Nordic Social Work Research

Call for papers for special issue on

Social Work Technology:

Explorations and reflections on the technological ‘nature’ of social work

Guest editors:

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Social work is more than ever before tied to the use of electronic systems and techniques, e.g. apps, online systems, big data, algorithms and artificial intelligence. As new systems and techniques are incorporated into every aspect of social work including prediction and assessment, case work, treatment and care, they challenge our understanding of what social work is and ought to be. This special issue explores and reflects critically on the relationship between technology and social work in context. Are these new electronic systems and techniques a part of or apart from social work, or both? How do governmental and professional rationales shape the construction and use of technology in social work? When, how and under which conditions can such systems contribute to the development of social work, or the opposite? What does this imply in terms of understanding the technological ‘nature’ of social work? Can we meaningfully speak of a ‘Social Work Technology’?

Processes of professionalization are dynamic and cover a range of contextual conflicts and negotiations related to scientific disciplines, jurisdiction, techniques and tools for problem solving within a particular field of interest. Technology understood as a practical knowledge, skills or knowhow for the purpose of shaping reality is not an external infringement upon social work but inherent to social work professionalization. Explorations and reflections on the context dependent approach to and use of new electronic information and communication systems, and their role in shaping knowledge, practice, problem definitions and solutions, are pivotal to understand the current developments of social work.

This special issue invites authors to explore and reflect on the relation between knowledge, practices, tools, techniques, aims and purposes of social work. The aim is to contribute to understanding the relation between social work and technology and the current development of social work as a profession. We invite researchers to present research that explores and reflects on the technological nature of social work. Papers should offer a clear conceptualisation of technology, however we welcome a variation of social philosophical, sociological, organisational, professional and social work perspectives that allow us to understand the relationship between social work and technology. We welcome papers that present findings from empirical research on social work as a social, human, bodily, material and spatial practice supported, disturbed, disrupted or destroyed by various systems and techniques for making examination, assessment, decision-making and evaluation. In particular, we welcome papers on the development, implementation and use of electronic information and communication systems, and the consequences for social workers, the agencies that employ social workers and service users. We also welcome papers that
offer comparative analyses of technological developments in social work in different political, professional and social contexts.

Submission details

- Deadline for abstracts: November 2, 2020: Abstracts should be max 400 words; include full author information (name, position, institutional affiliation and contact information) and should be sent to Andreas Møller Jørgensen anmj@socsci.aau.dk
- Deadline for full papers: March 1, 2021 (follow the guidelines below)
- Published special Issue: February or May 2022

Papers should follow the ordinary standards and requirements of Nordic Social Work Research except that papers for this special issue should not be more than 7000 words including abstract (approx. 200 words), tables, references, figure captions, footnotes or endnotes.

Please read guidelines for authors carefully:
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?show=instructions&journalCode=rnsw20

On submission, please remember to indicate that the submission is for a special issue.

Papers will be subject to double-blinded peer review and papers selected for publication in the special issue will be notified according to the process of reviewing the papers in 2021. The special issue will be published as a part of Nordic Social Work Research’s regular volume in 2022. Papers of a high quality that are not selected for this special issue will be published in a regular issue of Nordic Social Work Research.

On questions please contact Andreas Møller Jørgensen anmj@socsci.aau.dk.