch, Adrian, Daniel Vogler, and Gabriele de Seta. 2025. "Deepfakes or Synthetic Media? The Effect of Euphemisms for Labeling Technology on Risk and Benefit Perceptions." *Social Media + Society* 11 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305125131350>.

Computer Games and Interactive Digital Narrative and Understanding Masculinity in Games

LEADER: PROFESSOR KRISTINE JØRGENSEN



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN



The Research Council of Norway

The node's activities overlap with the activities in the CDN Games Research Group. In 2025, we organized several guest talks and three workshops. The Understanding Masculinity in Gaming is still the most important large activity in the node.

We organized one project workshop in November in preparation of a special issue in *Eludamos: The Journal of Computer Game Culture* (where I am co-editor in chief), with international attendants from 3 continents. Also, Tom Legierse and Ida Martine Gard Rysjedal, secured funding from Nordic Gender Fund for a series of workshops – one which was at CDN in November.

Legierse, Tom. 2025. "Towards a Hopeful Understanding of Masculinities in Gaming: An Autoethnographic Exploration through Kind Words." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *Nordic DiGRA 2025: Hope: Envisioning the Future of Game Cultures*, May 26. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i1.2414>.

Pyke, Tegan & Rysjedal, Ida Martine Gard. 2025. "Scary Business: Mascot Horror as Product and Reflection of Platformisation." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *DiGRA 2025: Games at the Crossroads*, July 30. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i2.2483>.

Mortensen, Torill Elvira, & Jørgensen, Kristine. 2025. Looking for gamers where they are: Norwegian broadcasting from television to Twitch. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 31(3), 1160-1179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13548565251326796>

Artistic Integrated Research

LEADER: JASON NELSON

2025 was a good year for artistic research. Working with Research Assistant Emma Huset, I worked on developing a database of experimental digital narrative interfaces, including new approaches in AR, games, kinetic, interactive and generative methods for reading and experiencing non-linear stories and poetry. I also won the Electronic Literature Organisation's Maverick Award given for a career of innovative artistic research (read more on page 19). Me and CDN affiliate Alinta Krauth created the *Intimate Atmospheres* exhibit (read more on page 20) and associated research projects, creating digital narratives and interactive art that engages with and utilizes the climate change data of the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research and Nordic Forest Research.

This research was also published at the Living Data conference in Brasil, the *Biodiversity Information Science and Standards* journal and showcased in the Cellar Gallery at the University of Regensburg. AIR ran a successful artistic research workshop at the CDN PhD

summer school, with students creating locative digital narratives throughout the CDN complex (see page 14).

AIR research travelled to Regensburg to work with Professor Astrid Ensslin during an extended research stay, working with the DIMAS institute on AI and Digital Narrative initiatives. We also continued our collaboration with Digital Culture students via their Artistic Labs, with MA students Vegard Fotland, Lee Melting, Sofie Rørlie and Emma Huset. Their research was exhibited at the 2025 ELO Conference in Toronto, Canada.

Late 2025 Alinta Krauth and me were invited to create four new digital narrative artworks for OpenAI's newly established offices in Sydney, Australia (see page 27), making us some of the first artists in the world to be invited by OpenAI to create public artworks.

AIR node collaborator Dr. Yolanda de Gregario wrote an artist book about mine and Krauth's digital narrative work to be published in 2026 by the University of Cadiz Press during her visit to the CDN.



PROJECTS

ALGOFOLK

LEADER: GABRIELE DE SETA



In 2025, ALGOFOLK entered its team phase: four hires started in their PhD and Postdoc positions, settled in their offices, and immediately *delved* into the weird and wondrous realm of algorithmic folklore. The project *not only* launched a research blog, newsletter and podcast, *but also* conceptualized and set up two key deliverables: the Black Box (a collaborative archival infrastructure) and the Lexicon (a co-authored theoretical glossary). With over seventy Black Box items and twenty Lexicon entries, the ALGOFOLK team has hit all of the year's milestones, and is charted for smooth sailing in 2026. Besides *a plethora* of single-authored articles on deepfakes, memes and metal music, the project's main output has been a book chapter on the phenomenon of algospeak, co-authored by all team members, which has been accepted for publication in a handbook.

Furthermore, the project has also organized and taken part in extensive dissemination activities. Over the year, the ALGOtalk series of seminars has hosted visiting scholars from Helsinki, Regensburg, Munich and Silchar, *a testament* to the project's global relevance and cross-institutional networks. The project team has



also been very active in seeking external funding, by both establishing partnerships with other projects and obtaining *a treasure trove* of small grants for individual activities and travel support.

Team members have also founded a new research group on "Algorithmic Cultures & Synthetic Media" (AC•SM), which has been awarded funding by LLE to organize a two-day workshop. *In conclusion*, 2025 has been a great year for ALGOFOLK – an *intricate tapestry* of weirdness and fun.

de Seta, Gabriele. Idil Galip, Lucie Chateau, and Günseli Yalcinkaya. 2025. "Groundhog Day: Memes Are New." *International Journal of Communication* 19: 558–64.

Vogler, Daniel, Rauchfleisch, Adrian, and **De Seta, Gabriele.** 2025. "Support for Deepfake Regulation: The Role of Third-Person Perception, Trust, and Risk." *Studies in Communication and Media* 14 (4): 570–93. <https://doi.org/10.5771/2192-4007-2025-4-570>.

Sarkar, Debarun. 2025. "A Distant Echo Attracts Me, Fragrance of Life beyond': Growing up a Metalhead in India." *South Asian History and Culture* 16 (1): 14–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2024.2442821>

AI Stories

LEADER: JILL WALKER RETTBERG

AI STORIES



AI STORIES is a 5-year project led by CDN PI Jill Walker Rettberg, funded by an ERC Advanced Grant, exploring the narrative structures underlying LLMs with a focus on the potential dominance of Anglo-American narratives and the need for more culturally inclusive approaches to Gen AI development.

2025 marked the project's first full year of activities, with two postdoctoral researchers, an impact and administrative coordinator, several research assistants and a data management engineer establishing the project's core research and support structure. Recruitment continued in parallel, with a third postdoc and a PhD fellow scheduled to begin in early 2026.

The project's second workshop in March led to a number of exciting spin-offs, among which a Peder Sather research collaboration grant between humanities scholars and computer scientists at UC Berkeley and UiB, to expand our mutual understanding of AI narration, and a publication (under review for *Narrative Inquiry*) on affirmative narrative. Former RA, Hermann Wiggers, and Jill Walker Rettberg's work on ChatGPT-generated stories is under review for *Open Research Europe* (but available in preprint, and the dataset is on *Dataverse.no*), with the title "AI-generated stories favour stability over change: homogeneity and cultural stereotyping in narratives generated by gpt-4o-mini". The cultural bias in these generated stories has been explored further in a series of workshops in Germany, Australia and India and at least two publications are underway, on conflicts, clichés and

colonialism. Another project publication in *Humanities*, by postdoc Anne Sigrid Refsum, explores how LLMs adapt the classic Asbjørnsen & Moe folk tale "Kjæresten i skogen" (The Sweetheart in the Forest, ATU 955).

