



---

Interacting on the merry-go-round  
Erving Goffman as Sociologist of Technology  
Lecture by Trevor Pinch

## Invitation

Monday, June 18, 2012  
6 p.m., Room A 300

---

Many technologies we interact with are mundane and almost invisible to users. How can such infrastructural technologies with which we interact be studied? In his talk, Trevor Pinch will turn to the classic early studies of the American sociologist Erving Goffman for insight. He will discuss some of Goffman's early studies of mundane interaction in locations such as hotels, radio studios, surgical operating theatres, and children riding merry-go-rounds to show that the interactions he studied were materially and technologically staged, mediated and performed. This leads to the insight that all interaction is technologically mediated.

Trevor Pinch argues that treating Goffman as a sociologist of technology returns us to the study of important processes of norms, obligations and social exchange and how these become manifest in technologically dense sites such as the internet. Some examples will demonstrate how this approach might be made to work for studying interaction at internet sites as the digital music site ACIDplanet.com and the ecommerce site Amazon.com.

**Trevor Pinch** is Professor of Science & Technology Studies and Sociology at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. His research centers on the sociology of technology and how users engage with technology, sound studies and how sonic technologies and listening cultures develop and general issues in the sociology of science and technology concerning social construction of technology and understanding the role of performances and agency. Trevor Pinch is currently a visiting scholar at the research unit „Cultural Sources of Newness“.

*The WZB provides child care during the lecture. If you are interested, please respond by June 7, 2012, indicating the number of children and their age.*

*To register, please reply by June 15, 2012 to Chris Reinelt [chris@wzb.eu](mailto:chris@wzb.eu),  
Fon: (+49) 030 -25491-201*

---

**Social Science Research Center  
Berlin**

Reichpietschufer 50  
D-10785 Berlin

Telefon 030/25491-0  
Telefax 030/25491684