

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Silvia Lindtner, assistant professor of information, School of Information, and assistant professor of art and design, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of information, with tenure, School of Information, and associate professor of art and design, without tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2012	University of California, Irvine, CA
M.S.	2004	University of Hagenberg, Linz, Austria

Professional Record:

2015 – present	Assistant Professor of Art and Design, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan
2014 – present	Assistant Professor of Information, School of Information, University of Michigan
2012 – 2014	Post-doctoral Fellow, School of Computer Science, Fudan University, Shanghai, China
2012 – 2014	Post-doctoral Researcher, Intel Center for Social Computing, Irvine, CA
2008	Research Intern, Intel Labs, Portland, OR
2006 – 2012	Doctoral Student and Graduate Student Research Assistant, Department of Informatics, University of California, Irvine, CA
2004 – 2006	Research Assistant, User Experience Group, Siemens Research, Princeton, NJ and Munich, Germany

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Lindtner is an outstanding instructor who has taught broadly across the UMSI curriculum as well as in the UM Science and Technology Studies Program. In her courses, she strives to educate students in cultural and critical inquiry so that they can better navigate sociotechnical work and research spaces. She does this through teaching research and design skills that will enable students to explore this complexity from multiple perspectives so that they understand the relationships between technology and practice across domains and different sectors of the economy. She has taught five different courses: Knowledge/Power/Practice in Science, Technology, and Medicine (cross-listed with the UM Science and Technology Studies Program); Tech Labor, Entrepreneurial Life, and Precarious Creativity (a doctoral seminar); Mastery Course in User Experience Research and Design; Interaction Design; and Advanced Projects in Social Computing. For all of these courses, she made substantial revisions to existing syllabi. In the case of the required Mastery Course in User Experience Research and Design, she created a unique, synthetic, culminating experience for students in the School of Information's Master of Science in Information degree that leverages her critical studies research on making and this is now one of the most popular mastery course offerings. Professor Lindtner's teaching evaluation scores also demonstrate exceptional teaching.

Outside of the formal classroom setting, Professor Lindtner has mentored post-doctoral fellows and Ph.D., masters, and undergraduate students. Her two post-doctoral fellows have moved on to successful academic positions. Professor Lindtner is an exceptional mentor who has written publications and/or developed grant proposals with her mentees. Professor Lindtner is currently a principal or dissertation advisor for three Ph.D. students, two of whom have advanced to candidacy. Publications with her doctoral students have been placed in top peer-reviewed conference and journal venues. One doctoral student has been awarded two ACM Best Paper Honorable Mention awards (which represents the top 5% of all papers); one of these was co-authors with Professor Lindtner. In addition, Professor Lindtner is also on three other dissertation committees and has been on six Field Prelim committees at UMSI. She also served as primary advisor for three master's thesis students and has supervised research projects by nine master's students and one undergraduate.

Professor Lindtner's mentorship extends beyond UM. She has worked to strengthen graduate education in her research area. For example, she co-founded and co-organized a regional doctoral student workshop (MidweSTS) in Chicago co-sponsored by 14 universities. From this, she developed a research network to build scholarly community and talent in critical "making," her area of specialization. She has also organized what amounts to three concurrent lab groups serving graduate students and other faculty: her own lab group at UMSI (Tech. Culture. Matters.); a group organized via competitive funding from the Michigan Humanities Collaboratory and run collectively with other faculty (Precarity Lab); and a group based in Shanghai that operates via physical co-presence and telepresence (Hacked Matter).

Research: Professor Lindtner is an interdisciplinary scholar who works at the intersection of Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), Science Technology Studies (STS), and China Studies. She engages in critical analyses of labor and the impact of computing applying a socio-technical lens. Her greatest area of impact has been her ethnographic analyses of "making," people engaged in creating hardware objects for themselves and for profit. Making has been seen, at various times, as part of Do-It-Yourself work, hobbyist computing, a new form of entrepreneurial labor, and a social movement to democratize technology. Professor Lindtner problematizes these conceptions of making and investigates its socio-technical underpinnings in different contexts, particularly in China. Early-on, she recognized the importance of this topic and has been investigating making in Shenzhen, China for almost a decade.