Research dissemination and networking featured prominently, with project members contributing to international conferences, workshops and summer schools (e.g. the 40th Annual International Conference on Narrative, Florida, USA, April 2025 and the Australasian Digital Humanities Conference, Canberra, December 2025), and to public venues, both with invited talks from local UiB AI seminars to the national *Arendalsuka*, and with 4+ opinion pieces in newspapers. We also collaborated with other centers (e.g. invited talks at SFF Integreat and SFI MediaFutures) and hosted 5 international guest researchers.

In 2026 we will kick-off phase 2 of the project on experimenting with AI and we'll also be focusing on increasing visibility of, and value creation from, our research.

Refsum, Anne Sigrid. 2025. "The Sweetheart in the Forest' and the Synthetic Storytellers." *Humanities* 14 (12). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14120230>.

Rettberg, Jill Walker, and Wiggers, Hermann. 2025. "AI-Generated Stories Favour Stability over Change: Homogeneity and Cultural Stereotyping in Narratives Generated by Gpt-4o-Mini." *Open Research Europe* 5 (2025): [version 1; peer review: 1 approved, 1 approved with reservations]. <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.20576.1>.

The Next Generation

What are our early-career researchers doing this year? Let us hear from our postdoctoral fellows and PhDs.



Zahra Rizvi

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, AI STORIES

I am studying cultural flattening and narrative bias in LLMs, and also work on AI ethics, pop culture, and interactive and synthetic media, with a focus on South Asia.

I began with thinking about AI-generated texts and stories, and increasingly began to gravitate towards how the most popular/mainstream usage of AI capabilities is recreational AI. In this vein, small stories of big AI trends tell us something deeply important about the human side of AI and the human cost of AI.

I presented my research, "Ghibli Timelines and AI-Generated Indians", for the first time at UiB, at the HUMAN/AI seminar, organized by CDN, 05.08.2025. Presented my 2025 research findings in "Exploring Indian AI Stories" at Digital Archipelagos - Digital Humanities Australasia 2025 conference, Australian National University, Canberra (Ngambri), in December.



Tom Legierse

PHD CANDIDATE, UMG

I am working on gender in gaming communities. Specifically, I explore how gender becomes relevant in different places and communities in Berlin where people come together offline to play digital games. Considering that these sites are predominantly occupied by men, I focus mostly on how these men perform gender through their gaming practices. I do so through an intersectional lens, meaning I look at the construction of social difference in these communities more broadly in order to understand the interplay between gender and other categories of social differentiation including ethnicity, class and ability.

My ethnographic work consists primarily of participant observations and interviews, which leads to a thick understanding of the day-to-day practices that make up gender in these communities. My aim is to understand how men make sense of themselves as gamers and men; how they play a variety of games in a variety of ways; and how they anticipate the future for men

in games and society at large. The overall goal for this research is to rethink how men can be part of inclusive (gaming) futures.

For me personally the coming together of scholars on gender and games in various workshop settings (of which 2 at CDN in Bergen!) was the most important development in the field. In 2026 we will establish an Interdisciplinary Network for Research on Gender and games based off of this work in 2025. It is incredibly stimulating to see so many people working on similar topics from various different disciplines, and important to create a space in which we can have rich and safe discussions around gender and games research.

Legierse, Tom. 2025. "Towards a Hopeful Understanding of Masculinities in Gaming: An Autoethnographic Exploration through Kind Words." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of Nordic DiGRA 2025: Hope: Envisioning the Future of Game Cultures, May 26. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i1.2414>.



Marianne Gunderson

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, ALGOFOLK

I am working on vernacular practices through which people seek to control, explore, or make sense of our relationship with AI. Among various practices I am researching is the design, spread, and iterative adaptation of custom prompts, the circulation of thought experiments, fables and memes as expressions of AI-related fears and anxieties, and the playful exploration of LLM personalities and behaviour in online communities. Together, these practices are examples of different approaches to the necessary task of understanding the impact of AI on human lives now and in the future.

This year I have been digging deep into the phenomenon of the "egenprompt", a viral prompt that has been circulating in AI-adjacent circles on X.com. I am

fascinated by how people are using custom prompts to negotiate their relationship with large language models, and the communities and networks that are being formed around this practice. I have also started to look into communities of AI enthusiasts that are exploring and playing with large language models in closed forums, placing different models in conversation with each other. Finally I am collecting and analysing thought experiments in which AI is given a monstrous or apocalyptic role. I presented about the eigenprompt at the AoIR conference in Niteroi, Brazil, and submitted an article (forthcoming) on academic writing as gothic practice.



Debarun Sarkar

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, ALGOFOLK

I am mapping emerging entanglements of everyday life and algorithmic imaginaries by investigating the emergence of algorithmic folklore in South Asia.

This ties into my broader work in the field of science and technology studies and sociology of everyday life which I have been engaged in over the past decade. To do so I am conducting digital ethnography and will conduct physical ethnography in 2025 and 2026.

The field of digital folklore lacks a deep genealogy in India. I am currently working on an article on digital folklore from the late 2000s in India to establish the field. In another piece with fellow collaborators, we are attempting to think through screen-based computing in Norway, India and China and interrogating situated notions of creativity and innovation. I am also working on establishing on a longer genealogy of fan-made celebrity deepfakes in India with older practices of making collages and photoshopped images. Over the

next year, I plan to focus my energies on interfacing algorithmic folklore with labour perspectives building longer traditions of work in industrial and organisational folklore.

The work allows me to think of relatively serious and grim issues with material that is relatively mundane and everyday. For example, it allows me to think and will allow me to intervene in future in relatively serious debates of AI ethics by following internet cultures and interacting with common folks. I get to spend a lot of time hunting memetic trends and lurking on the internet.

Sarkar, Debarun. 2025. "A Distant Echo Attracts Me, Fragrance of Life beyond': Growing up a Metalhead in India." *South Asian History and Culture* 16 (1): 14–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19472498.2024.2442821>



Jhave Johnston

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, XDN

I explore AI-augmented multimedia digital literature creation and more generally how AI is re-shaping knowledge across disciplines. My practice tracks genAI tools as they emerge and tests how they reconfigure authorship and research-creation methods. This year the AI ecosystem and my practice adopted semi-autonomous agentic processes, where foundation models produce prompts to generate audio-visuals or code in loops with limited human intervention. This resulted in extensive fiction, code, video and music creative output. Additionally, I continue to synthesize research signals into online and physical micro-essays, slides, prototypes, and installations. Including an automated research hub (*AI-updates* coded and launched in mid-2025 at glia.ca/AI-updates⁶) which already (as of Dec 2025) contains 2600+ categorized links harvested through a semi-autonomous workflow.

