

**POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP  
ON “ALGORITHMIC IMAGINARIES”**

We are looking for a candidate to undertake a postdoctoral fellowship as part of the research project “Algorithmic Imaginaries: Practices and Representations of Algorithms in Academia.” (See presentation below).

The research project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for a period of three years.

The postdoctoral fellow will be affiliated with the Laboratory on Communication and Digital Media (LabCMO) and the Interuniversity Research Center on Science and Technology (CIRST) and will be based in Montreal at UQAM.

**Skills and Qualifications :**

PhD in a relevant field (communication; sociology; science, technology, and society (STS) or other related discipline)

Demonstrated knowledge of or interest in the subject

Knowledge of qualitative or mixed methodological strategies

Experience in empirical research involving field surveys

Publication experience (peer-reviewed)

Ability to work in a team

Excellent command of written and spoken French

Good command of written and spoken English

**Start date:** January 2026 or June 2026

**Duration:** 12 months

**Salary:** \$60,000 CAD

**Location:** Montreal, QC, Canada

**Submitting an application:**

Interested candidates must submit a complete application in a single document, preferably in PDF format, including the following:

- A cover letter describing your interest in the postdoctoral fellowship, how your skills match the skills and qualifications, and a research topic you would be interested in developing in connection with the “Algorithmic Imaginaries” project.
- The contact details of two references, specifying the nature of your relationship with them.
- A CV, including a list of your publications and presentations.
- A text of your choice from among your writings (e.g., a published article, thesis chapter, or conference paper).

Applications should be sent to the following email address: [millerand.florence@uqam.ca](mailto:millerand.florence@uqam.ca)

The deadline for submitting applications is **July 31, 2025**.

Applications will be evaluated on an ongoing basis until the position is filled.  
Submitting applications before the deadline is strongly encouraged.

The successful candidate will join the project's research team, which includes Florence Millerand, full professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM); Guillaume Latzko-Toth, full professor at Laval University; Claudine Bonneau, full professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM); and several master's and doctoral students.

For more information on the research project and the postdoctoral fellowship, please consult the full online offer [link].

### **Project overview**

#### **“Algorithmic imaginaries: practices and representations of algorithms in academia”**

Computer algorithms are omnipresent, both in everyday life and in the workplace. The recent development of artificial intelligence-based tools, such as the ChatGPT conversational robot, has further contributed to their integration into a multitude of tasks and activities, particularly in professional environments focused on the production and circulation of information and knowledge, such as academia. However, algorithms remain shrouded in a certain “fuzziness,” partly because their functioning is unclear to the vast majority of people, and partly because they are, for the most part, invisible, abstract, and opaque. As they influence increasingly crucial decisions and shape our world in unprecedented ways, it is important to better understand the central role that algorithms play in society and to question how their ubiquity and growing mediation of social life can affect the ways we live and work, form relationships, and do business.

This project therefore aims to understand the place algorithms occupy in our contemporary societies by examining the imaginaries and practices developed around two of the most widely used types of tools in the academic context: generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Perplexity, and Gemini, based on algorithms called “large language models”; and scientific social networking sites such as Academia, ResearchGate, and Mendeley, based on content recommendation and visibility algorithms. Each of these tools relies on distinct families of algorithms and raises specific issues with regard to the purposes and contexts in which they were developed and are used.

We propose to study the “algorithmic imaginaries” that develop around these tools in order to better understand how these imaginaries influence a) the way algorithms are produced (by those responsible for their design and development) and b) the way they are integrated into everyday life, helping to transform practices themselves (by those who use them in their work, in this case

academics). The aim is to examine, on the one hand, the imaginaries of the engineers who design the algorithms and, on the other hand, the imaginaries of the professors and students who use them, in order to understand more broadly their influence on the transformation of intellectual work and the circulation of scholarly publications.

More specifically, this project has the following three objectives:

- 1) Describe and analyze the imaginaries of the designers/developers of the algorithms on which tools based on generative AI techniques and scientific social networking sites are based, in order to understand how they conceive of their possible uses. In doing so, the project aims to fill a significant gap in social studies on algorithms, which tend to focus on the study of users' imaginations at the expense of those of designers. Although it is attracting growing interest, the influence of imaginations on the development of technological innovations remains understudied.
- 2) Describe and analyze users' algorithmic imaginaries to understand how these imaginaries affect their use of tools and the social practices in which these uses take place. In doing so, the project will provide new insights into the “ordinary” relationship with algorithms, the contexts in which users become aware of their existence, and the meaning they give them.
- 3) Understand how design imaginaries relate to usage imaginaries, given the constant interactions between algorithms and their users.