

# Coding as Creative-Aesthetical and Political Expression

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While the first computers were technological behemoths, the devices have evolved rapidly over the past few years, turning into smart objects in our homes, workplaces and even in our pockets in the shape of smartphones. Computers have evolved in their material appearance and their complexity, so has the computer code that is running on it.

Understanding code as both script and performance, it unfolds a special quality considering the fundamental idea of action and speech as conceptualized by Arendt (1958, 1964). Coding has become, or always has been more than simply a means to an end, reaching from computational arts to creative coding. This is linked to different modes of (self-)expression and meaning production (Pepler & Kafai 2005, Chun 2011). Thus, coding can not only be seen as *code works* but also as way for creative-aesthetical and political expression at the same time, which, following Cox and McLean (2013), lies in the realm of *code action*.

The complexity does not only result from the act of coding or the execution of a script, which already involves performativity in different ways (Mackenzie 2005), but rather in the relation between acting and being acted upon, pointing to specific modes of subjectivation. The talk will highlight some of these aspects and discuss them against the background of qualitative social research.

## References

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