

INCS CONFERENCE: Speed and Acceleration
June 18-20, 2025 // Genoa, Italy

The experience of an accelerating pace across various dimensions of life distinguishes modernity. Advances in technology accelerate processes, communication, and information flow, leading to the rapid development of technologies that influence how we interact, work, and live. Social practices, norms, and expectations accelerate, demanding quicker adaptation and response from individuals and institutions. While speed and acceleration are connected, they are not synonyms: high-speed technology should give us *more* time, yet we experience the paradox of being relentlessly pressed for it. Historically speaking, we are now well positioned to explore the ways previous experiences of acceleration impacted the social, generating discourses of (and attempts at) deceleration, modifying the perception of history and time, and shaping attitudes to life. How did nineteenth-century writers, artists, philosophers, intellectuals, economists, scientists, and politicians articulate the discourse of acceleration? How did they position themselves regarding speed and speeding-up technologies? How did they react to the feeling that history had accelerated its pace, or that the experience of previous generations was becoming obsolete/irrelevant to modern times? How was the changing pace of life conceptualized or artistically represented? Which dimensions of life, or sectors of society, or geographical areas, were perceived as accelerating, and which actively resisted the accelerating trend or passively lagged behind? What conflicts resulted from differences of pace?

Within this general framework, proposals will be welcome on a variety of topics including, but not limited to:

- the representation of time
- the changing relationship between time and space
- new technologies' impact on everyday life (steam technology, trains, bicycles, etc.)
- speeding up the means of communication (newspapers, the telegraph, the telephone) or the means of production (cultural or otherwise)
- generational clashes; gender clashes
- the perception of increased or lagging social mobility
- individual perspectives on speed: the cult of living fast
- the compression of the present, its "museumification," the preoccupation with heritage
- the fast development of literary genres and hybrid forms
- the discourse of accelerating consumption and fast-changing fashions
- ecological concerns: consumption of natural resources outpacing nature's powers of recuperation
- the language of science: acceleration and changes

Deadline: October 31, 2024, with notification of acceptance by late January 2025. For individual papers, send 250-word proposals; for panels, send individual proposals plus a 250-word panel description to incsgenova@gmail.com. Please include a one-page CV with your name, affiliation, and email address. Proposals that are interdisciplinary in method or panels that involve multiple disciplines are especially welcome.