The editors of *Finance and Society* invite submissions for a special issue on how financial services are fusing with digital technology and what the broader implications of this are in social, political, and economic terms.

The seamless incorporation of financial capabilities such as payments, lending, insurance, banking, and investment into various sectors, including e-commerce, healthcare, education, and beyond, is posited as the next frontier for fintech. By embedding financial services into the fabric of everyday life, (non-financial) businesses aim to enhance customer experiences, create new revenue streams, and foster financial inclusion. But this process also raises broader questions about the role of finance in contemporary societies and the shifting politics of financial society. We seek contributions that go beyond the hype surrounding financial innovation to critically examine how the disappearance of finance into technical infrastructures is reshaping social relations, power dynamics, and the very meaning of money itself.

‘Embedded finance’, as it is known in the industry, represents a departure from the decentralized finance (DeFi) narrative that has dominated recent discourse. While DeFi promised to democratize finance by disintermediating traditional gatekeepers, embedded finance leverages the power of centralized platforms to deliver financial services in a more accessible, context-specific manner. This tension between decentralization and embedding presents a rich avenue for social scientific inquiry, as it speaks to broader questions of trust, control, and the role of technology and institutions in mediating financial interactions. Central to the embedded finance trend are the technological infrastructures that enable financial services across diverse platforms and industries. Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) models play a crucial role in this process, affording financial products and services without the need to build and maintain complex financial infrastructures themselves.

Meanwhile, several of the most central actors in finance continue to experiment with technologies that were originally intended to provide an alternative to centralised finance. More than 130 central banks around the globe are exploring the creation of their own digital currencies for wholesale and retail purposes with varying motivations and aims, ranging from financial inclusion to monetary sovereignty and new forms of cross-border
payments. This tension between new technologies and established financial actors presents a promising opportunity for researchers interested in the co-evolution of technology and the economy.

This special issue aims to foster a vibrant interdisciplinary dialogue that situates embedded finance within a broader landscape of financial innovation and social change. We invite scholars from various disciplines to contribute papers that interrogate the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of embedded finance.

Potential topics may include, but are not limited to:

- How technologies are changing financial services and business models, e.g., the rising importance of data.
- The historical context of embedded finance and its relationship to earlier forms of financial innovation and social change (e.g., electronic markets, Fintech, corporate financialization).
- Tensions between decentralization and the embedding of finance into centralized platforms.
- The implications of embedding finance into everyday life, especially in terms of social relations and power dynamics.
- From the FinTech Revolution to “Techified” Finance. How have relations between incumbents and challengers developed over time?
- Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs). How are these redefining public-private monetary relations and what are the potential consequences of this in socio-economic terms?
- Comparative studies of embedded finance across different cultural, institutional, and regulatory contexts.
- Perspectives on the cultural meanings and practices associated with embedded finance.
- The sociological significance of APIs as boundary objects that mediate interactions between financial and non-financial actors.
- The regulatory challenges and opportunities associated with BaaS, including issues of licensing, compliance, and accountability.
- Critical analyses of the discourses and ideologies surrounding embedded finance and their implications for financial subjectivity.
- How geopolitical tensions affect the intersections between finance, technology, and the proliferation of financial services.

We welcome submissions that employ diverse theoretical and methodological approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. By bringing together a range of perspectives and empirical insights, this special issue seeks to advance our understanding of embedded finance as a socio-technical phenomenon with far-reaching implications for individuals, communities, and societies.
Author guidelines

Submissions are invited in the full range of formats listed below, though the editors are especially seeking original articles and essays:

- Articles; 9-11,000 words
- Essays; 4-6,000 words
- Policy focus; 4-6,000 words
- Review articles; 3-4,000 words

Interested authors should get in contact with the journal editors listed below and share with them a title page including all the usual material relating to their proposed submission (title, abstract, keywords, author names and affiliations).

Selected authors will be invited to participate. Full papers should then be submitted through our online submission system, Manuscript Central, following the journal’s standard formatting and style guidelines. When doing so you will be able to indicate that your submission pertains to this Special Issue. All submissions will go through the journal’s peer review process.

Key dates

- Abstracts by email to Adam Hayes and Carola Westermeier: October 1, 2024
- Full papers submitted via Manuscript Central: April 1, 2025

Further details

Please consult our author instructions here: 
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society/information/author-instructions

Information on preparing your manuscript can be found here: 
https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society/information/author-instructions/preparing-your-materials

More information about the journal and the submission process can be found via the following link: https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society

Any queries should be directed to: Adam Hayes and Carola Westermeier.