



*SPT newsletter*

**Volume 32, Number 1 (Spring 2008)**

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**Greetings and news from the President**

Dear SPT Members,

I am pleased that the first newsletter following the SPT 2007 meeting in Charleston is now in your hands, or at least on your computer screens! On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to express many thanks to Katinka Waelbers for offering to serve as our new newsletter editor. Katinka, coordinator of the Centre for the Philosophy of Technology and Engineering Sciences (CEPTES) at the University of Twente and graduate student, can be reached at [k.waelbers@utwente.nl](mailto:k.waelbers@utwente.nl). I hope that you will send her items for future newsletters, including notices of upcoming conferences and calls for papers, information about member publications, honors, or other news, and any items of interest related to philosophy of technology around the world.

In addition to serving as the newsletter editor, Katinka will also be taking over as the SPT webmaster. A big "thank you" is due to our former newsletter editor, Peter-Paul Verbeek, also of the University of Twente, and Tom Burke, of the University of South Carolina, who has served as webmaster for a number of years. Both Peter-Paul and Tom have brought a good deal of energy and dedication to helping SPT members stay connected and informed in between our biennial conferences. We look forward to Katinka's bringing her energy and efforts to bear for the benefit of our membership as well.

Last year's conference in Charleston on *Globalization and Technology* was a big success, marked by numerous interesting and illuminating presentations and discussions, as well as affording many opportunities for casual conversations. A particularly impressive feature of SPT 2007 was its strong graduate student presence, including a number of Paul Thompson's students, who drove down with Paul to Charleston from Michigan State. Another highlight of the conference, and underscoring the growing international interest in the philosophy of technology, was the wide geographical diversity represented by the

participants. Speakers and panelists came from 17 countries and 4 continents. Congratulations to Davis Baird, Ann Johnson, Mark Stevens, and all others involved for organizing such a wonderful meeting.

At this meeting, the SPT Board of Directors accepted a proposal from the Centre for Philosophy of Technology and Engineering Science (CEPTES) at the University of Twente to host our 16<sup>th</sup> biennial international conference. Philip Brey and Peter-Paul Verbeek will co-chair the conference, which will be on the theme of *Converging Technologies, Changing Societies*. More details will follow in future newsletters. For now, though, please mark your calendars for 8-10 July 2009 for what promises to be a very exciting conference.

In other Board action, approval was given to raise annual dues for regular members from \$20 to \$35 dollars. Even with this increase, our dues are still below what they are for many similar societies. I hope you will encourage potentially interested colleagues to consider joining SPT. If you have moved recently, please don't forget to give the Philosophy Documentation Center your new address, as ballots will be going out soon in the mail for the election of a president-elect and a new board member. And, please stay tuned for a request for information so that we can put together an SPT members' directory, something that will allow members with common interests in particular areas of inquiry in the philosophy of technology to be able to more easily find one another.

With all good wishes to all,

Diane P. Michelfelder  
President, SPT

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## ***Techné* Updates**

At the request of the Board of Directors, Joe Pitt, Pieter Vermass, and Peter-Paul Verbeek, the editors of *Techné*, have been exploring the possibility of having the journal published by a more conventional fashion through a publishing house. This could mean offering a print version of the journal, a print and an electronic version, or simply an electronic version.

At present the journal resides in the Virginia Tech Library Electronic Journal Project on the Virginia Tech server. Since there is no publishing house to advertise for the journal, it can only be found by way of the internet or word of mouth.. Despite this the journal is healthy. The number of requests for access to the journal has risen dramatically from 7,925 in 1996 to 479,207 in 2006, the last year for which data are available. It appears SPT has reached the point where it should seek the means for *Techné* to serve a larger community of scholars.

So far the editors have made contact with four publishing houses: Springer, Routledge, MIT and Johns Hopkins. They have had favorable initial reactions from Springer and Rutledge. They are waiting to hear from MIT and Johns Hopkins. They have not entered into serious negotiations with anyone.