Notable explorations: *Liferature*, the convergence of protein/genome language models and literary practice. I frame *Liferature* as a boundary object between

synthetic biology, computation, and poetics, using Evo-2-era genome modeling as a key inflection point; humans will re-write bodies in ways that re-write civilizational narratives. Evidence-based ecological accounting: I collated and analyzed data estimates for the carbon emissions of generative AI relative to other sectors in *Carbon Emissions of #genAI in Context*. Speculatively, I developed notion of *Matriarchal AI*: an ontological reconfiguration away from extractive logics.

Key results this year: *Identity Upgrade ep2* exhibited in "For You" at Samek Art Museum (Lewisburg, PA) Jan-March. ReRites exhibited in "Le monde selon l'IA" at the Musée du Jeu de Paume (Paris), April-Sept. I presented ongoing work at AI@UiB, KMD, MAH2025, Versopolis, Arendalsuka, and NERDs *North European Resonance and Dissonance Society*. I participated in *Eye for AI* with the installation Brain-Knot Altar. Full documentation and works are available at glia.ca⁷.



Anne Sigrid Refsum

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, AI STORIES

In the AI STORIES project we study the narrative structures and cultural biases of Large Language Models (LLMs). I have been working on generating new variants of Norwegian folktales and comparing them to variants from oral tradition. Folktales are useful for studying LLM textual outputs, as they are structurally predictable but have specific regional cultural traits that can be subdued or amplified both in training data and in outputs. My preliminary results show a tendency towards «floating» motifs and imagery, where the LLM detaches narrative units from their original context to new and sometimes absurd textual sites. This may be a useful way of describing so-called «hallucinations».

Together with Jill Walker Rettberg and Hanna-Riikka Roine I have also researched the narrative push and pulls seen in ChatGPT conversations allegedly leading to suicides. It is evident that chatbots draw on the plot structures of multiple literary tropes as well as dramatic roles such as project manager or groomer, and I look forward to looking more closely into these dynamics in 2026.

The most important change in my research focus was discovering how much research food there is for a literary scholar in any LLM text or conversation!

Refsum, Anne Sigrid. 2025. "The Sweetheart in the Forest and the Synthetic Storytellers." *Humanities* 14 (12). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14120230>.



Hannah Ackermans

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, ELECTRONIC LITERATURE AND PAIG COORDINATOR

Whenever I explain that my work concerns the accessibility of electronic literature, I can expect questions about the practical use of electronic literature. We are predisposed to think about accessibility requirements as only the basic needs to stay alive, disregarding all that makes life worth living. No matter how much we have to fight for disability justice on basic needs, I want it to be parallel to our fight for disabled art and joy, to argue that we do not just exist to survive at the bottom of the curve as disabled people, trying claw our way up to "normal". Electronic literature's avant-garde position is ideally suited for this argument.

I analyze canonical and lesser-known born-digital literature, highlighting the alternative interpretations of core concepts in electronic literature by taking a disability-inclusive perspective. In doing so, I provide a deeper understanding of multimodality that serves as an analytical tool for anyone close-reading electronic literature with a focus on multimodality or reading experience.

As such, I mean to participate in ongoing scholarly conversations in the field about the materiality of electronic literature and on a higher level the societal and aesthetic effect of digital culture. This disability-inclusive perspective is sorely needed with the growing awareness of digital accessibility both inside and beyond the academy.

I have had two shifts in my research that seem noteworthy to me:

1. I participated in the International Symposium on Ecological Economics and Degrowth in Oslo in June 2025 to talk about my research within the wider context of capitalist exploitation. Having this more global perspective has given me a greater sense of purpose for my work, especially because my research topics are underrepresented in these fields. I have now been asked to speak at the Winter school on Degrowth in Oslo this year, and which will likely turn into an article for Degrowth Journal.

2. 2025 was also the year I started learning to take a more personal perspective in my research, which I had avoided so far. I wrote a chapter for *The Joy of Electronic Literature* (forthcoming) which focused on my reading experience of an e-lit work about chronic illness as a chronically ill person. The feedback has encouraged me to also have some personal perspectives in my other writing at the end of the year.

Publishing and Infrastructure Group (PAIG)

We hosted the conference "Weird Stories and Wicked Communities" on March 13-14 in which students and PhDs from Bergen and Stuttgart presented their work. This event also included the launch of the Living Glossary of Digital Narrative (see page 25).

We also published a bunch of glossary entries and hosted the virtual workshop How to Write a Badass Glossary entry (Nov 10-11) for Bergen and Stuttgart Students. "Showcase of the Consortium on Electronic Literature".

In addition we hosted the in-person CELL workshop (Sept 4-5) which brought together the representatives of all member databases of CELL that currently contribute to the search engine.



Lina Harder

PHD CANDIDATE, XDN

I research what happens when artificial intelligence is asked to speak for the past. My PhD project explores AI-driven chatbots that present themselves as historical figures. I call these systems histobots. They appear in museums, exhibitions, and online platforms where “they” promise access to history through conversation. I am interested in what these encounters actually offer. Are they educational tools, narrative devices, or confident improvisers dressed up as authority figures? More importantly, what kinds of history do they produce, and which voices quietly disappear in the process?

Some of my work grows out of practice-based experiments, including a chatbot of a Hollywood actress and inventor as she might have spoken in 1951. Building and testing such systems can be playful and strange. A historical figure responds instantly, speaks fluently, and rarely admits uncertainty. When the bot answers questions the real person could never have known, or slips modern values into mid-century sentences, the cracks show. These moments are not failures. They are where my research begins. They reveal how large language models smooth over gaps in the archive and replace absence with confidence.



Ella Maria Holi

PHD CANDIDATE, SOCIAL MEDIA

In my PhD project I explore how different fat communities in the Nordics negotiate with dominant narratives of fatness and the counter-narratives emerging from the fat community. In my first article I explored how body positivity and traditional weight loss narratives intertwine in the social media stories of body positive content creators on a weight loss journey, and discussed its impact on body positivity as a political movement in the Nordics.

I am currently working on my second paper on content moderation of fat activists, or more specifically, how the disproportionate content moderation of fat people is experienced and theorized.

This year, I leaned into those cracks. Instead of creating more historical characters, I focused on understanding what histobots are, how they work, and where they mislead. I talked to a lot of different histobots online, developed typologies, first approaches to ethical frameworks, and smaller experimental interventions that make their assumptions visible rather than invisible. The aim of my research is not to perfect historical illusion, but to ask when simulation becomes distortion, and when restraint is the more responsible choice.

In 2025 I finished two article drafts. One explored conversations with three versions of the impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh across platforms to clarify the concept of histobots. The other presented a situated, practice-based reflection on the simulation of historical figures. I shared this work at international conferences, including AoIR 2025 in Brazil and GenAI and Creative Practices in Amsterdam, and through on- and offline talks and workshops in Europe and the United States. I also showed two artistic works in the Centre’s exhibition “An Eye for AI Cinema” and one work in “New Realities: Fashion Fakes – AI Factories” at the Museum für Kommunikation Frankfurt.

