

## Preface and Acknowledgments

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A few years have passed since 2016, when I first had the idea to research Internet development in Lithuania. At the time I had recently finished my MA thesis, in which I critically and theoretically explored the instrumentalization of language and its relation to digitalization. At the same time, I also started visiting the legendary “Stammtisch” at Cafe Buchhandlung on Berlin’s Tucholskystraße, where I was exposed to the critical and empirically visible world of hackers, digital activists, and artists. I began to travel to Chaos Computer Congress as well as other events that dissected what I had previously theoretically perceived as “digitalization” into phenomena of made and lived practices and processes. Thus, what had previously felt like a lofty topic consequentially acquired empirical and grounded qualities.

I began to wonder how I could use my own research practice to go beyond discourses that celebrate media technology developments in abstract terms. I decided to focus on very empirical media technology development, Internet infrastructure, and Lithuania’s telecom industry. I wanted to further a research approach against the backdrop of work done by others in the field of science and technology studies (STS) and infrastructure studies that would make Internet infrastructure in particular, and infrastructures as such, more graspable.

My choice to investigate this infrastructure in Lithuania was prompted by several factors. Not only is Lithuania an interesting research case due to its well-developed Internet access, but, as I noticed through my own experience, it is also ignored in the media technology research, which is still predominantly focused on western experiences. Importantly, I wanted to look into Lithuania’s Internet development, not from a national desire to present an unknown country to the world, but rather to situate and complicate the global narrative of media technology development through a rarely researched place. I thereby target media scholars, students, and the general public as potential readers of a book with a narrative that grounds Internet in a place that many are possibly unfamiliar with. I aim to stimulate their interest in its complexities as well as prod them to learn that global infrastructural and media technology developments are much more complicated and convoluted than they appear because they occur in specific and highly diverse places.

This research would not have been possible without the help of many individuals and institutions. I am especially grateful to my supervisors, Prof. Dr. Timon Beyes, Prof. Dr. Götz Bachmann, and Prof. Dr. Jörg Niewöhner, who helped me to shape this book and its predecessor, the PhD thesis, in its current form, guided me through my anxieties and helped me navigate the university's bureaucratic systems. Timon, huge thank you for everything—I have treasured your encouraging theoretical, empirical, and organizational knowledge and insights—without your ongoing constructive feedback and support this book simply would not have been possible. Götz—thank you dearly for your constant support, inspiring insights, and for pushing me go to beyond my comfort zone and become a better scholar. Jörg—thank you for your invariably sharp comments and observations, methodological help and for your precious introduction to the STS world. I would like to thank to all of the supervisors for your very much-appreciated feedback that motivated me, helped me pick myself up during moments of crisis, and eventually spurred me to write this book.

I am also especially grateful to the graduate school *Kulturen Der Kritik*—and its speaker Beate Söntgen as well as deputy speaker Erich Hörl—which provided me with a space to think and present my research, as well as the financial support for three full years. I would also like to express my particular gratitude to the Center for Digital Cultures at the Leuphana University, Lüneburg, which generously supported the final months of research. Additionally, I am enormously grateful for all of my fieldwork participants and interviewees who took the time to provide me with invaluable information. They shared their knowledge, archival access, and time, without which this book would not exist. I am especially grateful to Darius Meizeraitis, who provided me with access to Telia Lietuva and supported my research throughout these years as well as Vidar Bjerkeland, who answered my ongoing e-mails and allowed me to access and use his photo archive. Although I cannot list all the people I met during my fieldwork, their engagement and help is very much appreciated. Also, I would like to offer a big thanks to all my colleagues from *Kulturen der Kritik* research training group; all my colleagues from the summer schools Historiographies of Digital Cultures at the Center for Digital Cultures at Leuphana University, Lüneburg and Technology and Power in Katowice; colleagues from the Tensions of Europe conference in Luxembourg and EASST conference at the University of Lancaster, Lancaster; colleagues from the STS workshop at the University of Siegen, Siegen, where I was given an opportunity to present and discuss my research; and especially to Daniela Wentz, Monika Dommann, Thomas Haigh, Arne Kaijser, Valerie Schafer, Jane Winters, and Monika Klinkhammer who provided support and insights and overall pushed me to further my research. I am also grateful to Nida Art Colony for the two-week residency that allowed me to focus and write in their serene environment. Additionally, I am thankful for the STS Laboratory: Anthropology of Environment at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, which was open to outsider researchers and where I learned about and gained inspiration from the work and knowledge of STS scholars.

Last but not least, this book would not have emerged without the help of my friends, colleagues, and neighbors who edited, criticized, gave feedback, and provided general support, in particular Rachel Pafe, Aidan Wall, Dora Komnenović, Miloš Janicki, Viktorija Šiaulytė, Iva Radić, Karina Papp, Jelena Duvnjak, Julija Goyd, Ingo Dachwitz, Vik-

torija Rusinaitė, Svenja Bednarczyk, Jakob Werlitz, Yiftach Ron, Krzysztof Gutfranski, Baruch Gottlieb, Anna Königshofer, Boaz Levin, Andreas Bernard, Lisa Conrad, Randi Heinrichs, Boukje Cnossen, Brigit Tranavičiūtė, and Virgilijus Dadonas.

Lastly, I want to thank to my family—Pierre Allix, Danutė Bareikienė, Gintautas Bareikis, and Tadas Bareikis—for enduring my extreme stress during these PhD years and encouraging me to stay curious, to research and to write.

