



**digital
ethnography
research
centre**

Newsletter

December 2015

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Thank You and Farewell to 2015 and Heather

This month, we would like to recognise the outstanding achievements and contributions made to DERC over the last few years by the outgoing Co-Director, Associate Professor Heather Horst. Since Heather and Larissa Hjorth founded the centre in 2012, it has become a world-leading hub of innovative digital ethnography researchers.

A sociocultural anthropologist, Heather's research explores how our engagement with digital media and technology is transforming everyday life through studies of homes and families, transnational migration and material culture. Over the past three years, she has developed a regional focus through a series of collaborative projects funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) that explore transformations in the mobile telecommunications industry and mobile media practices in [Fiji](#), [Papua New Guinea](#) and other countries in the [Pacific](#). Next year she will be expanding her focus to Australian-based youth and families through three projects, an exploration of digital kinship via the [Locating the Mobile project](#), an EU Horizon 20/20 study



of [young people's learning](#) and a new project exploring Portuguese migration to Australia funded by the Portuguese Foundation of Science and Technology.

Heather is also well known internationally for her publications across the fields digital anthropology and digital ethnography – not least of course our new DERC book *Digital Ethnography: principles and practice* (2016). Her field-defining book *Digital Anthropology* brings together material culture studies, digital media studies and anthropology. It was also recently translated into Chinese and Arabic. Heather has been a tremendously valuable leader, researcher and mentor throughout DERC's foundational years and we are sure she will continue her successes in her new role as Director of Research Partnerships in the College of Design and Social Context at RMIT.

EVENTS

December 2-4th

GRC (Graduate Research Conference). Building 09 - several locations. DERC involved panels at Wed 2nd, 10:00am - 'Young People and the Digital', 09.02.18 and 1:45pm - 'The Body Visual', 09.02.18.

December 14th

DERC end of year event. Building 09, Level 04, Room 29 (Staff Lounge).

December 15th

Digital Ethnography Reading Sessions meeting, Building 09, Level 03 Room 004A. 12 - 1:30pm. Reading (the introductory chapter to 'Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practices' can be found [here](#)).

December 16th

DERC PhD Workshop. Building 09, Level, 02, Nucleus Space. All day event.

NEWS AND LINKS

RMIT Europe has been awarded a collaborative research project as part of the EU Horizon 2020 (H2020) programme and its research call focused on the young generation. The research will help to tailor adult education policies and practices to meet the needs of young adults in a vulnerable position. The project will be led by Professor Veli-Matti Värri at the University of Tampere in Finland, with RMIT Europe's **Professor Jo Tacchi** leading one of the work packages. Other researchers involved are from universities in Estonia, Germany, Greece, UK, Hungary and Turkey.

RMIT's Graduate Research Conference (GRC) is on in early December. As well as taking part in panel discussions, there are also several DERC members undertaking candidature milestones - **Tammy Law**, **Allister Hill**, **Ge Zhang**, **Josh Nettheim** and **Will Balmford**. Best of luck to these candidates, and you can find the GRC schedule [here](#).

NEWS AND LINKS

We are very pleased to announce that DERC's **Lucas Gaspard** has successfully passed his PhD entitled "Ecologies of the televisual: Children's use of the televisual in Melbourne, Australia". Luke's thesis explores the emergent practices of children's televisual use in the changing digital media landscape. Drawing upon surveys, interviews and creative approaches with children aged 8-12 in Melbourne, Australia, he argues that children utilise this media practice in complex and nuanced ways as a form of identity-work. Luke was supervised by **Heather Horst** and **Larissa Hjorth**. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Gaspard.

Follow the Digital Ethnography Reading Sessions, with the most recent notes now available on John Postill's blog [here](#).