

Project Group (Number and Name): 25 Range Anxiety and Digital Cultures: Batteries as Media of Urban Organization

Comment

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Comment: Not only the great challenges of the century require a turning point but also mundane everyday life that we do not reflect frequently enough. Battery driven technology is widespread and penetrates deeply into a variety of areas. From accessible and assistive technologies to our own personal security, our lives, however different, heavily depend on batteries. The amount of batteries we are producing is increasing as innovative technologies rely increasingly on batteries (e-mobility). In contrast to the innovations batteries have brought until now, stands the unsustainability of battery production. The mining of resources used in batteries pollutes the environment and the labour conditions are inhumane. With this in mind, we started into a discussion about batteries. Since this technology is used in such a diverse manner, there are many aspects of the problem to consider. From our personal perspective, smartphone addiction and the resulting range anxiety as well as security issues were the most important aspects. The design of the widespread smartphone technology is made to elongate our usage of the device, driving us so far as to view our devices as an extension of ourselves. A low percentage of battery thus leads to anxiety. The battery range of our phone in a sense dictates our movement and behaviour leading to range anxiety. Through the loss of function of our smartphones, very drastic consequences, for example in personal security late at night, can arise. In that sense we are too reliant in our behaviour on batteries.

Furthermore, we took our discussion beyond our own perspective. Fortunately for us, we have electricity from an outlet, but some people are dependant on large batteries. Another point of discussion was the reliance of disabled people on assistive technologies as well as medical devices. The consequences of a battery failure can literally mean death for them. The problem when criticising our society's reliance on batteries is always, that there are no alternative technologies. The fundamental and underlying concept of portable and rechargeable electricity is so engrained in our society that it even affects how we think about our body. Although the human body does not function this way, the phrase "recharging our body" or an "empty social battery" is present in our daily vocabulary. Consequently, thinking outside of this paradigm is not easy for us and thus new battery technology is not as revolutionary as it could be.

Envisioning a utopia to solve our unsustainable reliance on batteries will be very complex and require a very flexible technology. It is out of question, that battery technology needs a turning point, if we want to accomplish a turning point in climate change. Innovation in the field of battery technology as well as sociological research is necessary to create a future for digital technologies. Since there is no current alternative, consumption of battery driven technology should be reduced.

Video Information

Title of the Video: 25_knead_electricity.mov

Authors of the Video: Pauline Behle, Elisa Krumholz, Jonas Stolle, Hsu-Tung Hsieh, Karoline Tanck, Fabian Michelsen, Roman Yusifov, Lea-Christin Zynda

Music: *Hypeddit: ATCH - FIRST LIGHT* (<https://hypeddit.com/track/myd4ry>) Zugriff am 13.10.2022

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