For the fat studies field, the growing trend around GLP-1 medications, like Ozempic and Wegovy, continued to shape public discourse around fatness. The shift from the era of body acceptance to an even more medicalized way of looking at fatness provides both a challenge and rich material for research.

Holi, Ella Maria. 2025. “From #bodypositive to #weightlossjourney—Exploring Weight Loss Narratives within the Body Positive Community.” *Fat Studies* 14 (3): 263–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2025.2554040>.

Conference presentation: “Your Butt Goes Against Our Community Guidelines”: Negotiating Fatness, Visibility, and Resistance in Social Media at NordMedia 2025



Hanna Hellesø Lauvli

PHD CANDIDATE, ALGOFOLK

I am researching speculative beliefs and theories about technology and the rhetorical factors at play when people argue, develop and disseminate those theories. As a part of the Algorithmic Folklore project, studying theories that are at a crossroad between folklore, theory and conspiracy, I’m excited to couple my previous research in rhetoric to investigate the factors at play that persuade us to imagine specific futures. I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how the ascription of epistemic value in vernacular contexts occur, and map different theories and beliefs that have developed in tandem with technology.

Among other fascinating theories, this year I’ve taken a special interest in the Dead Internet Theory; a theory that posits that machine generated content will surpass human made content online, leaving the primary communication platform of many, the internet, in a state where real human connection is either constantly in question, or completely void. Researching its origins and tracing similar ideas through history has been fruit-

ful in understanding the larger systems at play that connect these fears to broader cultural, societal and economic issues.

Research concerning AI and general algorithmic impact on the web at large is an increasingly growing field, and I’m grateful and excited to be part of it. Philosophically, theoretically and practically, these configurations impact the way we create, interact and think. I enjoy the surprising elements of it and seeing the different ways people and collectives respond to future imaginaries.

Presented at: Weird Stories and Wicked Communities (Bergen, Norway); Internet Archetypes Workshop (Regensburg, Germany); Forskerdagene UNG (Bergen, Norway)

Key impressions this year: Digital Humanities Summer Institute in Montréal, Canada; Digital Methods Summer School in Amsterdam, Netherlands; Digital Narrative Summer School in Bergen, Norway.



Jasmine Matthey

PHD CANDIDATE, ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

I am researching South African Electronic Literature. I am specifically focusing on a new literary movement currently active in the nation that is driven and shaped by digital technology and online platforms. This movement stems directly from the Born Free Generation of young politically active writers and creatives who are changing the literary and publishing landscape in South Africa through their creative innovations. I am writing an article-based thesis that implements a mixed-methods approach, combining literary analysis with qualitative and quantitative methods, informed by Franco Moretti’s approach to the practice of distant reading. I hope to later conduct fieldwork within South Africa at literary festivals, conduct interviews with writers and readers, and record their insights.

My research has been further informed by philosophical approaches and narrative theory which is something I hope to develop further.

I created a dataset of digital works and authors, presented at the European Conference of African Studies in Prague, attended a series of literary events in Oslo and interviewed Koleka Putuma, one of the key authors I am conducting research on, collaborated with colleagues at the CDN summer school, and developed extensive teaching resources on the topic of Electronic Literature for an undergraduate course.



Sérgio Galvao Roxo

PHD CANDIDATE, XDN

I am exploring how media production within immersive media—particularly in relation to Virtual Reality (VR)—can function as a tool for visibility, social education, and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their rights. My work examines how queer creators use media production and digital storytelling to confront systemic and rising violence, and how VR can promote forms of representation and social education.

By analyzing queer documentary works created by, for, and about them, I frame these storytelling practices as digital artifacts that expand our understandings of visibility, belonging, and awareness. As part of this research, I am also developing SurvivingSOGICE (www.survivingsogice.eu), a web archive of testimonies from survivors of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE, also known as Conversion Therapy/Practices) in Europe. This archive will serve as the backbone for a VR piece that will function as an educational tool, designed to counter discriminatory practices and promote broader social awareness.

This year included the launch of the SurvivingSOGICE platform (see page 29), supported by the Nordic Gender Fund at the University of Gothenburg, as well as the presentation of preliminary findings on topics including ethics, queer use of XR, and media productions in VRChat at conferences such as NordMedia and AoIR.



Tegan Pyke

PHD CANDIDATE, ELECTRONIC LITERATURE

I am working on postdigital perceptions of literature and literary production. More specifically, I'm looking at the field of electronic literature and how its emergence within academic institutions has influenced what is valued as 'literary' in the digital milieu. Through this analysis, I'm uncovering the ways in which colonialism and capitalism have informed contemporary literary culture, placing emphasis on the lone genius while collaborative, 'folk' practices are underrepresented.

My ultimate aim is to highlight a variety of practices that have gone undocumented in the field of digital literature, either due to legitimate oversight or as a result of institutional bias. In particular, I'm focusing on creative works and practices that are Web-first and collaborative, either in nature or formation.

This has led to my current research, which looks at the phenomena of Sims stories simultaneously as: result of corporate leveraging of participatory culture, extension of women's print literary practices, and example of how women are often erased from video game history.

My favourite research rabbit hole this year has been my research on the origin of 'creativity'. Many people don't know that creativity is a relatively new concept, formulated in the USA over concerns that the rise in white-collar workers would lead to a sea of mindless drones. This would negatively impact innovation, particularly in the military-industrial complex. But when creativity is seen as a generic, intrinsic human trait, the creativity outlook assures that anyone can try to innovate, any time, any where. This is a value that's inherent in contemporary society; with a considerable role in individualism and hustle culture.

Pyke, Tegan, and Rysjedal, Ida Martine Gard. 2025. "Scary Business: Mascot Horror as Product and Reflection of Platformisation." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *DiGRA 2025: Games at the Crossroads*, July 30. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i2.2483>.



Ida Martine Gard Rysjedal

PHD CANDIDATE, UMG

As part of the Understanding Masculinity in Gaming project, I am conducting a study of two men gamers in Twitch.tv, and two forums connected to the channels. The project's main goal is to examine how gaming behavior, as well as rhetorical statements, channels different ways of expressing masculinity. I am focusing on what is being said and done in streaming channels of games, and how masculine discourses is discussed amongst gamers. The aim of this project is to contribute to a more holistic understanding of masculinity, men and gaming.

I will explore how gaming behavior, as well as rhetorical statements, channel different ways of expressing masculinity in gaming discourses.

The project's overarching question is: How is masculinity expressed in game culture, and in what way are behavior in games and rhetorical devices used as expressions of masculinities? As the question indicates, I find it very fun to work with something I find interesting, and I enjoy working with gendered aspects of gaming and game culture. These topics are important to me, which is why my research also feels meaningful.

Pyke, Tegan, and Rysjedal, Ida Martine Gard. 2025. "Scary Business: Mascot Horror as Product and Reflection of Platformisation." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *DiGRA 2025: Games at the Crossroads*, July 30. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i2.2483>.



