



Workshop: Personal Identities after the Information Revolution

University of Hertfordshire, UK, 17 June 2011

Part of the AHRC project *The Construction of Personal Identities Online*

Keynote Speakers

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Organisers

Luciano Floridi (Hertfordshire/Oxford)
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1st Call For Papers (deadline: 15 March 2011)

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are building a new habitat (*infosphere*) in which we are spending an increasing amount of time. So, how individuals construct and maintain their personal identities online (PIOs) is a problem of growing and pressing importance. Today, PIOs can be created and developed, as an ongoing work-in-progress, to provide experiential enrichment, expand, improve or even help to repair relationships with others and with the world, or enable imaginative projections (the "being in someone else's shoes" experience), thus fostering tolerance. However, PIOs can also be mis-constructed, stolen, "abused", or lead to psychologically or morally unhealthy lives, causing a loss of engagement with the actual world and real people. The construction of PIOs affects how individuals understand themselves and the groups, societies and cultures to which they belong, both online and offline. PIOs increasingly contribute to individuals' self-esteem, influence their life-styles, and affect their values, moral behaviours and ethical expectations. It is a phenomenon with enormous practical implications, and yet, crucially, individuals as well as groups seem to lack a clear, conceptual understanding of who they are in the infosphere and what it means to be an ethically responsible informational agent online. The workshop will address this gap in our philosophical understanding by addressing questions such as:

- How does one go about constructing, developing and preserving a PIO?
- Who am I online? How do I, as well as other people, define and re-identify myself online?
- What is it like to be that particular me (instead of you, or another me with a different PIO), in a virtual environment?
- Should one care about what happens to one's own PIO and how one (with his/her PIO) is perceived to behave online?
- How do PIs online and offline feedback on each other? Do customisable, reproducible and disposable PIOs affect our understanding of our PI offline?

- How are we to interpret cases of multiple PIOs, or cases in which someone's PIO may become more important than, or even incompatible with, his or her PI offline?
- What is going to happen to our self-understanding when the online and offline realities become intertwined in an "onlife" continuum, and online and offline PIs have to be harmonised and negotiated?

Submissions: we welcome submissions addressing similar questions, or comparing and evaluating standard philosophical approaches to personal identity problems by analysing how far they may be extended to explain PIO, or seeking to complement the already available approaches. If in doubt, please feel free to contact Luciano Floridi (l.floridi@herts.ac.uk).

Deadline: please submit extended abstracts (between 1000 and 1500 words all included, preferably in MS Word format) for papers suitable for 40-minute presentations to Luciano Floridi (l.floridi@herts.ac.uk) by **15 March 2011**.

Bursaries: a number of bursaries for graduate students presenting papers will be available, on a competitive basis, to contribute to travel and accommodation expenses. Please specify if you wish to apply for one.

Publication: successful submissions will be selected for two special issues, to be published one by [*Minds and Machines*](#) and the other by [*Ethics and Information Technology*](#).

Series: the workshop is part of a series of meetings organized by the AHRC-funded project "The Construction of Personal Identities Online". More information about the project is [available here](#).