One of the important features of the current arrangement is that the journal is free to all. If we receive an offer that requires that we charge for the journal, we will do our best to (1) keep the price low for members of SPT, (2) retain free access for scholars from underdeveloped countries.

The ultimate decision as to how we continue to publish *Techné* will be made by the Board after all avenues have been explored. If you have any questions, or if you would like to share your thoughts on the print/electronic publishing options or any other aspect of the above, please send them to any member of the Board.

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## Conferences, Workshops, and Lectures

### SPT at the American Philosophical Association Meetings

#### *Program Information and Request for Proposals*

If you will be attending the Central Division meeting of the APA, please know SPT is on the group meeting schedule for Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 12:15-2:15 PM in Salon 12 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor (S)) at the Palmer House in Chicago, IL.

Topic: "Philosophers of Technology Going Native, and Engineers Going Reflective: Why Now, Is It Worthwhile, and If So, Why?"

Chair: Diane P. Michelfelder (Macalester College)

Speakers: David Goldberg (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

Michael Davis (Illinois Institute of Technology)

Joe Pitt (Virginia Tech University)

Sessions are currently being organized for the Eastern Division APA meeting (Philadelphia, December 27-30, 2008) and for next year's Pacific Division meeting (Vancouver, British Columbia, April 8-11, 2009). The topic for the latter will be on philosophy of technology, architecture, and sustainability.

If you are interested in organizing or chairing a session for the Central Division APA meeting, to be held in Chicago from February 18-22, 2009, or if you would like to propose an SPT author-meets-critics session for any of the above APA meetings, please contact Diane Michelfelder at [michelfelder@macalester.edu](mailto:michelfelder@macalester.edu). Please note the deadline for getting on the program for the Eastern Division meeting is coming up quickly—May 31, 2008.

### SPT 2009

The next SPT conference will be held 8-10 July 2009 at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. The main theme will be "Converging Technologies, Changing Societies". Co-directors: Philip Brey and Peter-Paul Verbeek. End of April, the conference website will be published. More information: [k.waelbers@utwente.nl](mailto:k.waelbers@utwente.nl)

### WPE 2008

The next Workshop on Philosophy and Engineering will be held 10-12 November 2008 (Monday-Wednesday) in London, England. WPE-2008 will be hosted by the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the RAEng's Natasha McCarthy will join David E. Goldberg of the University of Illinois as workshop co-chairs. TUDelft's Ibo van de Poel will join the co-chairs as a third member of the workshop business committee. The workshop's mission is to encourage reflection on engineering, engineers, and technology by philosophers and engineers alike. More information will be forthcoming on the WPE website at [www.illigal.uiuc.edu/web/wpe/about/](http://www.illigal.uiuc.edu/web/wpe/about/). In the meantime, if you have any questions about WPE-2008, please contact David Goldberg at [deg@uiuc.edu](mailto:deg@uiuc.edu).

## **Ethics, Technology, and Identity**

18 to 20 June 2008

Delft/The Hague, Netherlands

Website: <http://www.ethicsandtechnology.eu/ETI>

Contact name: Noëmi Manders-Huits

This conference aims to discuss the theme of 'identity' in light of new (information) technology. Key-note speakers include: David Velleman, Oscar Gandy, Robin Dillon, David Shoemaker.

Organized by: 3TU Centre for Ethics and Technology

## **Call for Papers: ICTs & SD**

A special Issue of the Journal of Information, Communication & Society on Information and Communication Technologies and Sustainable Development

Guest Editors: Gunilla Bradley, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm Wolfgang Hofkirchner, Paris-Lodron-University of Salzburg

Assistant Editor: Robert Bichler, Paris-Lodron-University of Salzburg

Deadline for Submission: April 15, 2008

Tentative Publication Date: November, 2008

The objective of this special issue is to discuss current developments in the field of ICTs and Sustainable Development (SD) by providing a forum for both academic researchers and practitioners interested in broadening and deepening the understanding of the sustainability concept. In the discourse on sustainability there has been a shift from a focus on ecological issues towards the inclusion of broader societal issues.