Yagmur Cisem Vik

PHD CANDIDATE, ALGOFOLK

I am working on understanding how human and algorithmic co-creation transforms cultural artifacts and practices in Turkish diaspora. For this, I am exploring three branches of cultural expression: crafts, horror stories, and spirituality and divination. Through these three cultural practices, I hope to explore how our perception of creativity as a vernacular expression is transforming with co-making with algorithmic systems whether these are recommender systems, or AI models. These three branches collectively create what I call "girl topics" which is a semi-pun on the social media-famous concepts of "girl dinner" and "girl math". It essentially addresses the gendered history of cultural practices where leisure activities are considered feminine, despite generating income; like fortune telling, handicrafts, and organizing séances.

I essentially try to understand and trace the cultural changes GenAI technologies have brought together. These three branches are areas that I consume and practice, and it allows me to have an autoethnographic perspective these cultural products and the Turkish

communities practicing them. This project is derived from my fascination of cultural production, folklore, and creativity; and of course, our ability to creatively adapt, mimic, or make fun of the changes that come with them. Curiouser and curiouser.

As one does, I found myself in the rabbit hole of sociologists and philosophers discussing Weber's concept of disenchantment and enchantment. There have been many developments in the algorithmic side of my research, due to its fast-changing nature and popularity; but those were not necessarily the rabbit holes I have been in.

Two results in press: a co-authored book chapter on algospeak awaiting to be published, and an unpublished research report from the Digital Methods Summer School on LLM's search engine function.

Vik, Yagmur et.al. (2025). What if LLMs Are Our New (Re)search Engines? <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.18247.61601>



Dom Ford

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, LEAD AI

I began my project 'Bring Me to Life? The Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Nonplayer Character Dialogue in Digital Games' in October 2025. Generative AI is, of course, one of the most talked-about topics today, and games can often be a 'canary in the coalmine' for digital culture and capital. They serve as a place where the technology can be experimented with – played with. The potential benefits are clear: on the one hand a utopian vision of an immersive fictional world where you can talk to characters naturally, without running into the limits of a script; on the other hand, executives lick their lips at the cost-cutting implications. But, as in other areas of culture, there is a grassroots backlash to the use of generative AI.

So in my project, I look at large language model-powered nonplayer character dialogue in two ways. First, it's coming soon: what do players think about it? Second, do AI characters pose any fruitful challenges to our existing theories of fiction, characters and narratives?

I honed in on 'liveness' as the cornerstone of my project. What natural language gives AI characters is a sense of liveness. It's why it is with natural-language chatbots that AI technology has gone massively mainstream. This has led me to broaden my search to include AI characters in chatbots like ChatGPT as a side project.

Ford, Dom. 2025. "On Myths, Stories, Models and Games." *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies* 17 (2): 285–91. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00130_7.



Haoyuan Tang

PHD CANDIDATE, XDN

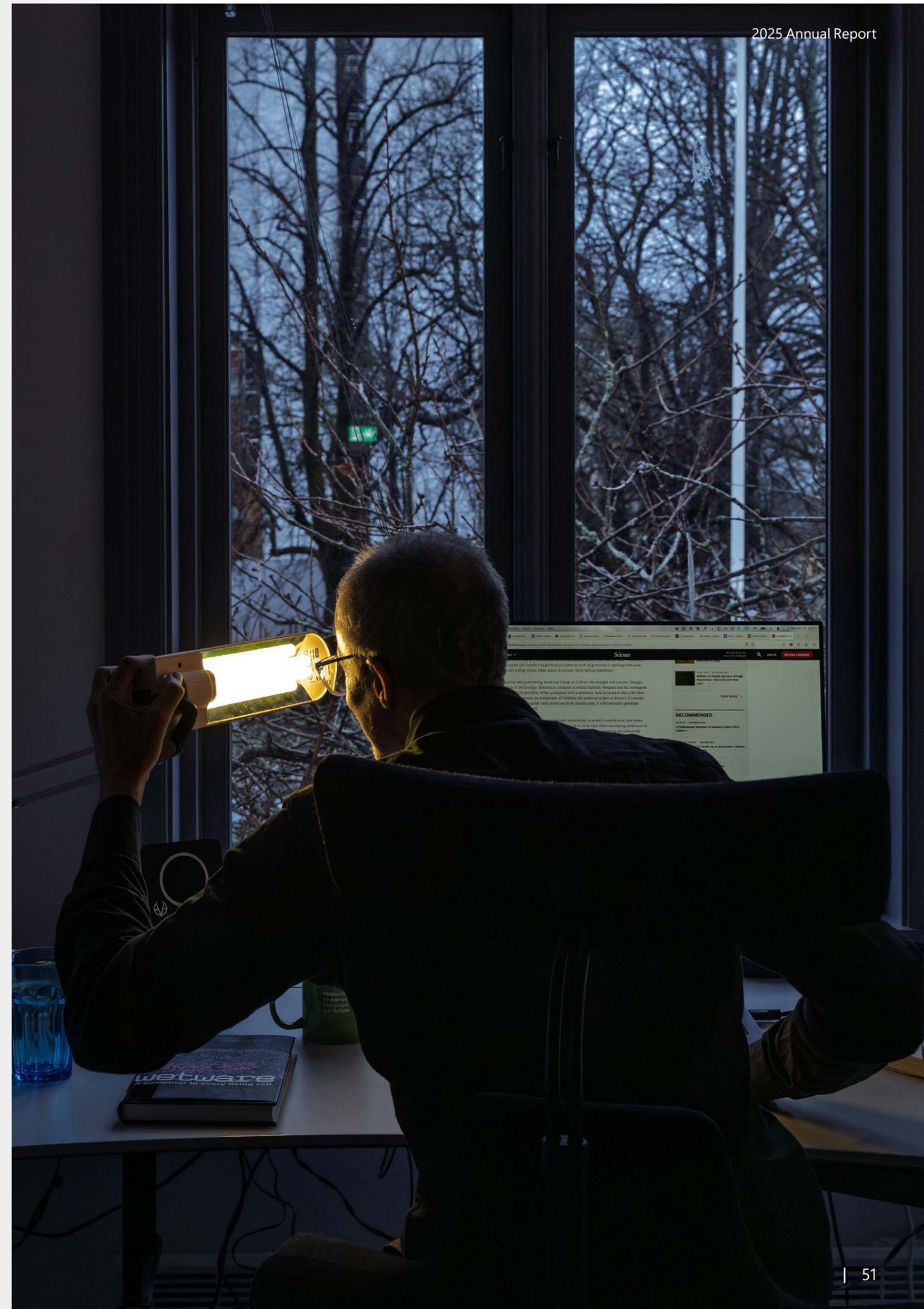
I am working on integrating Large Language Models (LLMs) into video game narratives through non-verbal (non-text-and-speech-based) input and addressing the challenges and potential of using AI-driven storytelling in 3D adventure role-playing games.

serve as the "grammar" of game narrative, shaping the player's experience and the narrative that unfolds. The study aims to understand how AI-generated text can align with the narrative affordances of game mechanics, and how LLMs can fit in the conventional game design.

