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Persons of Interest

The Status of the
Self in
Digital Cultures

Persons of interest: The Status of the Self in Digital Cultures

What is striking about today's methods of self-representation and self-perception – the profiles of social media but also the various locational functions on smartphones or the bodily measurements of the "quantified-self movement" – is the fact that they all derive from methods of criminology, psychology, or psychiatry that were conceived at various points since the end of the nineteenth century. Certain techniques for collecting data, which were long used exclusively by police detectives or scientific authorities to identify suspicious groups of people, are now being applied to everyone who uses a smartphone or social media. Biographical descriptions, GPS transmitters, and measuring devices installed on bodies are no longer just instruments for tracking suspected criminals or patients but are now being used for the sake of having fun, communicating, making money, or finding a romantic partner. The talk tries to trace back these genealogies and thus present the criminological fundamentals of contemporary subjectivity.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Bernard is Professor for Cultural Studies at Leuphana University Lüneburg and Speaker of its Centre for Digital Cultures. He studied Literary Criticism and Cultural Studies in Munich and was a Research Assistant at Bauhaus University Weimar and at University of Constance. As a journalist, he currently writes for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* and *ZEIT-Magazin*.

