



## Minds & Machines

Editor-in-Chief: Mariarosaria Taddeo  
(Oxford)

Call for Papers for Minds & Machines special issue on

## Social Robots: Ethical and Anthropological Issues

### Guest Editors

- Prof. Georg Gasser, University of Augsburg
- Ass. Prof. Dr. Claudia Paganini, University of Innsbruck

### Description

The field of robotics is moving increasingly into non-industrial application areas. Robots are becoming more and more part of ordinary human life and they are also penetrating into our private and intimate areas. Social and care robots are programmed to move and interact with people as therapists, entertainers, communication partners, companions, confidants or cuddlers. That is, the use of these robots not only serves to train and maintain the cognitive and social skills of individuals, but also to convey a feeling of interpersonal warmth and empathic understanding for improving the quality of life through social connection. Proponents of so-called sex robots go even one step further and stress that robots can be proper "Ersatz-partners" and offer a real feeling of a meaningful and loving relationship including sexual fulfillment. What do these and similar visions say about us as a species if we outsource such central human roles as being care-givers, friends and even sexual partners to technology, and mostly for a highly vulnerable population, such as elderly persons in care facilities and persons suffering from loneliness and social isolation? Does an hour talking or cuddling with a robot equal an hour with a close relative for a person with dementia or an elderly person whose family is living far away? Is an intimate relationship with a robot better than having no intimate personal relationship at all? How do these people perceive the difference? How do other possible stakeholders in these scenarios such as the family, friends, social workers, the nursing staff, or health care administrators perceive the difference?

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

- The use of robots and implications for our nature as social animals
- The potential threat of de-humanising vulnerable individuals through the substitution of personal social contacts with robot-interaction
- The difference in the qualitative 'feel' between human-robot and interpersonal interaction
- The concepts of sociality and friendship in human-robot-interaction
- Ethical principles in the deployment of care robots and social robots
- Social robots as devices of deception
- Robots as enhancers or reducers of personal autonomy
- The use of robots and informed consent

### **Timetable**

Deadline for paper submissions: October 1, 2020

Deadline for paper reviews: January 31, 2021

Deadline for submission of revised papers: February 15, 2021

Deadline for reviewing revised papers: March 15, 2021

Accepted papers will be published in 2021

For any further information please contact: [Claudia.Paganini@uibk.ac.at](mailto:Claudia.Paganini@uibk.ac.at)

### **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: "Social Robots: Ethical and Anthropological Issues" 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.