While LLMs such as GPT have demonstrated potential in generating Non-Player Character (NPC) dialogue and story content, their current applications in games are constrained by their dependence on language-based input and output. This often conflicts with non-verbal, mechanics-driven player input such as moving and fighting and storytelling techniques such as level design and environment. This contradiction creates a disconnect between LLMs' language-based understanding of story context and the interactive narrative conveyed by the game's mechanics. My study proposes a methodology to address this contradiction by converting non-verbal player actions into textual prompts for LLMs, generating NPC dialogue and story content based on player actions. The study also proposes the term "language of mechanics" to describe how the non-verbal elements of games like mechanics,

In 2026, I'll focus on two topics. The first one is text generators in games. I am making a historical analysis of how text generators have affected gameplay and storytelling in video games. The second one is exploring the concept of "the language of mechanics". I am planning to extract representative common mechanics from 3 popular AAA narrative-driven games, compares how these mechanics allow players to take actions (as verbs in the narrative), and identifies design patterns from them.

Harder, Lina Ruth, David Jhave Johnston, Scott Rettberg, Sérgio Galvão Roxo, and Haoyuan Tang. 2026. "Extending Digital Narrative with AI, Games, Chatbots, and XR: How Experimental Creative Practice Yields Research Insights" *Humanities* 15, no. 1: 17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h15010017>



How to stay in touch

Newsletter

Our newsletter is quarterly, and give news of articles, job postings, activities and events we do.

<https://pub.dialogapi.no/s/MjM1MDM6N-mMwMTIiODUtNjRiZi00M2RmLWlwN2MtNzE5Yjg1Y-jE5MDII>



Podcast

Our podcast comes every other week in season, with an interview with a CDN scholar or scholar in a related field. Read more about Off Center on page 21.

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/off-center>



Our Social Media

We have a **Youtube channel** where we post recordings of selected seminars and talks.

<https://s.cdn.uib.no/youtube-cdn>



You can find
all this on our
website

cdn.uib.no

We are active on:

LINKEDIN: Center for Digital Narrative

BLUESKY: @cdn-bergen.bsky.social

MASTODON: @cdn@fediscience.org

INSTAGRAM: @centerfordigitalnarrative

FACEBOOK: Center for Digital Narrative



Opportunities

We will have open positions in 2026. All positions are advertised at Jobbnorge.no and Euraxess, and are linked to from our website front page.

<https://www.jobbnorge.no/search>



<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/>



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions - Postdoctoral Fellowships

The European Union funds two-year postdoctoral positions for early career scholars of any nationality to move to Norway to carry out their research activities abroad, acquire new skills and develop their career. These are highly competitive grants with an application deadline in September each year, and only applicants with a PhD who have not lived in Norway for more than 12 of the preceding 36 months are eligible.

If you are interested in applying for an MSCA at CDN with UiB as a host, contact the researcher you have an interest in cooperating with, or our administrative project leader.

ERC grant

The European Research Council (ERC) is the premier European funding organization for frontiers research. ERC grants support excellent researchers of any nationality to conduct ambitious, groundbreaking research at institutions in Europe (including Norway) for 5 years. It targets researchers at different stages in their careers and intends to encourage the highest quality researchers in Europe, in any field. If you have a project idea that would contribute to our research objectives, contact us.

Fulbright

The Fulbright Scholar Program provides fellowships for U.S. academics and professionals to lecture or conduct research abroad, and for foreign scholars to do the same in the United States. Each year, it awards over 1,700 fellowships, fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange.

Other fellowships

- **CDN Guest Researcher Fellowship** (to be advertised in March for Autumn 2026)

- **The Joseph P. Tabbi Guest Researcher Fellowship in Electronic Literature** (to be advertised in September for Spring 2027)

Both are available for post-doctoral researchers or university faculty within 5 years of their first appointment.

Self-funded visiting scholars

If you have your own project funding to cover your expenses you can apply to be a visiting scholar at CDN, which would give you access to our events and facilities and to a shared workspace.

For more information about visiting or initiating a project, contact the researcher you have interest in cooperating with, or our administrative project leader.