Authors may submit articles up to 7,000 words in length by sending an electronic version preferably in Word to the following address only: [robert.bichler@sbg.ac.at](mailto:robert.bichler@sbg.ac.at)

## **Call for Papers: Technologies of Globalization**

Technische Universität Darmstadt, October 30-31, 2008

Presently (re-)shaping social life as well as economics and science, the effects of globalization are in their turn – and in manifold ways – related to and in fact highly dependent on technology. The first International Conference of the DFG-Research Group, "Topologies of Technology" seeks to explore in greater detail, and from a deliberately interdisciplinary angle, the role(s) and function(s) of world-embracing information and communication technologies, transport and computing facilities in the global age. In particular, the plenary discussions and five interdisciplinary streams attempt to clarify how newly developed technologies contribute to and assist the currently observable developments in the particular field of engineering and, more generally, in labor distribution and organization, how they influence the re-definition of "the local" against the backdrop of "the global," and in which novel ways they enable mobility (and require new modes of managing these). In addition, space will be given to collateral effects of both globalization and technologies at large such as world-wide efforts of controlling and improving body movement(s), e.g. for the target group of old-age people, in sport science/kinesiology and perceptual computing, and to historical considerations aiming at the disclosure of precursors of technology-enhanced globalizing tendencies. Some key questions for this session include:

- Which are the current global paradigms influencing planning and architecture? How did they develop? Do they encourage and facilitate sensitivity to local contexts?
- Who are the actors on the global and local level, are the first identical with the second? Are they connected through networks? How does the inter-level exchange work?
- At which stage in the planning process do local contexts start to matter?
- How do localized experiences influence the universal discourse? Are there specific local contexts that dominate the development of universal paradigms?
- How do the planning disciplines absorb and conceptualize the notion of globalization? Is it just another twist in the long history of transnational exchange?
- What does this mean for researchers and practitioners?

Timeline for proposals

Abstract proposals (max. 500 words) must be sent by email to stream3@tog08 or via upload on our website [www.tog08.org](http://www.tog08.org) before April 15th, 2008. Notification of acceptance or refusal of abstracts will be given before May 15th, 2008. Complete papers (max. 8.000 words) should be sent before September 30th, 2008.

For all conference issues visit our website at [www.tog08.org](http://www.tog08.org)

### **Call for contributors: Discovery and Invention: An Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Society**

M.E. Sharpe, a New York-based academic and reference publisher, and East River Books, a reference book producer, are seeking contributing scholars for a four-volume illustrated reference work on the history of science and technology from prehistoric times through the present-day. The project is aimed at the academic high school and undergraduate student. The General Editor is Dr. James Ciment.

The encyclopedia will explore the origins, evolution, impact, and legacy of technological innovation and scientific discovery in a wide variety of fields, including agriculture, architecture, astronomy/space exploration, biology, chemistry, climate, communications, electronics, energy, food/nutrition, geology, manufacturing, mathematics, mechanics, medicine, physics, transportation, weaponry, as well as other areas.

Articles will vary in length from 1,000-4,000 (depending on significance of topic) and many will be accompanied by ancillary materials, including charts, sidebars, tables, and primary documents. Contributors will receive authorial credit, a modest cash honorarium and/or copy of the full encyclopedia set (depending on contribution length and contributor preference).

If you are interested in contributing to this exciting and important reference project—one we hope will be the definitive reference work on the global history of technology and science—please visit our website for further information: [www.encyclopediawebsite.com](http://www.encyclopediawebsite.com) and click on “discovery and invention.”

## **Recent publications of interest**

### **James Joyce, Hypertext & Technology**

by Louis Armand

2nd corrected edition, with index

ISBN 978-80-246-1382-6 (paperback). 234pp.

