Situating the 'data subject': self-tracking in between big data culture and citizen science

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This research aims at moving beyond the focus of a top-down process of collecting and analysing data about users as the primary way that datafication is experienced. To do so, it will look into situated practices and explore the question of agency in our engagement with data. It will focus on the phenomenon of self-tracking in the health context. While being a part of the overwhelmingly commercial big data culture with the proliferation of sensor-based wearable and implantable devices, direct to customer genome sequencing and such, self-tracking is also practiced as a citizen science. What are the different experiences of data subjectivity produced by self-tracking practices? What does the phenomenon of self-tracking with diverse subject positions tell us about making sense of the datafied everyday life? Combining theoretical framing with ethnographic study, this research will explore the possibilities of building alternative information politics in the work of reimagining knowledge practices and data futures.

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