Critical Computing Seminar
With Daniela Rosner

Critical Fabulations: Reworking the Methods and Margins of Design

FRIDAY, 4 December, 2020
2:00--3:30PM, EST (Zoom Meeting)
Register here : www.bit.ly/CCS03

Daniela Rosner, Associate Professor, Human Centered Design & Engineering University of Washington

Bio: Daniela Rosner is an Associate Professor in Human Centered Design & Engineering (HCDE) at the University of Washington. Her research investigates the social, political, and material circumstances of technology development, with an emphasis on foregrounding marginalized histories of practice, from maintenance to needlecraft. Rosner's work has been supported by multiple awards from the U.S. National Science Foundation, including an NSF CAREER award. She is the author of several articles on craft and technoculture, including "Legacies of craft and the centrality of failure in a mother-operated hackerspace," Journal of New Media & Society, 2016 and "Binding and Aging," Journal of Material Culture, 2012. In her book, Critical Fabulations, she investigates new ways of thinking about design's past to rework future relationships between technology and social responsibility (MIT Press, 2018). Rosner earned her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. She also holds a BFA in Graphic Design from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MS in Computer Science from the University of Chicago. Rosner serves as co-Editor-in-Chief of Interactions magazine, a bimonthly publication of ACM SIGCHI.

Book Abstract: In Critical Fabulations, Daniela Rosner proposes redefining design as investigative and activist, personal and culturally situated, responsive and responsible. Challenging the field's dominant paradigms and reinterpreting its history, Rosner wants to change the way we historicize the practice, reworking it from the inside. Focusing on the development of computational systems, she takes on powerful narratives of innovation and technology shaped by the professional expertise that has become integral to the field's mounting status within the new industrial economy. To do so, she intervenes in legacies of design, expanding what is considered "design" to include long-silenced narratives of practice, and enhancing existing design methodologies based on these rediscovered inheritances. Drawing on discourses of feminist technoscience, she examines craftwork's contributions to computing innovation—how craftwork becomes hardware manufacturing, and how hardware manufacturing becomes craftwork. She reclaims, for example, NASA's "Little Old Ladies," the women who built information storage for the Apollo missions by weaving wires through magnetized metal rings. Mixing history, theory, personal experience, and case studies, Rosner reweaves fibers of technoscience by slowly reworking the methods and margins of design. She suggests critical fabulations as ways of telling stories that awaken alternative histories, and offers a set of techniques and orientations for fabulating its future. Critical Fabulations shows how design's hidden inheritances open different possibilities for practice.