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CALL FOR PAPERS

Intercity Transportation in Foresight and Science Fiction

Guest Editors:

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The journal *Technology and Innovation* is presenting a call for papers on the theme of interurban transportation in foresight and science fiction. The goal is to publish a special issue in July 2026 devoted to this topic, which straddles the divide between current events and foresight. Thematic, analytical, or theoretical articles will also be welcome, drawing on a theme that will draw on multidisciplinary approaches.

Representations of cities and urban transportation in foresight studies increasingly rely on science fiction aesthetics [GAR 20]. The city of the future has often been the subject of theoretical, fictional, or architectural research. Design fiction [MAR 23] is also increasingly playing a role in urban studies, helping to imagine the transportation infrastructure that will connect urban areas in the future. Lim [LIM 17] has thus highlighted the value of science fiction in imagining urban transformations, particularly in transportation, in an era of global warming and overpopulation. A rather realistic outlook thus leads to the idea of interconnected mobility, in which decarbonization [AUV 2023] will become a central issue for public policy. The development of hydrogen trains and low-carbon infrastructure can thus be the subject of representations between pragmatism and imagination. New technologies such as the hyperloop may appear as relevant means of transport in the future to quickly and cost-effectively connect areas previously served primarily by aviation with high CO₂ emissions. Berlinski et al. [BER 22] have also shown that "the hyperloop carries the mythology, in the Barthesian sense, of the possibility for humans to master time and space," to the point of dystopia, as in *Total Recall* (2012). Technologies and transport are thus part of a mythology of which science fiction constitutes an important dimension. Science fiction has also explored the theme of intercity transportation in numerous films, novels, and video games.

Thus, in *The Fifth Element* (1997), we find a particularly complex network of air routes for flying cars, prompting reflection on the impact of this technology on the organization of cities in the future. Flying cars could indeed constitute a considerable market in the coming years,

as certain prototypes are increasingly promising. However, this mode of transport can raise important ethical and security questions [KAS 19].

Similarly, in a series like *Star Trek*, or in the film *The Fly* (1986), teleportation is presented as a revolutionary means of transport. Clean, instantaneous, and efficient, it could be a disruptive technology that would considerably change the relationship with space and urban environments. While scientific research remains confidential in this sector, science fiction has made it a recurring theme. Consider, for example, the recent novel *Nouvelle Babel* (2022) by Michel Bussi, which imagines a near future where teleportation is widely used. Furthermore, a number of fictions deal with space transportation, making it possible to connect cities located on more or less distant planets. Cosmic interurbanity will be a central element of the multiplanetary civilization currently in the making. Thus, the study of works representing transportation routes in space could shed light on the trajectories that interplanetary infrastructure could take in the more or less near future. Whether between Earth and possible lunar or even Martian cities, the question of the nature of the vessels, their modes of propulsion, and the different elements of infrastructure management allowing the supply of energy along these communication routes will be raised, as demonstrated by all the episodes of the series *The Expanse*, whether we are talking about the Solar System or the mobility of people in Ceres. Space foresight is a crucial element in the development of technologies that will allow states, businesses, and individuals to prosper in the cosmos in the future. Similarly, post-apocalyptic films and novels often illustrate the consequences of a collapse of civilization on transportation networks. Abandoned, they deteriorate rapidly, contributing to the acceleration of societal decline. These fictions illustrate the importance of transportation routes between urban areas, which are interdependent and require the use of effective means of communication.

Thus, it seems that foresight attempts to imagine ecological and inclusive solutions for future transportation, while science fiction explores the excesses and utopias linked to this transportation. It is also possible to approach the issue in a hybrid manner, through works of foresight and design fiction that introduce science fiction into the creative and design processes.

Articles, ranging from 6,000 to 8,000 words, may address several topics:

1. Representations of future transportation in science fiction and foresight.
2. The role of design fiction in imagining future transportation (e.g., design cars).
3. Representations of the city of the future.
4. Typology of interurban transportation in science fiction.
5. Connected cities: prospective visions of the interurban network in science fiction.
6. Symbolism of interurban travel in science fiction.
7. Expansion of cities thanks to ultra-fast transportation.
8. Network aesthetics: Visual design of future transportation in fiction.



9. Role of transportation in science fiction films and series.
10. Anticipation and retrofuturism: Tomorrow's transportation in history.

References

- [AUV 23] AUVERLOT D., SAUVANT A., "Décarboner les mobilités", *Futuribles*, n° 453, 2023/2, p. 25-42
- [BER 22] BERLINSKI E., STRAUCH M., PLANTEC Q., "Hyperloop, une mythologie de marches", *Revue française de gestion*, n°304, 2022/3, p. 65-88.
- [GAR 20] GARDNER W., *The Metabolist Imagination: Visions of the City in Postwar Japanese Architecture and Science Fiction*, University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
- [KAS 19] KASLIWAL A., FURBUSH N.J., GAWRON J.H. *et al.*, "Role of flying cars in sustainable mobility", *Nature Communications*, 10, 2019,1555, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-09426-0>
- [LIM 17] LIM C.J., *Inhabitable Infrastructures. Science Fiction or Urban Future?*, New York, Routledge, 2017.
- [MAR 23] MARSHALL T.A., "The Literary Method of Urban Design: Design Fictions Using Fiction", *Utopian Studies*, n°34, 3, 2023, p.560-569

Submission Guidelines and Important Dates:

September 1: Submission of draft article summaries
September 15, 2025: Response to authors
January 2, 2026: Submission of articles
2026: Publication of the issue

Articles will be pre-published on the journal's website as soon as they are approved.

Author guidelines and document templates can be downloaded from the following address:
https://www.openscience.fr/IMG/zip/authors_guidelines_en.zip

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