

# German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ Tokyo)

## DIJ Study Group



December 10, 2024, 6.30 pm (JST) / 10.30 am (CET)

### **Exploring Desirable Socio-Technical Futures in Japan: Perceptions of genAI and Cybernetics-induced Societies**

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This talk explores how laypeople and experts in Japan assess the role of technology in a desirable future. This is carried out by introducing two separate studies, spotlighting perceptions on two different streams of technology with two different stakeholder groups (non-comparatively): laypeople's perceptions of generative artificial intelligence (genAI) and experts' perspectives on cybernetic avatar (CA) technology. Both studies draw on a Research through Design (RtD) inspired Futuring approach, carried out through workshop formats. RtD refers to generating knowledge through the act of designing, while Futuring broadly refers to a set of approaches to strategically think about future developments and their (social) implications.

The first study explores how laypeople in Japan imagine the role of genAI in a desirable future. GenAI systems create new content based on their training data in response to user commands (prompts). A prominent example is the chatbot ChatGPT. As part of a larger study comparing laypeople perspectives in Nigeria, Japan, and Germany, a dialogue workshop was held in Tokyo. Participants discussed a desirable future for genAI in three contexts: education, public service, arts and culture. The second study concerns how experts in Japan imagine the role of CAs in a desirable future. CAs involves remote avatars, including robots or virtual representations, enabling free interaction in physical and virtual spaces. An example is DAWN Cafe Tokyo, where individuals who face difficulties going out can remotely operate avatar robots to provide services. This talk spotlights how the role of technology is anticipated by different stakeholders in Japan and sheds light on attitudes and values driving these socio-technical imaginations.

**Michel Hohendanner** is a PhD candidate at the Technical University of Munich and a research associate at the Munich Center for Digital Sciences & AI. Previously he was a research associate at the Institute for Digital Ethics in Stuttgart. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Media Art & Informatics and a Master's degree in Applied Design Research. His research focuses on the social impact of emerging technologies like (generative) Artificial Intelligence and social aspects of immersive technologies. Since August 2024, Michel has been a PhD student at the DIJ Tokyo.

#### **About:**

The DIJ Study Group is a forum for scholars from all disciplines conducting research on contemporary or modern Japan. The event is open to all.

This session is organized by Nicole M. Müller.

#### **Online Event:**

To participate in this online only event, please register via our [webpage](#).