Dr. Joanna Bryson

Biography

Joanna Bryson is a Reader (tenured Associate Professor) at the University of Bath, United Kingdom, and an affiliate of Princeton University’s Center for Information Technology Policy (CITP). Her academic interests include the structure and utility of intelligence, both natural and artificial. Venues for her research range from “reddit” to “Science”.

She is best known for her work on AI systems and AI ethics, both of which she began during her doctoral work in the 1990s, but she and her colleagues publish broadly – in biology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, cognitive science, and politics. Current projects include “Public Goods and Artificial Intelligence” with Alin Coman of Princeton University’s Department of Psychology and Mark Riedl of Georgia Tech. The project is funded by Princeton University’s Center for Human Values and includes both basic research in human sociality and experiments in technological interventions. Other current research projects are centered around understanding the causality behind the correlation between wealth inequality and political polarization, generating transparency for AI systems, and conducting research on machine prejudice deriving from human semantics.

Bryson holds degrees in psychology from the University of Chicago and the University of Edinburgh, and in artificial intelligence from the University of Edinburgh and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). At Bath, she founded the Intelligent Systems research group (one of four in the Department of Computer Science) and heads their Artificial Models of Natural Intelligence.

Visiting Professor for Gender Studies at Bielefeld University

The interdisciplinary Visiting Professorship for Gender Studies strengthens gender-specific content in the research and teaching activities in Bielefeld University’s faculties and institutes. This professorship aims at embedding and further expanding gender-related knowledge in the individual disciplines, and in research and teaching more generally. The Visiting Professor thus advances the goals of structurally strengthening gender research while also stimulating interdisciplinary exchange at Bielefeld University. To these ends, the Interdisciplinary Center for Gender Research (IZG) and the Master’s degree programme in Gender Studies have already been successfully implemented. The Professorship is also integrated into the Rektorat’s strategic plan to strengthen equal opportunity as well as gender and diversity issues within Bielefeld University.

During the Winter term of 2017, Dr. Joanna Bryson will hold the Visiting Professor at the Cluster of Excellence Cognitive Interaction Technology (CITEC), contributing her expertise into the field of gender and cognitive interaction technology. During her stay at CITEC, she will give talks and also hold a seminar for Master’s and PhD students.

More information is available online at:
www.uni-bielefeld.de/gender/gendergastprofessur.html
TALK 2: WHY AI ETHICS IS A FEMINIST ISSUE: THE LEGAL AND MORAL LACUNA OF MACHINE RIGHTS

Date: Wednesday, 22 November 2017
Time: 10:00 – 12:00
Location: CITEC, Room 1.204

Conferring legal personhood to purely synthetic entities is a very real legal possibility – one that is, in fact, currently under consideration by the European Union. Why do people assert that machines may need their own (rather than derivative) rights? In what sense can anything other than a human be a legal person, or a moral agent? Does extending ethical concerns to other entities ever diminish the ethical concern we have for humans, or certain categories of humans?

In this talk, Bryson will begin with a set of simple functionalist definitions for the following terms: intelligent, agent, moral agent, moral patient, ethics and legal person. In most cases, the definitions are not the “correct” usages of the terms, but rather present a set of concrete concepts that can be used to disentangle frequently confused conceptions of ethics and identity. She will argue that since both machines and ethics are cultural artifacts, there is no scientific fact about the moral standing of machines that needs to be discovered, but rather only normative recommendations that need to be made.

References: