Futures Thinking Conference Details

1-3 October 2019
Wolfson College, University of Oxford

Ubiquitous technologies have resulted in unprecedented access to media for many but have also altered the way humans engage with and consume content, specifically the way in which we read. For example, recommender systems automatically filter content, based on an intelligent machines' expectations about our preferences; and digital platforms allow us to share, alter, manipulate, and understand content in myriad ways that were not possible with traditional forms of media. Although humans may now read more than ever before, there are many questions that are raised about the new modes of engaging and consuming media that deserve attention.

Taking up the conversation framed during our successful launch event this conference seeks to explore the future of reading and narrative in relation to how questions of inequality, bias in programming and developing technologies are changing the way that human beings create and interact with narrative and the self. We are interested in how reading and technology can be understood as acts of futurity, bringing the future into the user/reader's present, and in doing so opening up some futures while closing off others. The conference will explore questions such as:

•	Do the new forms of media have an impact on an individual's self-understanding or identity, perhaps by altering or mediating the way we construct a self-narrative?
•	Are there opportunities or risks associated with new technologies, and are they equally distributed or are some segments of society disproportionately affected?
•	How might we apply humanities methodologies to future-oriented technologies, such as machine learning, AI, and VR?
•	What are the gaps in futures thinking, narratives of the self, programming and technological development that researchers fail to address?

From a fundamentally interdisciplinary network, this conference brings together computer scientists and narrative theorists, philosophers and mathematicians, artists and social scientists, so as to collapse the perceived boundaries in disciplinary interests. This conference is intended to pull together diverse threads within the broad space of future studies. We have accepted papers on topics including:

- AI and art
- Creativity and technology
- Narrativising the digital self
- Selves and others online
- Histories of AI
- Fiction and technology
- Copyright and access to ideas
- Programming bias
- Using AI to shape media

- The future of publishing
- Science fiction
- Urban planning
- Mental health and the future

Keynote Speakers
Marcus Du Sautoy OBE FRS is The Simonyi Professor
for the Public Understanding of Science at the University of
Oxford, a mathematician and populariser of mathematics and
author of The Creativity Code.

Molly Flatt is a journalist and author who specialises in the impact of tech on publishing and identity. She is the Associate Editor of FutureBook, and Comment Editor at The Bookseller.

The conference will take place at Wolfson College, University of Oxford from 1-3 October. Registration includes access to all of the panels, workshops and keynote events, as well as lunch, tea and snacks. We will be catering a vegetarian and vegan menu.
Please contact futuresthinking@torch.ox.ac.uk with any queries, specific dietary requirements, and access needs.

Registration will open soon and the programme and abstracts will be made available on this site by the end of August.