



Minds & Machines

Editor-in-Chief: Mariarosaria Taddeo
(Oxford)

Call for Papers for Minds & Machines special issue on

Artificial Speakers – Philosophical Questions and Implications

Guest Editors

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Description

With the increasing ubiquity of natural language processing (NLP) algorithms, interacting with “conversational artificial agents” such as speaking robots, chatbots, and personal assistants will be an everyday occurrence for most people. In a rather innocuous sense, we can perform a variety of speech acts with them, from asking a question to telling a joke, as they respond to our input just as any other agent would.

However, in a stricter, philosophical sense, the question of what we are doing when we interact with these agents is less trivial, as the conversational instances are growing in complexity, interactivity, and anthropomorphic believability. For example, open domain chatbots will soon be capable of holding conversations on a virtually unlimited range of topics.

Many philosophical questions are brought up in this development that this special issue aims to address. Are we engaging in a “discourse” when we “argue” with a chatbot? Do they perform speech acts akin to human agents, or do we require different explanations to understand this kind of interactivity? In what way do artificial agents “understand” language, partake in discourse and create text? Are our conversational assumptions and

projections transferable, and should we model artificial speakers along those conventions? Will their moral utterances ever have validity?

This special issue of *Minds and Machines* invites papers discussing a range of topics on human-machine communication and the philosophical presumptions and consequences for developing, distributing, and interacting with speaking robots.

We invite the submission of papers focusing on but not restricted to:

- What are philosophically sound distinctions between speaking robots, unembodied chatbots, and other forms of artificial speakers?
- What constitutes discourse participants, and can artificial speakers ever meet those requirements?
- Can artificial speakers perform speech acts, and if yes, can they perform all speech acts humans can perform? Or do robots perform unique speech acts?
- What kind of artificial agent can be capable of what kind of language or discourse performance: chatbots, robots, virtual agents, ...?
- What is the role of anthropomorphism in modelling chatbots as possible discourse participants?
- What is the role of technomorphism in modelling human interlocutors as technical discourse participants?
- What are the normative consequences of moral statements made by artificial discourse participants?
- How will communicative habits between humans change by the presence of artificial speakers?
- How can semantic theories explain the meaning-creation of artificial speakers?
- Are normative conventions in human-human communication (politeness, compliments) relevant and transformable/transferrable to human-machine communication?
- Are there – analogous to human-human communication – any communicative presuppositions in human-machine communication?

Timetable

Deadline to submit full paper: October 1st, 2020

First round of reviews: October 2nd – December 1st, 2020

Deadline to resubmit paper: December 15th, 2020

Second round of reviews: December 15th – December 31st, 2020

Deadline for final paper: December 31st, 2020

Publication of special edition: March 2021

For any further information please contact

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Submission Details

To submit a paper for this special issue, authors should go to the journal's Editorial Manager <https://www.editorialmanager.com/mind/default.aspx>. The author (or a corresponding author for each submission in case of co-authored papers) must register into EM.

The author must then select the special article type: "Artificial Speakers – Philosophical Questions and Implications" from the selection provided in the submission process. This is needed in order to assign the submissions to the Guest Editor.

Submissions will then be assessed according to the following procedure:

New Submission => Journal Editorial Office => Guest Editor(s) => Reviewers => Reviewers' Recommendations => Guest Editor(s)' Recommendation => Editor-in-Chief's Final Decision => Author Notification of the Decision.

The process will be reiterated in case of requests for revisions.

The link to this CfP:

<https://resource-cms.springernature.com/springer-cms/rest/v1/content/17912410/data/v1>