Society for Philosophy and Technology

SPT newsletter

Volume 33, Number 1 (Winter 2009)

Contents

1. President's Column

President's Message

As I sit down to write this message, I find myself looking out at a clear and bright blue Minnesota winter sky….with clouds on my mind. No, I am not thinking about the weather but rather about words….about "tag clouds," that is. What would a tag cloud of SPT members' academic interests look like? While "philosophy of technology" would stand out quite prominently, I suspect that there would be quite a swarm of additional tags, reflective of the diversity of our scholarly interests and areas of inquiry. The structure of our conference this July at the University of Twente reflects both this commonality and diversity of our interests in an exciting way, with fifteen "tracks" available for reflection on the conference's theme of converging technologies. If you have not already done so, I hope you will consider submitting an abstract for SPT 2009. Since the deadline has been extended to 31 January 2009, there is still ample time to get one in. For details on how to submit an abstract, please see the conference website at http://www.utwente.nl/ceptes/spt2009. You can also register now for SPT 2009 through the conference website, as well as make reservations for hotel accommodations.

Confirmed keynote speakers for SPT 2009 are Nick Bostrom, the Director of the Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford University and the co-founder of the World Transhumanist Association and the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies, and Andrew Feenberg, who is Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology at Simon Fraser University.

As you know, our biennial conference is the best opportunity we have for connecting with one another face to face across the spectrum of our varied and shared interests. But, because as a society we only meet every other year, we particularly need to take advantage of other ways of connecting with one another. Along these lines, for some time we have talked about having a member directory for SPT. Now with the transition to a new year, in the grand spirit of new year's resolutions, it is high time to make this directory a reality.

In the directory, you will be listed along with your institutional contact information, including address, phone number, e-mail address, and website (if you have one). If you are an independent scholar, you will be listed in the directory with the contact information you gave the Philosophical Documentation Center at the time you joined SPT or renewed your membership. In order to protect your information, the directory will not be available online but rather will be sent out via e-mail, first this Spring and thereafter each Fall to members in good standing.

Some of you might want to see what your listing looks like before the directory goes out to ensure that your information is up-to-date. If you would like to see it in advance, if you would prefer to have some but not all of the contact information

mentioned above appear in the directory, or if you would prefer not to be listed at all, please just send a message by 15 February 2009 to spt@spt.org.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in Enschede in July. And, as this new year unfolds, may it bring blue skies for us all.

Collegially yours,

Diane Michelfelder
President, SPT

PS: Again, to submit an abstract for the upcoming conference, please send it to spt2009@gw.twente.nl. Any questions or requests regarding listings in the member directory should be sent to spt@spt.org.

---

2. Techné

Techné: Research in Philosophy & Technology, the journal of the Society for Philosophy and Technology, is currently welcoming submissions of all styles and approaches in philosophy of technology. The editorial stance of *Techné* is ideologically neutral. There is, however, a unifying theme: a focus on technology, particular technologies, modern or traditional, worldwide, or on social and ethical problems associated with particular technologies. *Techné* aims at being the platform for presenting novel developments and results in academic research on this theme. We therefore seek rigorous, seminal, interesting, creative work and eagerly solicit work from those in fields outside philosophy as long as they offer philosophical perspective.

Submissions will be blind refereed by at least two readers. It is our expectation that authors will be provided with critiques, where, in the judgment of the editors they are deemed helpful. We also seek to have a turn-around time of two months, although this is subject to the cooperation of our referees. We construe philosophy of technology broadly, and we are dedicated to fostering the highest standards in what is becoming a diverse field of study. We hope you will consider submitting your work to *Techné*. Submissions and questions can be directed by email to technejournal@gmail.com. If you would like to read past issues of *Techné* for free, please visit our Ejournal, http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/SPT/.