October 2007

Publisher: Karolinum/Charles University Press

<http://litteraria.ff.cuni.cz/books/techne.html>

While this study is concerned with the question of technology in its relation to the work of James Joyce and theories of hypertext, it is also, and more specifically, addressed to a concept of technology arising from the language of *Finnegans Wake*. Drawing upon developments in communication theory and information technology, this study attempts to map a parallel development in Joyce's uses of language in the *Wake*, arguing that Joyce's writing provides a model for re-thinking the relationship between technology and "all forms of cultural production." The purpose of this is not, however, to suggest that Joyce was necessarily in some way cognisant of a future possibility of hypertext, nor is it simply concerned with a retrospective glance at Joyce from the position of current computing technologies. Rather, it is to examine how Joyce's work is aware of its own position against and within contemporary developments in the sciences and electronic media, and that Joyce incorporated material from these developments into his texts.

Louis Armand is director of the InterCultural Studies programme in the Philosophy Faculty of Charles University, Prague

**Jussi Parikka: *Digital Contagions. A Media Archaeology of Computer Viruses.***  
(New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

*Digital Contagions* is the first book to offer a comprehensive and critical analysis of the culture and history of the computer virus phenomenon. The book maps the anomalies of network culture from the angles of security concerns, the biopolitics of digital systems, and the aspirations for artificial life in software. The genealogy of network culture is approached from the standpoint of accidents that are endemic to the digital media ecology. Viruses, worms, and other software objects are not, then, seen merely from the perspective of anti-virus research or practical security concerns, but as cultural and historical expressions that traverse a non-linear field from fiction to technical media, from net art to politics of software. Jussi Parikka mobilizes an extensive array of source materials and intertwines them with an inventive new materialist cultural analysis. *Digital Contagions* draws from the cultural theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Friedrich Kittler, and Paul Virilio, among others, and offers novel insights into historical media analysis.

Jussi Parikka teaches and writes on the cultural theory and history of new media. He studied cultural history at the University of Turku, Finland, and is currently Visiting Research Scholar in the Seminar for Media Studies, Humboldt University Berlin. Parikka's homepage is <http://users.utu.fi/juspar>

### **New Titles in the Earthscan Science in Society Series**

Earthscan is pleased to announce two new books in their prestigious Science in Society Series edited by Steve Rayner, Professor of Science and Civilization at Oxford University and Programme Director of the ESRC Science in Society Programme. For more info about any of these titles, and for review or inspection copies, please contact [gudrun.freese@earthscan.co.uk](mailto:gudrun.freese@earthscan.co.uk).

#### **Vaccine Anxieties: Global Science, Child Health and Society**

By Melissa Leach and James Fairhead

Combining a fresh anthropological perspective with detailed field research, the book examines anxieties emerging as highly globalized vaccine technologies and technocracies encounter the deeply intimate personal and social worlds of parenting and childcare, and how these are part of the transforming science-society relations. More info here:

<http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/781/groupID/7/categoryID/17>

#### **Democratizing Technology: Risk, Responsibility and the Regulation of Chemicals**

By Anne Chapman

- Original, sweeping, critical examination of a key debate in science and technology: how society controls, governs and makes decisions about the development and use of technology
- Focuses on chemicals as the most pervasive technology on earth with wide ramifications for industry, government, society and the environment
- Detailed coverage of the new EU 2006 REACH regulation that requires chemical companies to divulge information about all substances in their chemicals in order to protect humans and the environment

More info here: <http://shop.earthscan.co.uk/ProductDetails/mcs/productID/780/>

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## News from our Members

- Philip Brey is promoted to Professor and is named chair of the Department of Philosophy of Technology of the University of Twente (Netherlands).

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## 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. Dues are \$35 per year for regular memberships, \$15 per year for student memberships, and gratis for people in developing nations.

To join SPT, to renew your membership, or to update your contact information, just go to <http://www.pdcnet.org/member-spt.html>

Dues can be paid online by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, or Discover). Credit card payments or 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.

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