New people in 2025



Dom Ford
Postdoc, Lead AI



Zahra Rizvi
Postdoc, AI STORIES



Anne Sigrid Refsum
Postdoc, AI STORIES



Azza Sakr
Research assistant



Mahaut de Vareilles
Administrative project coordinator, AI STORIES



Yagmur Cisem Vik
PhD candidate, ALGOFOLK

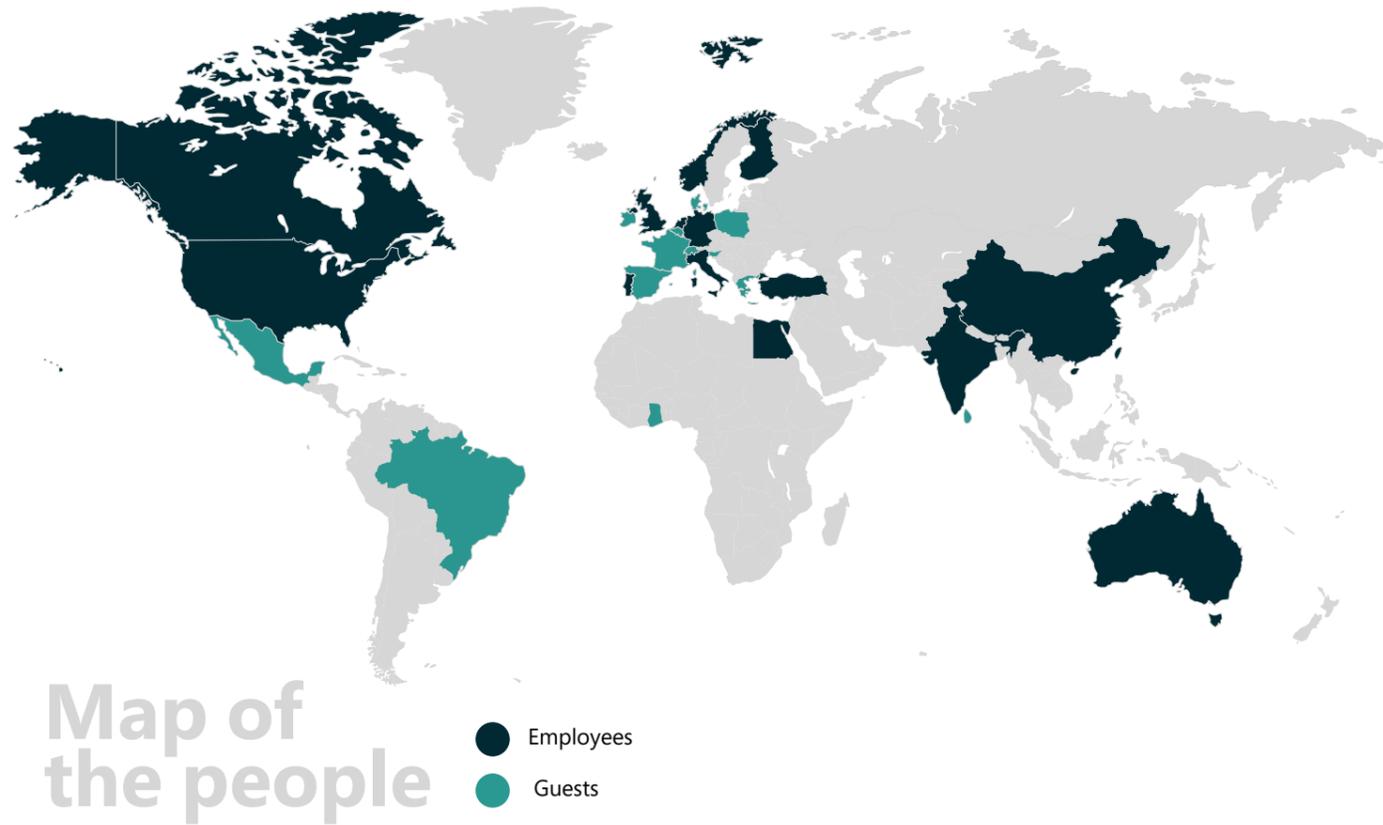


Pedro Pinto
Research assistant

Accounts 2025

REVISED BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS 2025,
CENTER FOR DIGITAL NARRATIVE (IN NOK)

	Revised budget	Accounts	Deviation	Budget 2026
Own contribution	7 070 700	7 664 237	- 593 537	7 553 640
Tech/Adm	3 544 131	3 647 486	- 103 355	3 284 445
Buyout	2 384 776	2 507 400	- 122 624	2 709 792
Prof II	1 609 738	1 611 952	- 2 213	1 620 311
Recruitment positions	1 216 790	922 417	294 373	4 023 074
RA	1 004 217	1 000 472	3 745	777 987
XDN production costs	53 176	57 262	- 4 086	132 930
VR/AI	58 661	28 661	30 000	333 344
Core group travel	617 139	578 659	38 480	792 499
Advisory board	25 065	35 229	- 10 164	118 494
Events	950 185	948 472	1 713	927 892
Dissemination	92 474	110 394	- 17 920	137 833
Guest researcher stays	54 226	55 496	- 1 270	127 685
Programming design	208 886	236 986	- 28 100	260 715
PAIG	160 579	120 732	39 847	226 624
Research stays	82 000	-	82 000	488 333
Other costs	33 913	17 760	16 152	41 332
Total	19 166 654	19 543 614	- 376 960	23 556 929
		Deviation NFR	216 578	
		Deviation wages NFR	69 925	
		Deviation drift NFR	146 652	



The CDN Team

as of March 2026

CORE GROUP



Scott Rettberg
Professor and Center Director



Jill Walker Rettberg
Professor and Deputy Director



Nick Montfort
Professor II and Principal Investigator



Kristine Jørgensen
Professor and Principal Investigator



Jason Nelson
Professor and Principal Investigator



Eamon O' Kane
Professor of Fine Arts, KMD, UiB (from January 2026)



Gabriele de Seta
Researcher and ALGOFOLK Project Leader

PROFESSOR II



Lai-Tze Fan
Associate Professor, University of Waterloo, Canada



Rafael Pérez y Pérez
Professor, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Mexico



Doris Rusch
Professor at Uppsala University, Sweden



Lin Prøitz
Professor, Østfold University College, Norway



Caitlin Fisher
Professor, York University, Canada

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS

- Hannah Ackermans**
- David Jhave Johnston**
- Marianne Gunderson**
- Debarun Sarkar**
- Anne Sigrid Refsum**
- Zahra Rizvi**
- Dom Ford**
- Jakob Kusnick** (from January 2026)
- Jessica Witte** (from February 2026)

PHD CANDIDATES

- Lina Ruth Harder**
- Ella Marie Holi**
- Hanna Hellesø Lauvli**
- Tom Legierse**
- Jasmine Matthey**
- Tegan Rhiannon Pyke**
- Sérgio Galvão Roxo**
- Ida Martin Gard Rysjedal**
- Haoyuan Tang**
- Yagmur Cisem Vik**
- Mick With Berland** (from March 2026)



OTHER SCIENTIFIC STAFF

- Elisa Marie Strand Hagen**, Research Assistant
- Drew Keller**, Research Assistant
- Jack Pyke**, Research Assistant
- Esteban Piedrahita Martinez**, Research Assistant
- Emma Huse**, Research Assistant

ADMINISTRATION

- Ola Roth Johnsen**, Administrative Project Lead
- Mahaut de Vareilles**, Research Advisor on AI Stories
- Colin Robinson**, Research Technologist
- Andreas Hadsel Opsvik**, Communications Advisor

CDN STEERING BOARD

- Professor Camilla Brautaset**, Dean of Faculty of Humanities, UiB
- Professor Anders Fagerjord**, Head of Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, UiB
- Dr. Martin Paulsen**, Head of Department of Foreign Languages, UiB (until December 2025)
- Professor Bjørnar Tessem**, Head of Department of Information Science and Media Studies, UiB

CDN ADVISORY BOARD

- Dr. Kishonna Gray**, Professor of Information, School of Information and Professor of the Digital Studies Institute, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, USA
- Dr. Hartmut Koenitz**, Professor at Natural Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden
- Dr. Crystal Abidin**, Professor at School of Media, Creative Arts and Social Inquiry, Curtin University, Australia
- Dr. Serge Bouchardon**, Professor of Information and Communication Sciences at the Université de technologie de Compiègne (UTC), Sorbonne University, France
- Dr. N. Katherine Hayles**, Distinguished Research Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the James B. Duke Professor Emerita from Duke University
- Dr. Rui Torres**, Professor at University Fernando Pessoa, Portugal

Publications

ACADEMIC ARTICLE

Ackermans, Hannah. 2025. "Let's Build a City: Introducing the Living Glossary of Digital Narrative." *Electronic Book Review*, June 22. <https://electronicbookreview.com/publications/lets-build-a-city-introducing-the-living-glossary-of-digital-narrative/>.

De Seta, Gabriele, Idil Galip, Lucie Chateau, and Günseli Yalcinkaya. 2025. "Groundhog Day: Memes Are New." *International Journal of Communication*, 558–64. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/23313>.

Ford, Dom. 2025. "What Went Wrong with Cities: Skylines II, According to Players: How Players Understand Game Development in the Context of a Poor Digital Game Launch." *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 17 (3): 303–31. https://doi.org/10.1386/jgvw_00133_1.

Holi, Ella Maria. 2025. "From #bodypositive to #weightlossjourney—Exploring Weight Loss Narratives within the Body Positive Community." *Fat Studies* 14 (3): 263–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21604851.2025.2554040>.

