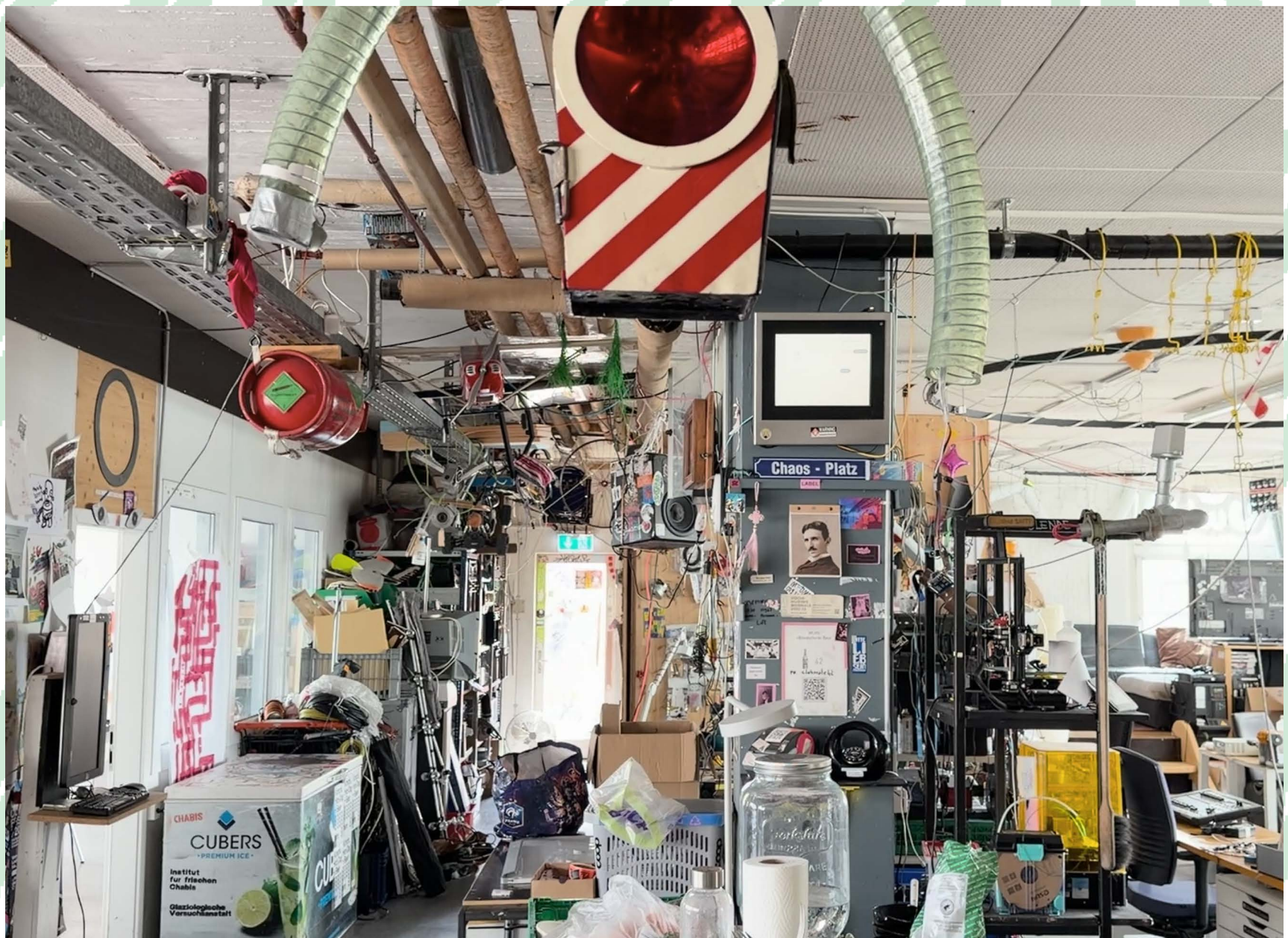


The Production of Cloud

ARCHITECTURE OF
TERRITORY
Power to the People



Investigative Reporting on Data Infrastructures

INTRO: 15 September 2026
Tuesday, 9.30 am, ONA G35
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AI is becoming part of everyday life, changing the ways we work and think. However, for a tool promising to solve every conceivable problem, it keeps leaving profound dilemmas in its wake. Public debate on AI in relation to resources, ethics, power, and control is therefore increasing. Questions abound: Whose land do data centres occupy, and whose water is used to cool them? Can the electricity needed for data centres be produced without harming ourselves and the living world? What kind of data requires long-term storage, and what can be discarded? How is AI being embedded in the diverse decision-making processes that organise our environment and our choices? Should public institutions, from local communes to national and international bodies, have a level playing field with private AI corporations? And what should be the role of architects in these transformations?

