

## **International Labour Process Conference 2026**

### **Stream: The Algorithmic Turn: AI, Professional Labour, and the Reconfiguration of Work**

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This stream critically examines the "algorithmic turn" in professional labour, exploring how Artificial Intelligence (AI) fundamentally reshapes expert work. This shift foregrounds core Labour Process Theory questions on control, value creation, worker agency, and occupational structure evolution under technological and capitalist pressures. Driven by AI, the 4th industrial revolution uniquely impacts professions, posing an existential threat to some through deskilling and job destruction, while others see opportunities for augmentation, improved services, and productivity. Regardless, professions and organizations are deeply transforming, affecting their size, structure, skills, practices, identities, and public access to services. Historically, professionalism thrived on occupational closure and controlled expertise. AI now challenges this by making knowledge infinitely accessible, questioning "peak professionalism" and potentially shifting power/rewards to AI solution owners. New AI-focused professions may also emerge. Within professions, AI disrupts stable structures, fostering new entrants and business models. Algorithmic management extends oversight, reconfiguring professional autonomy. AI profoundly impacts individual professionals, demanding new skills (digital literacy, ethical reasoning) and raising critical questions on ethics, accountability, and future training. Ultimately, this stream leverages Labour Process Theory to understand not just AI's impacts, but how and why. We invite contributions exploring how professionals resist, adapt, or shape these developments, and how new configurations of discretion, authority, expertise, value, and control emerge across hierarchies.

### **Key Questions & Thematic Areas:**

We welcome papers that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- The Algorithmic Threat & Promise: How AI displaces or enhances professional work; the implications of AI-driven knowledge accessibility for occupational closure; the erosion or evolution of professions as exclusive knowledge domains.
- Transformations within Professional Organisations: New business models challenging traditional regulation; AI's impact on hierarchies, leverage ratios, and power dynamics; the role of legacy institutions in mediating change; new forms of organizational experimentation.
- The Individual Professional in an AI Era: Shifting lived experiences, identities, and agency; emerging essential skills (digital literacy, ethical reasoning); new ethical challenges; adaptation of professional training; forms of resistance or compliance to algorithmic oversight.
- Envisioning Future Professionalisms: The rise or decline of specific occupations due to AI; potential resurgence of manual/craft labour; how professionals are shaping the future of their fields; emerging alternative models of professionalism.

### **Abstract Submission Details:**

For full details of the ILPC conference, the other specialist streams, and the general stream, as well as to submit your abstract, please go to <https://ilpc.org.uk/>.

- Abstracts must be 500 words excluding references.
- The deadline for abstract submission is October 31st, 2025.