

# DATA, DISCOURSE & DEMOCRACY FINAL WORKSHOP IN THE SERIES

African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science

28 November 2024 09:00-12:30 SAST

ZOOM LINK: <https://zoom.us/j/91345677090>

VENUE: 11<sup>TH</sup> Floor Boardroom, [UJ on Empire](#), Johannesburg South Africa

## Professor Boaz Miller 09:00-10:30 SAST Talk: Knowing When to Stop Looking on the Internet

### Abstract:

The Internet has called into question the possibility of attaining knowledge. Fake websites look like genuine websites. Fake news looks like real news. Some bots seem like real people, and real people act like bots. Communities discuss far-fetched, wacky, fringe theories. Alternative online epistemic authorities reveal that matters have never been as settled as orthodox authorities wanted us to think. The Internet arguably makes it too likely for us to form false beliefs on seemingly good grounds, or true beliefs on shaky grounds. Nevertheless, we (Boaz Miller & Isaac Record) argue that the Internet has made neither the attainment of knowledge impossible in principle, nor the very notion of knowledge obsolete. Rather, it has exposed a lacuna in our current theories of knowledge and justified belief. This gap concerns technology and the ways it affects our abilities to pursue lines of inquiry. Epistemologists have lacked the conceptual tools to address a new technological reality that differs in important ways from our historical norm.



Dr. Boaz Miller is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management Information Systems at Zefat Academic College. His research spans social epistemology, philosophy of science and technology, and science and technology studies. Dr Miller's work delves into the dynamics of knowledge and information on the Internet, the nature of expertise and collective knowledge, and the development of scientific consensus. and the intricate interplay between evidence and values. He also explores the roles of scientific models in representing truth and understanding complex systems.



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**Organiser:** Paige Benton

**Funding:** GES Grant

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Ms Cindy Friedman 11:00-12:30 SAST

## Talk: Understanding humanoid robots as a socially disruptive technology

### Abstract:

This talk investigates the socially disruptive nature of social robotics technologies, with a particular focus upon humanoid robots. There has been a lot of discussion about the disruptive nature of these technologies as they relate to the application conditions of specific concepts, such as whether, and under what conditions, humanoid robots could be classified as moral agents, moral patients, or legal and/or moral persons. While engaging with this debate, this talk also seeks to frame the disruptive effect of humanoid robots differently by taking the discussion beyond that of classificatory concerns. It does so by showing that humanoid robots are a socially disruptive technology because they also transform how we experience and understand the world. Through inviting us to relate to a technological artefact as if it is human, humanoid robots have a profound impact upon the way in which we relate to different elements of our world. Specifically, the focus is upon three types of human relational experiences, and how the norms that surround them may be transformed by humanoid robots: (1) human-technology relations; (2) human-human relations; and (3) human-self relations.



Cindy Friedman is a final year PhD Candidate at the Ethics Institute at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Her research is a part of the Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies Research programme, wherein she investigates how humanoid robots may (re)shape our understanding of what it means to be human. Her writing engages with machine ethics more generally, and the ethics of human-robot interaction in particular. Some of her research publications include: “Responding to the (techno) Responsibility Gap(s)”; “Ethical Concerns with Replacing Human Relations with Humanoid Robots: an Ubuntu Perspective”; and “Emotional Embodiment in Humanoid Sex and Love Robots”.



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