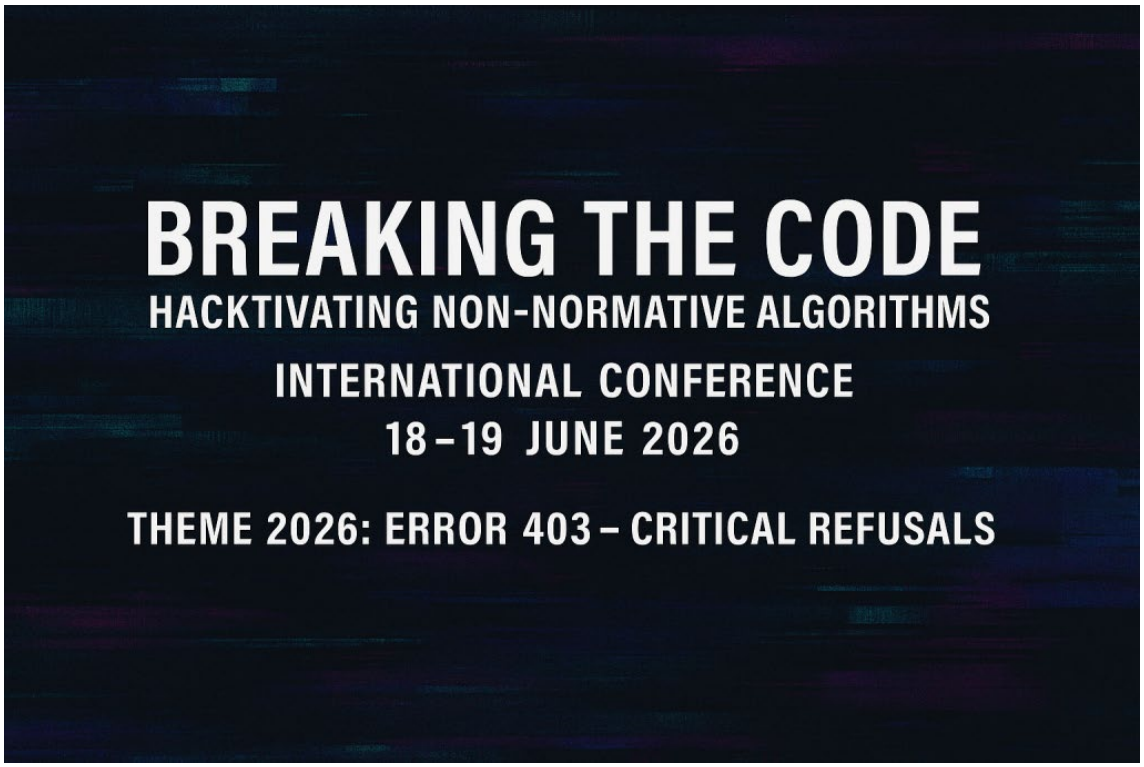

CALL FOR PAPERS

Breaking the Code: Hacktivating Non-Normative Algorithms
International Conference – 18–19 June 2026
Theme 2026: Error 403 – Critical Refusals

Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities (FLUP) + online
An output of the BRKCODE Project

What does it mean to err – to glitch, to refuse efficiency, to disobey system logics?

The inaugural conference of *Breaking the Code: Hacktivating Non-Normative Algorithms* adopts the theme *Error 403 – Critical Refusals*, inviting scholars, artists, and those working across research and artistic practice to treat error as a critical condition, to read glitch as resistant gesture, and to approach refusal and deviation as an opening to new epistemologies and creative forms.

We proceed from the recognition that algorithms, often presented as neutral and universal, operate as normative structures that shape and constrain identities.

They codify and reproduce biases linked to gender, race, class, and sexuality while masking these operations through appeals to efficiency and objectivity. To address these dynamics, we draw on Judith Butler's performativity, Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality, and Donna Haraway's situated knowledges, in dialogue with Critical Code Studies (Marino, 2020; Montfort et al. 2013) and Creative Digital Humanities (Rettberg and Saum-Pascual 2020).

Within this frame, error becomes method. Glitch practices, acts of critical hacking, and algorithmic disruptions, such as livecoded improvisations, are not accidents to correct but practices that surface and expose what systems obscure. As Legacy Russell notes in the *Glitch Feminism Manifesto* (2020), "to glitch is to embrace malfunction, and to embrace malfunction is in and of itself an expression that starts with 'no'." Crucially, "malfunction" here does not denote total breakdown but deviation from normative scripts: a "nonperformance" and a "refusal" that resists the demand for seamless operability. In that spirit, the conference foregrounds artistic and scholarly interventions that make visible algorithmic exclusions, challenge normative frameworks, and reimagine alternative futures for digital culture.

In doing so, *Error 403 – Critical Refusals* seeks to establish a critical platform linking intersectional research with creative disobedience, while advancing explorations of algorithmic glitch aesthetics and pedagogies. Through this platform, the conference positions itself at the crossroads of theory and practice, inviting dialogue across critical analysis and experimental making.

