

## Workshop on Digitalisation and creation of alternative monetary and financial spaces Call for papers

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This two-day workshop proposes an exploration of the intersection between digitalisation and alternative monetary and financial spaces developed in response to sustainable development objectives. By alternative monetary and financial spaces, we mean those spaces that are distinct, in degree or in kind, from the traditional monetary and financial spaces associated with the nation-state or built on the same logic, such as the Eurozone. A burgeoning literature provides insights on how the digitalisation of markets and, more broadly, platform capitalism, control everyday lives via massive data mining and analysis, and thus transform the process of value creation. So far little discussion has focused on how this affects existing and future alternative monetary and financial experiences in their local spaces. Such monetary and financial spaces are not simply physical: they are associated with networks, values, norms, cultures and, more broadly, with institutions. While the marking out of such spaces depends on the nature and volume of their trade flows ('trade creation'), the creation of social networks and relations between their participants also matter. Alternative monetary and financial spaces rest on a social community characterized by political choices (rules, economic policies, collective sharing of risks, common projects). While such spaces remain somewhat open, it is worthwhile considering the making of the frontiers within which they can provide alternative choices.

Such issues have become critical in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accentuated the challenges posed by digitalisation. On the one hand, the technical characteristics of digitalisation are likely to facilitate the development of new monetary and financial spaces. The COVID-19 crisis has reaffirmed the technical potential of digitalisation, and thence its economic and social added value. As a result, digitalisation is likely to enhance the 'local' by facilitating the emergence of initiatives at this scale, with the aim of mitigating some excesses of globalisation. On the other hand, in the context of the giant platforms of the Internet, digitalisation presents major risks of dehumanisation and predation likely to undermine the collective trust on which such spaces rest.

Given the contradictory nature of the ongoing digitalisation processes, this workshop proposes to open the discussion on the extent to which the digitalisation of local alternative monetary and financial spaces is likely to strengthen the economic and social cohesion of their agents or, symmetrically, challenge the economic and social cohesion associated with the nation-state.

The two-day workshop is co-organized by researchers from Université Grenoble Alpes, Université de Genève and Université de Lausanne. It will grapple with this crucial question, particularly focusing on three intersecting axes:

**(1) Money, finance, and digitalization.** This axis deals with an inquiry into the initiatives, tools and rationales underpinning the adoption of monetary and financial innovations. The technical, economic, and social logic sustaining the digitalisation of alternative monetary and financial exchange is likely to intersect with a number of puzzling issues for their future developments. Pending questions include the following: Does digitalisation foster trade creation or, by contrast, entail trade diversion? How does the digitalisation of exchanges affect the transaction and coordination costs of alternative monetary and financial spaces? Is digitalisation an efficient technique for creating or furthering social bonds? Or, conversely, does digitalisation jeopardize social links between people, creating new types of inequalities as well as new relations of power? What is the environmental impact of the digitalisation of alternative monetary and financial

transactions, in particular those claiming to provide a sustainable model, such as Faircoin, nextcoin, peercoin, solarcoin and the like?

**(2) Money, finance, and commons.** Monetary and financial transactions connect individuals to the ‘universal’, particularly in relation to the functions of money. However, such connections are inevitably fragile, either because money can be desired for itself or because monetary and financial macro transactions occur far from the real needs of people. As alternative monetary and financial spaces claim to be driven by a collective rationale, the lens of the ‘commons’ prompts us to explore how their digitalization may affect the economic and social relationships between users and their relations to key institutions.

**(3) Money, finance, and territories.** In line with one of the key topics of the workshop, namely “spaces”, it is crucial to question the relationship between money, finance, and territories. The separation and overlapping of different geographical, economic, and political scales are thus of primary interest. Possible questions include: does the circulation of local currencies challenge or complement that of the national currency? How to create confidence in money within a framework of monetary plurality? How does the digitalisation of local currencies transform their ability to shape progressive social relations on a given territory, particularly in reference to that of the nation-state?

Two keynote speakers will give a lecture related to the topics of the workshop:

**Georgina Gomez** (International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam): “Large-scale currency circuits as anti-crisis mechanism”.

**Eva Julin** (Bank of Sweden): “The Swedish e-krona, a means of guaranteeing the possibility to make payments for all”.

We look forward to contributions related to these three axes. Proposals can be diverse in nature (empirical, theoretical, historical, methodological). We welcome contributions from various theoretical backgrounds and approaches, as well as from various fields of social sciences beyond economics.

**WHEN:** 9-10 June 2022

**WHERE:** Université Grenoble Alpes, Saint Martin d’Hères (France)

**ABSTRACTS:** 500 words and institutional contact details – to be sent to Joëlle Hischier ([joelle.hischier@unil.ch](mailto:joelle.hischier@unil.ch))

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ABSTRACTS:** 15 January 2022

**DECISION ON SUBMITTED ABSTRACTS:** 28 February 2022

For further information, please contact the organizers:

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