For statistics on the growing readership of *Techné* from 1996 to 2007, please visit: http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/stats/ejournals/SPT-current.html

3. SPT 2009: Converging Technologies, Changing Societies. CFP

16th International Conference of
the Society for Philosophy and Technology

July 8-10

University of Twente
Enschede, The Netherlands

Extended deadline for abstracts: January 31, 2009

(also panel proposals are welcome)

SPT 2009 welcomes high quality papers and panel proposals in all areas of philosophy of technology. Given the focus of this year's conference, papers dealing with converging technologies and their social and cultural impact are especially welcomed. SPT 2009 will include 15 tracks:

1. Converging technologies and human enhancement. Chair: Peter-Paul Verbeek
2. Converging technologies and engineering sciences. Chair: Mieke Boon
3. Converging technologies and risks. Chairs: Sabine Roeser and Sven Ove Hansson
4. Converging technologies: general issues. Chair: Armin Grunwlad
5. Ethics of emerging technologies. Chair: Tsjalling Swierstra
6. Philosophy and ethics of biomedical and nanotechnology. Chair: Bert Gordijn and Joachim Schummer
7. Philosophy and ethics of information technology. Chair: Adam Briggle
8. Environmental philosophy and sustainable technology. Chair: Andrew Light
9. Philosophy of engineering and design. Chair: Pieter Vermaas
10. Robots, cyborgs and artificial life. Chairs: Mark Coeckelbergh and Gianmarco Veruggio
11. Technology and moral responsibility. Chair: Katinka Waelbers
12. Technology, culture and globalisation. Chairs: Charles Ess and Evan Selinger
13. The good life and technology. Chair: Philip Brey
14. Philosophy of technology: general and assorted issues. Chair: Anthonie Meijers
15. Reflective engineering. Chair: Darryl Farber

Descriptions of the tracks can be found on our website www.utwente.nl/ceptes/spt2009.

Papers will be accepted on the basis of a submitted abstract, which will be refereed. An abstract must be between 500 and 750 words in length (references excluded) and submitted via email (spt2009@utwente.nl) as embedded plain text or an attachment in RTF or WORD (no docx) or PDF format. It should also contain the name and number of the track to which the abstract is submitted. Abstracts must be submitted no later than January 5, 2009. Authors will be informed of the decision of the referees by March 15, 2009.

Panel Proposals

We will also accept proposals for panel discussions, also to be submitted by January 31, 2009. Panel proposals must include a statement of the general topic and an overview of the specific questions or issues to be addressed. In addition, the proposal should include a list of the panelists involved, their expertise in this area, and whether they have indicated that they are willing to participate.

The SPT conference series is recognized as the premier international event in philosophy of technology, with delegates from all over the world. Conferences are held every 2 years, alternating between Europe and the United States. SPT 2009 is the 16th conference in the series.

Scientific directors: Philip Brey, Tsjalling Swierstra and Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente
Managing director: Katinka Waelbers, University of Twente

Keep checking the conference website (currently in progress) at www.utwente.nl/ceptes/spt2009. Conference email address: spt2009@gw.utwente.nl

---

4. Call for Invitations to Host SPT 2011

The SPT Board of Directors invites proposals to host the SPT meeting in 2011. Following past practice, it is anticipated that this meeting will take place in North America, but invitations to host SPT 2011 in other locations are also welcome.

Invitations should include the following details:

- A brief description of your institution and why it would be a good choice for this meeting.

- Anticipated conference dates.
- Anticipated number of registrants.
- Travel information: What airport will conference participants use? Are there direct flights to this airport from major US and international cities? How far is the airport from the conference location? Will the host institution arrange transportation from the airport, or will participants be responsible for getting to the venue on their own?
- A description of the facilities available for the conference. How many rooms will be available for our use? What is their seating capacity? Where will group meals take place?
- Lodging information: How many rooms will be available for conference participants? What will be the anticipated costs of the lodging? Will lodging be on or off campus? If off-campus, how far away, and will transportation be available for participants to get from their lodging to the campus?
- An estimate of the conference registration fee, and a description of the costs to be included in it.
- A budget estimate, including a detailed breakdown of institutional and other expenses (eg keynote speakers, group educational/social activities, etc.). Please provide an explanation of how the costs will be covered, including anticipated revenue from registration fees, amount needed from the society, and institutional support. (All budgetary information should be given in US dollars.)
- A letter of commitment of institutional support is encouraged to accompany the invitation.