Topics of Interest

We welcome contributions that respond to the theme through conceptual analysis, artistic intervention, or pedagogical experimentation. Areas of particular interest include:

- Intersectional perspectives on algorithmic systems: analyses of how identity categories such as gender, race, class, and sexuality are encoded, erased, or reshaped by computational processes.
- Creative disobedience and critical hacking: artistic tactics of refusal and disruption, ranging from glitching and livecoding to performance-based or speculative approaches.

- Glitch aesthetics as critical method: practices that foreground error as a site of resistance, identity work, or ontological dissidence.
- Pedagogies of error: teaching and learning approaches that use mistakes, deviations, and creative misuse as tools for understanding and reconfiguring algorithmic systems.
- Histories and counter-histories: recovering the contributions of women and gender minorities in computing and digital art, while rewriting narratives of technological progress from feminist and queer standpoints.
- Critical Code Studies and beyond: treating code as cultural, ideological, and poetic text, with attention to its exclusions, performativities, and possibilities for reimagining.
- Cyberliterary and cyberartistic interventions: works that unsettle algorithmic normativity through writing, visual culture, performance, or hybrid media practices.
- Care, inclusivity, and infrastructures: rethinking digital systems through the lenses of accessibility, relationality, and techno-feminist futures.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Esther Monzó-Nebot (Universitat Jaume I)

Tatiana Bazzichelli (Disruption Network Lab, Berlin)

Formats

We invite proposals for:

- Academic papers (20 min presentations)
- Artistic presentations / performances (20 min)
- Work-in-progress discussions (10 min short talks with collective feedback)
- Workshops

Proposals should indicate the chosen format and any technical or spatial requirements.

Submission Guidelines

Abstract: max. 300 words

Short bio: max. 100 words

Indicate format: paper / artistic presentation / performance / work-in-progress / workshop

Language: English

Submission deadline: 15 January 2026

Notification of acceptance: 15 February 2026

All proposals must be submitted via the Microsoft Conference Management Toolkit (CMT) platform at https://cmt3.research.microsoft.com/BRKCODE2026/

Venue and Dates

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto (FLUP) + Online

18–19 June 2026

Registration Fee

€130 (early bird – from 1 Oct. 2025 to 31 Jan. 2026) | €160 (regular – from 1 Feb. to 15 Feb. 2026)

For students: €80 (early bird – from 1 Oct. 2025 to 31 Jan. 2026) | €100 (regular – from 1 Feb. to 15 Feb. 2026)

Registration can be completed through the University of Porto's official platform: https://www.letras.up.pt/si/subscriptions?event=128

Organizing Committee

Coordinated by Diogo Marques (CODA + ILCML/FLUP), Marinela Freitas (ILCML/FLUP), Rui Torres (ICNOVA, UFP), Luís Trigo (CODA + CLUP/FLUP) within the framework of the project Breaking the Code: Algorithmic Non-Normativity in Creative Digital Humanities (BRKCODE, DARIAH ERIC 2024–26).

Scientific Committee

Alex Mitchell (National University of Singapore)

Alex Saum-Pascual (U. Berkeley)

Amira Hanafi (Coastal Carolina University)

Ana Carvalho (UMAIA; CIAC)

Ana Marques da Silva (FLUC, MATLIT LAB)

Anna Nacher (Jagiellonian University)

André Rangel (FBAUP)

Bruno Ministro (Independent Researcher)

Cristina Sá (UCP)

David Ciccoricco (University of Otago)

David Thomas Henry Wright (Nagoya University)

Diego Gimenez (FLUC, MATLIT LAB)

Élika Ortega-Guzman (University of Colorado, Boulder)

Esther Monzó-Nebot (Universitat Jaume I)

Inês Cardoso (FLUP, ILCML)

Joana Chicau (University of the Arts London)

Lyle Skains (Bournemouth University)

Manuel Portela (FLUC, MATLIT LAB)

Mark Amerika (University of Boulder, Colorado)

Patrícia Gouveia (ITI/LARSyS)

Pedro Alves da Veiga (CIAC, UaB)

Pedro Cardoso (FBAUP)

Philipp Teuchmann (ICNOVA)

Sofia Ponte (IADE, ID+)

Tatiana Bazzichelli (Disruption Network Lab, Alemanha)

Terhi Martilla (ITI/LARSyS)

Thomas Ballhausen (University Mozarteum Salzburg)

Tiago Assis (FBAUP, i2ADS)

Tina Escaja (The University of Vermont)

Vera Moitinho de Almeida (FLUP, CODA)

The Microsoft CMT service was used for managing the peer-reviewing process for this conference. This service was provided for free by Microsoft and they bore all expenses, including costs for Azure cloud services as well as for software development and support.

For more info, please contact: dmarques@letras.up.pt