Stop worrying, trust the machine!? - Ethics and algorithms in a big data context

**Location:** Sint-Michielsstraat 6, MTC1, room 00.03

**Date and time:** Thursday 22 March, 14:30-17:30.

**Registration:** is limited to 60 persons
- Not KU Leuven staff/student: 50 euro
- KU Leuven staff/student: free

Online via [www.pythemis.be](http://www.pythemis.be) (before 16 March 2018)

Decisions regarding people are increasingly based on information produced by algorithms processing big data. Big data analytics can be very useful. It can serve important economic purposes as well as the common good, i.e. public interests such as those of scientific research, public safety and public health. Unfortunately, big data analytics can also expose people to harm or to infringements of rights exactly through the information produced, i.e. by producing information about persons previously unknown and undesired or by producing information that offers cause for discrimination. The ways in which the information is produced by algorithms in a big data context is complex and difficult to understand, even for experts in the field. Moreover, transparency is often impeded by formal or informal secrecy arrangements. How can we use big data analytics in such a manner that society can profit from its advantages and simultaneously avoid its possible negative impact?

In this afternoon conference we will explain what big data and algorithms are and how they work. We will discuss the social advantages and drawbacks and try to find responsible ways of using algorithms in a big data context.

14:30 Opening
14:45 Welcome (Anton Vedder)
15:00 Big Data and Algorithms (Seda Guerses)
15:30 Big Data’s bright future (Simon Hampton)
16:00 Algorithms in a big data context, ethics and law (Anton Vedder)
16:30 Algorithms, big data, justice and accountability (Laurens Naudts)
17:00 Plenary discussion
17:30 Reception

In collaboration with Overlegcentrum voor Ethiek
Info on the speakers

**Seda Guerses** studies conceptions of privacy and surveillance in online social networks, requirements engineering, privacy enhancing technologies and identity management systems. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow at COSIC/ESAT in the Department of Electrical Engineering at KU Leuven, Belgium. She is also a research associate at the Center for Information Technology and Policy at Princeton University. Prior to that she was a fellow at the Media, Culture and Communications Department at NYU Steinhardt and at the Information Law Institute at NYU Law School working together with a group of researchers under the leadership of Helen Nissenbaum. During her time at NYU, she was also part of the Intel Science and Technology Center on Social Computing.

**Simon Hampton** is a freelance software engineer specialising in full-stack web development using functional programming languages. He currently leads front end development for a San Francisco based startup working in Elm. For the previous two decades Simon evangelised the emergence of the Internet in the European Public Policy arena. During that time he worked across of the emerging communications value chain with Uber, Google, Time Warner, AOL, and Belgacom (now Proximus). He has also worked for the the European Commission and the UK Foreign Office, and began his career as a stockbroker in the City of London. Simon holds a BSc in Maths (1st class) from Bristol University, an MPhil in Economics from Oxford University, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Competition Law from King's College, London, and recently completed a sabbatical in computer science.

**Laurens Naudts** is a PhD student and legal researcher at the KU Leuven Centre for IT & IP Law. His PhD research focuses on the interrelationship between algorithmic differentiation and algorithmically guided decision-making, equality and non-discrimination, privacy and data protection. As a researcher, Laurens has also been involved in several national and EU funded research projects. Currently he is working on the EU funded H2020 project VICTORIA, Video Analysis for Investigation of Criminal and Terrorist Activities.

**Anton Vedder** is a professor of ICT-law at the KU Leuven Centre for IT & IP Law. He is especially interested in the interplay of technological developments and the conceptualization of basic moral and legal notions. Already for more than two decades, Anton is an active participant in various EU funded international research projects in the fields of security and ehealth. He was a visiting scholar at Georgetown University Law Center and the Kennedy Institute of Ethics (Washington, DC) and the University of Maryland. He organized various international conferences, e.g., on innovative health technologies and personal and professional autonomy in health care, the WTO and ethics, reliability and security of information, human enhancement, and the legitimacy of NGOs in the international arena. Anton teaches undergraduate and graduate classes at KU Leuven in Leuven and Brussels. He is also the coordinator of the Brussels based master`s program of IP and ICT Law.

**Practical Information**

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