The postdigital, as an aesthetic, gestures towards a relation produced by digital surfaces in a bewildering number of different places and contexts. This interface-centricity is not necessarily screenic, however, and represents the current emerging asterism that is formed around notions of art, computation and design. In this conception, the postdigital is not purely a digital formation or artefact – it can also be the concepts, networks and frameworks of digitality that are represented (e.g. voxels, glitch, off-internet media, neo-analogue, ‘non-digital’ media, post-internet art). Nonetheless, the interesting aspect is the implicit notion of surfaces as theatres of action and performance – such as through data visualization, interactivity or material design – above and beyond a depth model, which highlights the machinery of computation (see Berry 2014, 58).

Here I am thinking not just of the surfaces created in and through the digital, but, moreover, of the kinds of logics that this inspires more broadly across society and culture. For example, I am gesturing not only to new rectangular screenic interfaces, but also to physical manifestations of thinking interfaces – flat design as a mode of thought. So, for example, the 9,250 square metre simulated English village purpose-built in 2003 for the Metropolitan Police in Gravesend is in many ways an interface (BBC 2003); that is, an interface as a ‘militarized non-place […] designed for use as an immersive staging ground for police-training exercises, fighting staged riots, burglaries, bank robberies, and other crimes’ that creates an ‘architectural simulation embedded with high-tech, upgradeable media’ (bldgblog 2014, emphasis added). Complete with exteriors created by mock shopfronts, estates, parks, banks and post offices, this interface is made up of surfaces and facades, in a grotesque simulacrum of a real British town (see Clarke 2008). Similarly, the interface to the computational becomes a site which is a non-place of confrontation, engagement and control.

This notion of the surface is not new, of course. Jameson (2006) famously diagnosed the logic of postmodern capitalism through an analysis of the seeming shallowness of postmodernity. However, through computation,
capitalist logics have been remediated and re-ordered relative to their soft-
warization, not just resulting in surfaces that wait to be read, or inscribed
in such a way as to make such readings impossible or schizophrenic. Rather,
surfaces themselves become *thin machinery*, containing not just the possibil-
ity of a hermeneutic encounter but also an agency drawn from computation
itself. These surfaces point towards and suggest the very veneer of computa-
tion networked across the terrain of everyday life, directed towards control
and surveillance. The postdigital is, then, both an aesthetic and a logic that
informs the re-presentation of space and time within an epoch that is after-
digital, but which remains profoundly computational and organized through
a constellation of techniques and technologies to order things to *stand by*
(Heidegger 1977).

Further, the postdigital itself can be understood as an aesthetic that revels
in the possibility of revealing the ‘grain of computation’, or, perhaps better,
showing the limitations of digital artefacts through a kind of digital glitch, or
the ‘aesthetics of failure’ (Cascone 2000, 13). In common with the *new aesth-
etic*, the postdigital has been linked to the extent to which digital media
have permeated our everyday lives (Berry 2012a). We could, perhaps, say that
the postdigital emerges from a form of ‘breakdown’ practice linked to the
*conspicuousness* of digital technologies (see Berry 2014, 99): not just through
the use of digital tools, of course, but also a language of new media (see
Manovich 2001), the frameworks, structures, concepts and processes repre-
sented by computation, and the interplay of design and aesthetics inscribed
on the faces of technical devices; that is, both in the presentation of computa-
tion and in its representational modes. To explore this further, I think it is
interesting to look at the way in which the ‘digital’ has been understood in
the work of Bruno Latour by way of example, as I think he brings out many
of the tensions that emerge in relation to the demand that we rethink the
digital in relation to its historicity (Berry 2014).

The digital

Latour outlined his understanding of the digital in a plenary lecture at Dig-
ital Humanities 2014 conference. He was exemplary in explaining that
his understanding might be a product of his own individuation and pre-
digital training as a scholar, which emphasized close-reading techniques
and agonistic engagement around a shared text (Latour 2014). Nonethe-
less, in presenting his attempt to produce a system of what we might call
augmented close reading through building the AIME web-reading system,
he also revealed how he deployed the digital methodologically and his
corresponding notion of the digital’s ontological constitution.

Latour first outlined a rejection of the specificity of the digital as a sepa-
rate domain, highlighting both the materiality of the digital and its complex
relationship with the analogue. He described the analogue structures that