Invitations to host SPT 2011 may be sent to Diane Michelfelder at any time, but preferably no later than 15 May 2009. Invitations may be submitted electronically (to michelfelder@macalester.edu) or by surface mail to the Department of Philosophy, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105-1899 USA. The SPT Board will consider the proposals received at their next meeting; and it is anticipated that the host institution will be announced at the conference in Enschede. Preliminary expressions of interest, requests for a sample proposal, or any general questions should be directed to Diane at the e-mail address above or at 1-651-696-6197.

---

5. Workshop on Philosophy and Engineering 2008

The second international Workshop on Philosophy of Engineering (WPE), held in co-operation and affiliation with the Society for Philosophy and Technology and other professional organizations, took place at The Royal Academy of Engineering in London from November 10th-12th 2008. This was the second WPE, following a successful meeting at the Technical University of Delft in 2007.There were nearly 90

participants in the workshop, from across Europe, the US, China, India and Brazil. Nearly all of those attending played an active part, with 46 contributed papers, 8 posters, 4 keynote speakers and a series of 'tutorials' in which work by established researchers was introduced to participants working in different areas.

Opening the workshop, Billy V. Koen of the University of Texas gave the talk 'Towards a Philosophy of Engineering: An Engineer's Perspective'. Koen set out his view of the nature of engineering, a necessary precursor, he argued, for establishing a philosophy of engineering. According to Koen, the engineering method consists in 'the use of heuristics to cause the best change in an uncertain situation within the available resources'. Koen also offered an engineer's perspective on the nature of philosophy and how this relates specifically to the philosophy of engineering.

Jerome Ravetz of the James Martin Institute at the University of Oxford, and the second keynote speaker at the workshop, spoke on 'Maintenance as Morality'. Ravetz's talk addressed the essential importance of maintenance to engineering, which is necessary to ensure that engineered products function as intended, in a safe way. However, the criticality of maintenance contrasts with the relatively low status of maintenance activity and the people who carry it out.

Deborah G. Johnson of the University of Virginia gave a talk titled 'An STS-informed account of Engineering Ethics', and set out a case for using the tools and concepts developed within science and technology studies to better understand the ethical responsibility of engineers. By this means, a better appreciation of the relationship between engineers and society can be established. Carl Mitcham of the Colorado School of Mines set out his views on 'The Philosophical Weakness of Engineering as a Profession'. Mitcham argued that unlike philosophically strong professions such as medicine and law, engineering does not have an established set of goals that are embedded in the way that it is taught and practised. His provocative argument was that engineering was more like business in this respect, a conclusion that provoked lively debate.

These keynote lectures were complemented by contributed talks on a wide range of highly stimulating topics. The kinds of issues that proved most fruitful in generating philosophical discussion included the approach and methods of systems engineering; philosophical and ethical questions arising out of software engineering; engineering education for the current era; and the nature of philosophy of engineering. The contributed papers encouraged lively debate both in the lecture halls and throughout the breaks.

WPE 2008 introduced tutorials for participants, an opportunity to hear from experts in various fields about their work and how it relates to philosophy of engineering. Tutorial topics covered US and UK approaches to innovative engineering education; the application of metaphysics to practical engineering; learning about consciousness through the engineering of intelligent systems; peace engineering; feminism and engineering; and the nature of sociotechnical systems. As the philosophy of

engineering is an emerging subject, these were invaluable opportunities to share work that has been carried out by individuals and research groups worldwide.

Plans are now being formed for the WPE 2010. 2008 was a success in bringing together philosophers and engineers in academia. The challenge for the next conference is to include more practising engineers to give their perspective on the reality of engineering method and to discuss with philosophers those aspects of their work that they find philosophically interesting. The aim of WPE is to ensure that the exploration of philosophy and engineering maintains a focus on the real-world application of engineering and the philosophical issues to which it gives rise.

