



The thingness of the digital in academic work

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In this contribution, I draw on personal experience, journalism and academic sources to examine how digital technologies have been affecting the sense of belonging experienced by those studying, working and living near universities. I acknowledge the enormous benefits brought by digital technologies, but here focus on the ways they can also be used to individualise and alienate. I focus on how university libraries and open access publishing can be used to exclude people from reading and publishing. I also give two shorter examples about the individualising nature of e-readers and online administrative systems. This contribution is a reminder to always ask ourselves three important questions when digital (or any other) technologies are introduced: What is the problem for which this is allegedly the solution? Who benefits? Who pays?