The culmination of Professor Lindtner's scholarship is the book, Prototype Nation: China, the Maker Movement, and the Promise of Entrepreneurial Living, which will be published in 2020. The book represents almost a decade of ethnographic research on China's new role as a world leader in open source manufacturing. In keeping with rigorous ethnographic tradition, Professor Lindtner built the book's findings and analysis on long-term participant observation, first as a member of a startup team in a Shenzhen incubator, and at one point becoming a collaborator in XinDanWei, the work collective that gave birth to the first Chinese hackerspace and network of makers. This is an exceptionally well-done ethnography grounded in long-term participation, observation, and analyses of the Shenzhen maker community as well as similar programs elsewhere in China, the United States, Taiwan, Singapore, Africa, and Europe.

Professor Lindtner is a prolific scholar. In addition to her forthcoming monograph, she has published 11 journal articles and 22 top-tier conference papers. Among those papers are two Best Paper Awards from the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI) which represents the top 1% of papers at that conference. She also received two Best Paper Honorable Mentions, one at CHI and one at the ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) which represent the top 5% of papers.

These publications were all praised by the reviewers. The reviewers were extraordinarily complimentary of *Prototype Nation* and expected it to be widely influential. The article most often mentioned often by her letter writers was “Laboratory of the Precarious: The Seductive Draw of Entrepreneurial Living” in the flagship journal *Women’s Studies Quarterly*. In this article, she demonstrates how more democratic innovation took shape through illicit experimentation in Shenzhen. She argues that glimmers of post-colonial and post-feminist thinking set the stage for the original intentions of China’s makers, but were not acknowledged, perhaps limiting the progress they could make towards democratization of the economy.

Professor Lindtner has 2,349 citations and an h-index of 20 (Google Scholar 5 November 2019). This is high for a scholar in her area. She has also received over \$4.5 million dollars in grant funding, with over \$4 million as the principal investigator. This includes grants from the National Science Foundation, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and a Humanities Collaboratory Grant from the University of Michigan.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

Lindtner, S. Forthcoming 2020. *Prototype Nation: China and the Contested Promise of Innovation*. Princeton University Press.

Lindtner, S. 2017. “Laboratory of the Precarious: The Seductive Draw of Entrepreneurial Living.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45:3-4, pp. 287-305.

Lindtner, S. and Avle, S. “Tinkering with Governance: Technopolitics and the Economization of Citizenship,” *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Human-Computer Interaction - CSCW*, Vol 1, Article 20, November, 2017.

Lindtner, S., Bardzell, S., Bardzell, J. 2016. “Reconstituting the Utopian Vision of Making: HCI After Technosolutionism.” *Proceedings of the ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, CHI’16*, pp. 1390-1402. Best Paper Honorable Mention Award.

Kaziunas, E., Lindtner, S., Ackerman, M., Lee, J. 2017. “Lived Data: Tinkering with Bodies, Code, and Care Work.” *Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 33:1, pp. 49-92.

Service: Professor Lindtner’s service demonstrates an enthusiasm for institution and community building work that exceeds the expectations for promotion and tenure. Her service record is notable for its breadth. It includes evidence of impact via service, mainly in the form of invited leadership roles and the creation of new institutions to support others.