Natasha McCarthy
Policy Advisor, The Royal Academy of Engineering
Co-chair, WPE 2008

---

6. Conferences, Workshops, and Lectures

SNET 2009
The Society for the Study of Nanoscience and Emerging Technologies (S.NET) is poised to become an international organization to promote open intellectual exchange towards the advancement of knowledge and understanding of nanotechnologies in society. S.NET represents diverse communities, viewpoints, and methodologies in the social sciences and humanities.

The first annual conference will coincide with the founding of the Society. The conference takes place in Seattle, Washington, September 8 to 11, 2009 in cooperation with the University of Washington Center for Workforce Development Nanoethics Symposium. It invites all discussions of anthropological, cultural, economic, ethical, historical, philosophical, political, and sociological aspects of nanosciences and emerging technologies. The program committee welcomes individual abstracts, proposals for panels with three to five presentations, as well as roundtable or workshop discussions.

Deadline for submission of abstracts is February 15, 2009. Information about the Society, the conference, and the Call for Papers are available at www.theSNET.net

SPSP 2009
June 18-20, 2009, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA

We are happy to announce that Helen Longino and Mary Morgan will present a key-note lecture.

Please send an abstract of 500 words, and full contact information, to info.spsp@gw.utwente.nl and Abstract SPSP 2009 as your subject title in email. For registration and further information visit our website http://www.philosophy-science-practice.org.

Deadline for submission: February 1st, 2009.

SPT Sessions at the Pacific Division APA Meeting
The American Philosophical Association will be holding its annual Pacific Division meeting this year in Vancouver, Canada from 8-12 April 2009. If you are planning on being in Vancouver for what promises to be an especially lively meeting, please know SPT is sponsoring two sessions on the group meeting schedule.

One session will take place on Thursday, 9 April from 6-9 PM
Topic: The Good Life, Freedom, and the Web 2.0
Chair: Diane P. Michelfelder (Macalester College)

Speakers:
John Sullins (Sonoma State University) "Finding a Good Life in Virtual Worlds"
Shannon Vallor (Santa Clara University) "Social Networking Technology and the Virtues"
Andrew Feenberg (Simon Fraser University) "A Democratic Internet?"

Another session will be held on Saturday, 11 April, also from 6-9 PM.
Topic: Heidegger, Marcuse, and the Philosophy of Technology
 Chair: Andrew Feenberg

Speakers:
Andrew Feenberg "Heidegger, Marcuse, and the Critique of Technology"
Ian Angus (Simon Fraser University) "Labour, Technology and Time"
 Dana Belu (California State University, Dominguez Hills) "Removing the Frame: Technology and Agency in Heidegger's Gestell"

If you are interested in organizing a session for any of the APA meetings in the 2009-2010 academic year, please let Diane know at michelfelder@macalester.edu. Proposals for "author-meets-critics" sessions and/or for the Eastern Division APA meeting are particularly welcome.

Humanities and Technology Annual Conference
March 26-28, 2009
University of Virginia
Special Topic:Technology, Democracy, and Citizenship

Democracy and democratic citizenship shape and are shaped by technology. Taking the broad approach, this conference invites papers and session proposals bringing insight to the important albeit complicated and intricate relationships among technology, democracy, and citizenship.

Besides scholars in Science and Technology Studies and the Humanities and Social Sciences, we hope to attract practitioners and researchers in engineering, science, public policy, architecture, government, and international development to engage in a series of wide-ranging conversations focused on three broad intersections of technology and democracy:

To propose a paper, send an abstract of no more than 250 words. To propose a session, include a session title and rationale as well as an abstract for each paper. Include the affiliation and relevant contact details for all authors. Please direct electronic submissions and questions to Andreas.Michel@rose-hulman.edu, or write to Andreas Michel, HTA 2009 Program Chair, Humanities and Social Sciences, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, 5500 Wabash Ave, Terre Haute, IN, 47803. We will begin reviewing proposals as soon as they are received.
Proposals are due no later than February 6, 2009
http://www.humanitiesandtechnology.org/