Krauth, Alinta, and **Nelson, Jason.** 2025. "Reading Data Readings: Posthuman Poetry Authorship." *Biodiversity Information Science and Standards* 9 (October): e175400. <https://doi.org/10.3897/biss.9.175400>.

Legierse, Tom. 2025. "Towards a Hopeful Understanding of Masculinities in Gaming: An Autoethnographic Exploration through Kind Words." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *Nordic DiGRA 2025: Hope: Envisioning the Future of Game Cultures*, May 26. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i1.2414>.

Montfort, Nick. 2025. "Rap beyond the Afterfuture." *Global Hip Hop Studies* 6 (1): 113–21. https://doi.org/10.1386/ghhs_00107_7.

Pyke, Tegan, and **Rysjedal, Ida Martine Gard.** 2025. "Scary Business: Mascot Horror as Product and Reflection of Platformisation." Paper presented at Conference Proceedings of *DiGRA 2025: Games at the Crossroads*, July 30. <https://doi.org/10.26503/dl.v2025i2.2483>.

Rauchfleisch, Adrian, Vogler, Daniel, and **de Seta, Gabriele.** 2025. "Deepfakes or Synthetic Media? The Effect of Euphemisms for Labeling Technology on Risk and Benefit Perceptions." *Social Media + Society* 11 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051251350975>.

Refsum, Anne Sigrid. 2025. "'The Sweetheart in the Forest' and the Synthetic Storytellers." *Humanities* 14 (12). <https://doi.org/10.3390/h14120230>.

Rettberg, Jill Walker, and **Wigers, Hermann.** 2025. "AI-Generated Stories Favour Stability over Change: Homogeneity and Cultural Stereotyping in Narratives Generated by Gpt-4o-Mini." *Open Research Europe* 5 (July): 202. <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.20576.1>.

Rettberg, Scott Robert. 2025. "Shed Not a Tear for Literature in the Age of AI." *CounterText* 10 (3): 221–29. <https://doi.org/10.3366/count.2024.0358>.

Vogler, Daniel, Rauchfleisch, Adrian, and **De Seta, Gabriele.** 2025. "The Short-Term Impact of an On-Site Literacy Intervention on Discerning Deepfake Videos Based on Visual Features." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 102 (4): 1135–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10776990251373088>.

Vogler, Daniel, Rauchfleisch, Adrian, and **De Seta, Gabriele.** 2025. "Support for Deepfake Regulation: The Role of Third-Person Perception, Trust, and Risk." *Studies in Communication and Media* 14 (4): 570–93. <https://doi.org/10.5771/2192-4007-2025-4-570>.

Wright, David Thomas Henry. 2025b. "The Text Is Not Enough: Visibility in Asian Diasporic Digital Narratives." *Matlit Revista Do Programa de Doutorado Em Materialidades Da Literatura* 12 (1): 121–33. https://doi.org/10.14195/2182-8830_12-1_7.

BOOK

Wright, David Thomas Henry. 2025a. *Digital Literary Creative Practice: Six Memos for Writers in the Current Millennium*. Routledge Digital Literary Studies. Routledge.

POPULAR SCIENCE ARTICLE

Rettberg, Jill Walker. 2025. "Fra demokrati til algoritmokrati." *Udenrigs*

JOURNAL LETTER

Ford, Dom. 2025. "On Myths, Stories, Models and Games." *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies* 17 (2): 285–91. https://doi.org/10.1386/cjcs_00130_7.

ACADEMIC CHAPTER

De Seta, Gabriele. 2025. "Technologies of Clairvoyance: Chinese Lineages and Mythologies of Machine Vision." In *Machine Decision Is Not Final: China and the History and Future of Artificial Intelligence*, edited by Benjamin Bratton, Bogna Konior, Anna Greenspan, and Amy Ireland, 141–55.

Monteanni, Luigi, and **Gabriele de Seta.** 2025. "Spectral Hauntings, Ancestral Tunings: Two Unnaturalist Modes of Listening." In *Ultrablack of Music: Volume 2*, edited by Achim Szepanski and Palais Sinclair, 209–32.

DATASET

Rettberg, Jill Walker, and **Hermann Wigers.** 2025. "A Dataset of 1500-Word Stories Generated by gpt-4o-mini for 236 Nationalities." *DataverseNO*. <https://doi.org/10.18710/VM2K40>.

LECTURE

Ackermans, Hannah Maria Leontine. 2025. "Open Access Is Just the Beginning: Multimodal Data Representations for Disability-Inclusive Datasets." Presented at DHKO 2025: Infrastruktur og grensesnitt.

Ackermans, Hannah Maria Leontine. 2025. "Showcase of the Consortium on Electronic Literature." Presented at DHKO 2025: Infrastruktur og grensesnitt.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "(A)I Can't See Her." Presented at AoIR2025.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "(A)I Cannot See Them." Presented at GenAI & Creative Practices: Past, Present and Future.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "Haunted Algorithms: Techno-Necromancy and Ghosts in the Machine." Presented at Weird Stories & Wicked Communities.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "Histobots in Conversation: Ontologies and Typologies." Lecture at Center for Digital Narrative Research Presentations.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "Histobots: Rewriting History, One Chat at a Time." Presented at University:Future Festival /imagine.

Harder, Lina Ruth. 2025. "Persona Non Data: Histobots and the Ethics of AI Simulation." Presented at UiB Research Ethics Day "Research Ethics After AI."

Holi, Ella Maria. 2025. "'Your Butt Goes Against Our Community Guidelines': Negotiating Fatness, Visibility, and Resistance in Social Media." Presented at NordMedia.

Johnston, David Jhave. 2025. "'Writing with the Machine: AI and Poetic Creation': A Commissioned Video-Lecture for Versopolis." Versopolis Traineeship.

Legierse, Tom. 2025. "Changing the Game: Understanding Masculinities and Rethinking Inclusivity in Gaming." Presented at Men and Masculinities in Transition.

Maurseth, Anne Beate, Anne Lise Fimreite, **Jill Walker Rettberg,** and Kazmina Sjøvoll. 2025. "Er gaming virkelighetsflukt?" Lecture.

Nelson, Jason. 2025. "Critical Making as a Posthuman Methodology: Developing Experimental Digital Practices." Lecture series.

Nelson, Jason. 2025. "New Directions in Digital Writing and Art with Jason Nelson." Lecture at Polytechnic University of Milan.

O'Kane, Eamon. 2025. "Biorealism: AI in the Artist's Studio." Research presentation at Lake Forest College.

Pyke, Tegan. 2025. "Sims Family Sagas: Emergent Narrative Approaches to the 'Legacy Challenge' by Sims 2 Players." Presented at Weird Stories & Wicked Communities.

Rettberg, Jill Walker. 2025. "AI-Generated Australian Stories: Just Like American Stories but in the Outback." Lecture at Literary Provocations Hub Seminar Series.

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Even when we leave rainy Bergen, we bring a part of the city with us. On the left is the CDN umbrella in Brazil, USA, Turkey, Canada, Mexico and Wales.



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