Professor Lindtner’s record of internal service to UMSI and the university is excellent. Within UMSI, she has served on the Doctoral Committee, an ad hoc space committee, as co-faculty coordination of the Ann Arbor District Library/UMSI partnership, and co-coordinator of the

Michigan Interactive and Social Computing speaker series. She has also been part of official UMSI delegations to China. Within the university, Professor Lindtner has engaged in a variety of service activities benefitting the campus as a whole. She has organized on-campus public events including three major symposia, “Making the ‘Future of Work’ work,” “Neoliberal Fever: Precarity, Hope & Future Making” and “Shenzhen & Skolkovo: Contested Innovation in the Global Silicon Valley” (the former two funded by the National Science Foundation and the latter by the International Institute). She served on the Science and Technology Studies Program steering committee and on a provost’s committee exploring an initiative in Science, Technology, and Public Policy. Finally, Professor Lindtner recently volunteered for the role of associate director of a new campus research center, the Center for Ethics, Society, and Computing, demonstrating commitment to institution-building work on our campus: this is a good sign of a maturing colleague reaching for more responsibility.

Professor Lindtner’s external service record is exemplary. She has served on Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) conference program committees as a member and chair multiple times. She has chaired alt.chi at the ACM Computer on Human Factors in Computing (CHI) (two terms), chaired the interactive exhibitions at the ACM Participatory Design Conference and served as a track organizer and demo co-chair at the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S), workshop chair at the ACM Design of Interactive Systems conference, and served as diversity chair at the ACM CSCW conference. Professor Lindtner has also frequently acted as an external peer reviewer for journals and granting agencies.

Further evidence of Professor Lindtner’s impact can be seen in her public engagements. She was appointed to an expert group formed by the Obama administration in 2016 to consider the future of labor in manufacturing. Her research has been featured in such diverse venues as *The Economist*, *Forbes*, NPR, the *MIT Technology Review*, and *The Huffington Post*, and other venues. Press coverage has been in periodicals based in the United States, Germany, Austria, Denmark, China, and South Africa.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: “The impact of her innovative work is evident in the breadth of her research, the depth of her critical scholarly engagements, and her public facing work that informs industrial practices and policy. [Professor] Lindtner’s research is at the forefront of recent scholarship about entrepreneurial makers, technology, innovation, gender roles, and neoliberal capital.”

Reviewer B: “On all three fronts [publications, funding, collaboration], Professor Lindtner stands out as at the very top of her cohort. I recommend that she be awarded tenure. I do so without any reservation what so ever.”

Reviewer C: “[Professor] Lindtner’s research represents the clearest case for promotion and tenure that I have ever encountered in my experience reviewing over two dozen such cases for our peer institutions (including the Annenberg School at USC and other departments at the University of Michigan) and in serving on four such review committees in my own department.”

Reviewer D: “Compared to other professors for whom I have written tenure letters this year and last year, [Professor] Lindtner meets or exceeds those who are also performing at high levels in top-tier universities. Based on the evaluation of the record alone, [Professor] Lindtner’s accomplishments are stellar, and that you should consider her ready for tenure.”

Reviewer E: “I cannot overemphasize how crucial it is for us as a larger research community to have access to the kind of careful, creative empirical research that [Professor] Lindtner’s work exemplifies. [Professor Lindtner’s] promotion and tenure would not only ensure her retention at the University of Michigan, but also provide her with the institutional recognition that she clearly deserves and the mandate to continue her own research, as well as her capacity building within the School of Information. I have no hesitation in recommending this promotion.”

Reviewer F: “[Professor] Lindtner is an exceptionally creative scholar of the Maker movement and one of the best [junior] analysts of digital culture in China working today. The rigor and depth of her ethnographic research, her productivity, and her ability to speak to several disciplines simultaneously all make her work stand out. I believe she would be a shoo-in for tenure at any top-tier American university.”

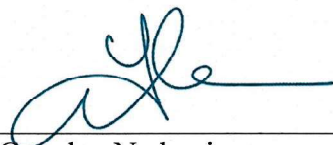
Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Lindtner’s accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research, and service meet and exceed promotion requirements. Therefore, with the support of the promotion and tenure committee of the School of Information and the Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, we enthusiastically recommend Silvia Lindtner for promotion to associate professor of information, with tenure, School of Information, and associate professor of art and design, without tenure, Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design.



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Thomas A. Finholt  
Dean, School of Information



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Gunalan Nadarajan  
Dean and Professor,  
Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design

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