CEPE 2009
Eighth International Conference of Computer Ethics Philosophical Enquiry
26-28 June 2009, Ionian Academy Corfu, Greece
The CEPE (Computer Ethics Philosophical Enquiry) conference series is recognized as one of the premier international events on computer and information ethics attended by delegates from all over the world. Conferences are held about every 24 months, alternating between Europe and the United States. http://cepe2009.ionio.gr

ISHPSSB 2009, Brisbane
Biennial Meeting, 12-16 July 2009, Brisbane, Australia
The 2009 meeting of the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology will take place from Sunday, 12 July, through Thursday, 16 July, at Emmanuel College, St. Lucia, Brisbane, Australia, hosted by the University of Sydney: http://www.ishpssb2009.org
ISHPSSB brings together scholars from diverse disciplines, including the life sciences as well as history, philosophy, and sociology of science. The ISHPSSB biennial summer conferences are known for their innovative, transdisciplinary sessions and for fostering informal, cooperative exchanges and on-going collaborations among a variety of international
scholars. This will be the first meeting to be held in the southern hemisphere.
The aim of the conference is to facilitate the exchange of research ideas and results across a range of fields. The submission of papers and sessions on any topic within the society's scope is welcomed. We also encourage the submission of posters,

workshops, and general
interest sessions based on themes identified in session proposals. It is our goal to develop a program that will allow maximal interactions, while also giving people the chance to present their ideas to their colleagues.
Scholars wishing to attend the meeting are invited to submit session and paper proposals on the ISHPSSB website: http://www.ishpssb.org/meeting.html. Deadline for submissions is 1 February 2009. Abstracts should not exceed 500 words; instructions for using the abstract submission system can be found at:http://www.ishpssb.org/meetingsubmissioninstructions.html.

IACAP
For the three IACAP (International Association for Computing and Philosophy, www.ia-cap.org) conferences the following deadlines are approaching:

NA-CAP February 1st 2009
North-American CAP - Indiana University
http://ia-cap.org/na-cap09/

E-CAP February 23rd 2009
European CAP - Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona http://ia-cap.org/e-cap09/

LA-CAP March 1st, 2009
Latin-American CAP - National University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico City http://ia-cap.org/la-cap09/

The Philosophy of Identity in the Virtual
Symposium 6, April 23, 9-12 AM / 2-5 PM
Difference, Relation and Identity are three notions that are fundamentals for the success of Virtual Reality technologies (VR and AR). The aim of this symposium is to conceptualise the Identity of an individual as a scientific concept whilst acknowledging the fact that Identity cannot be studied without considering the other two notions. The pros and cons of designing identities for or within VR become obvious upon admitting that representing any Self will be interpreted at some point by someone having his own values, opinions and experience in life. Members of our society that self-procure, attribute or redistribute Identity in the Virtual World bring about psychological enquiries in relation to user intentionality, specific uses of VR applications or general modifications to our ways of communicating. Usability issues addressing the problem of Identity have not yet been integrated into long-term visions of society and our needs. The Chair of the session is thus open to all existential, ethical and epistemological issues having to do with Identity in Virtual Communities.
Submission of full papers: January 19, 2009
Symposium chair: Colin Schmidt, colin.schmidt@univ-lemans.fr
For more information, see the Call for Paper http://www.laval-virtual.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59&Itemid=111

7. Calls for articles

Special Issue of Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy Medical Biotechnologies

Edited by Marin Gillis and Inmaculada de Melo-Martín

Medical biotechnologies have been heralded as both the solution to most problems affecting human beings and their environments, and as a threat to all that matters to us. Feminist analysis of current medical biotechnologies has much to offer to this debate. Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy invites submissions that use feminist philosophy to evaluate medical biotechnologies.

Articles exploring feminist philosophical analyses of medical biotechnologies and those evaluating how feminist values might shape the development and implementation of such technologies are welcome. Also of interest are essays reflecting on the gendered, race, and class dimensions of medical biotechnologies, those evaluating the impact of globalization on these biotechnologies and vice-versa, and articles offering new insights into the effects of medical biotechnologies on social and political arrangements.

Although feminist work in biomedicine is frequently assumed to be about women's capacity to procreate, this issue seeks to highlight other dimensions of medical biotechnologies, including human genetic modification, cloning, xenotransplantation, chimeras, pharmacogenomics/genetics, and human genetic databases.