Whether in Chile, the United States, Spain, or Sweden, these dilemmas have begun to fuel resistance against the unchecked spread of digital infrastructures. In Switzerland, however, resistance movements against the data centre industry are difficult to find. The country has one of the highest concentrations of data centres in the world, second only to Ireland. Individual data centres use as much electricity as the city of Zurich and occupy scarce building plots. Until now, Swiss infrastructure reserves and seemingly abundant hydropower resources have kept friction low. However, in the face of mounting climate pressure and increased energy demand, regional governments and civil society are starting to react.

Through design research and investigative reporting, this semester aims to explore the existing dilemmas surrounding AI's urban and territorial impacts. The resulting knowledge should be made public through investigative, situated reporting from data infrastructures. By working with renowned media outlets—Tsüri and WOZ—we want to help inform public discussion on data infrastructure challenges in Zurich and Switzerland.

Collaboratively, we launch a series of around ten parallel investigations, each resulting in an investigative reportage. Their topics are currently insufficiently understood, spanning resource use; environmental effects; the politics of resistance and the securitisation of data; economies of data storage; and the planning processes and design of data centres. For example, we will look at the phenomena of heat domes and infra-noise pollution from data centres, investigate their possible effects on human, animal, and plant life, and discuss possible policies to regulate them. We will delve

into the notion of critical infrastructure and question security practices at data centres. We will research the investment flows and business models behind data infrastructures, and follow click workers in Switzerland who train AI systems.

To raise awareness of these underexplored conflicts and contradictions of digital infrastructure expansion, we will develop investigative reportages for publication on our website, with selected stories published on the news portals WOZ and Tsüri. Through research, writing, drawing, and mapping, we are building a critical toolbox for representation and design practice, capable of analysing and visualising digital networks at a territorial scale.

Situated reporting will be the central methodological approach of the studio. It consists of ethnographic fieldwork at selected data centre sites, including identifying key actors, conducting interviews, undertaking theoretical and archival research, and compiling facts and visual evidence in the form of territorial drawings, diagrams, GIS and counter-cartographies, photographs, and videos. Through journalist-led workshops, you will be introduced to the basics of journalistic writing and publishing. In weekly sessions, we will discuss exemplary projects of investigative reporting, develop your argument and narrative structure, and move from a first hypothesis to your reportage over the course of the semester.

Join our studio to learn to investigate, write, and publish about architecture and territories, and to help inform the public about data infrastructures and their spatial consequences.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE
is a studio series at Architecture of Territory dedicated to improving the social and environmental outcomes of technological and sustainability transitions. The studio is affiliated with the Swiss Network for International Studies (SNIS) through the research grant "The Production of the Cloud."

PROCESS AND RESULTS
The work consists of investigative journeys and intensive studio sessions. Architecture of Territory values

intellectual curiosity, commitment, and team spirit. We are looking for avid travellers and team players, motivated to make strong and independent contributions. Our approach enables students to explore a range of methods pertaining to territory, including ethnographic fieldwork, drawing styles, and mapping techniques such as QGIS. Your results will be published as an online reportage on our website, and possibly in a media outlet, using journalistic writing and visual representation and evidence to explain

your work. Experts and guests will guide us on that journey. Students work in groups of two to three.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
The central method of the studio will be fieldwork. We will visit the sites of data infrastructure, talk to people affected by data centres, conduct interviews with experts, and investigate the buildings themselves and the infrastructure in question. Students will learn how to conduct interviews, and how to prepare for and record them. Your investigative

reporting will include tools such as a research plan or source mapping. We will introduce you to journalistic writing, from tools for defining a narrative structure to hands-on tips on grammar, language, and style.

CREDITS
The semester offers a total of 17 credit points: the Design Studio (14 KP) and the Integrated Discipline (Planning, 3 KP), which can be counted as an elective. The core course My INTELLIGENCE offers an additional 2 KP.