Papers should be no more than 8000 words, inclusive of notes and bibliography, prepared for anonymous review, and accompanied by an abstract of no more than 100 words. Please provide a cover letter identifying your paper as a submission for the special issue "Medical Biotechnologies." The deadline for submissions is 15 March 2009.

Papers should be submitted by electronic attachment in MS Word to hypatia@u.washington.edu. Submissions should follow Hypatia guidelines (see http://www.msu.edu/~hypatia/).

Please address questions and suggestions to Marin Gillis at mgillis@medicine.nevada.edu or Inmaculada de Melo-Martín at imd2001@med.cornell.edu.

8. Recent publications of interest

Berg Olsen, J., Selinger, E. and Riis, S. (eds) (2008) *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology.*

Ihde, D.(forthcoming March 2009) *Postphenomenology and Technoscience: The Peking University Lectures.* SUNY Press.

Johnson, D. and Wetmore, J. (eds) (2008) *Technology and Society: Building Our Sociotechnical Future.* The MIT Press.

Moriarty, G. (2008) *The Engineering Project: Its Nature, Ethics. and Promise.* Penn State University Press University Park, Pennsylvania

Selinger, E. (2008) *Embodying technoscience.* Automatic Press/VIP

---

9. Job Vacancies

The Section of Philosophy and Ethics of Technology, Eindhoven University of Technology

PhD (1.0 fte) in Philosophy and Ethics of Technology (V39.473)
On Ethical Aspects of Modelling in Engineering

Sponsored by the 3TU Centre of Excellence for Ethics and Technology
http://w3.tm.tue.nl/en/subdepartments/aw/research/philosophyethics_of_technology/vacancies/v39473/

Application
Please send a written (printed) application letter with a recent, detailed Curriculum Vitae, names and contact details of (at least) two referees, and a sample of written work to:

Eindhoven University of Technology
Department of Industrial Engineering & Innovation Sciences
Personnel Department, Pav R.1.23.
PO Box 513
5600 MB Eindhoven

The Netherlands

Applications should be received by January 31st, 2009. Please include the job vacancy code: V39.473.

Philosophy Department, University of Montana

We are in the process of recruiting promising students for Fall 2009 admission into our environmental ethics emphasis in the philosophy department at the University of Montana. Please encourage any students that you think might be interested to view our emphasis webpage at:

http://www.cas.umt.edu/phil/environmental_philosophy.htm

Contact: Christopher Preston (Christopher.Preston@mso.umt.edu / 406 243-2937) or Deborah Slicer (Deborah.Slicer@mso.umt.edu / 406 243-2527).

10. Membership and Dues

SPT welcomes as members persons from all countries whose professional interests include philosophically significant considerations of technology. Membership is open to those who have or who are pursuing an advanced degree in philosophy or a related discipline, and to those who work in a technological field. Because of the Society's long-standing commitment to access, dues are purposively kept at a modest amount: $35US per year for regular memberships and $15US per year for student memberships. Dues are waived for individuals from developing nations.

To join SPT, to renew your membership, or to change your e-mail address and/or update other contact information, just go to

http://www.pdcnet.,org/member-spt.html

Dues can be paid online by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Discover). Arrangements to pay by cheque or money order can also be made by calling the Philosophy Documentation Center at 1-800-444-2419 (toll-free from the US and Canada) or at 1-434-220-3300.

11. SPT Officers

President: Diane P. Michelfelder, Macalester College
President-elect: Philip Brey, University of Twente
Secretary-Treasurer: John Sullins, Sonoma State University
Executive Board: Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente
Sven Ove Hansson, Royal Institute of Technology
Ann Johnson, University of South Carolina
David Kaplan, University of North Texas
Inmaculada (Inma) de Melo-Martin, Weill Medical College of Cornell University.
Techné Editors: Joseph Pitt, Virginia Tech University
Peter-Paul Verbeek, University of Twente
Pieter Vermaas, Delft University
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster: Katinka Waelbers, University of Twente