Mindfest 2023
Center for the Future Mind
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, Florida
16-17 March, 2023

Please visit https://forms.gle/VSkpsNqDjwBoQyCx9 to confirm attendance. Feel free to contact Dr. Steven Gubka at sgubka@fau.edu to ask questions and if you are a member of the media who would like to attend. Hotel information is at the bottom of this program—it is strongly recommended that you book your hotel and airplane as soon as possible as it is tourist season. Please note that the global brain workshop is only for the speakers, lab/Center members, media, and invited participants flying in (unless space allows). The locations for events differ each day so please see the program. Thanks!

Thursday, March 16: Expanding Our Horizons on Consciousness and Computation

Location for Day One: Live Oak Building and Patio, Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd, Boca Raton, FL

9AM — 9:30AM Greetings! Strong coffee and bagels.

9:30AM — 10:30AM: Anand Vaidya (SJSU) — Keynote: The Parable of the Elephant: How Indian Philosophy Illuminates the Study of Consciousness (Dr. Gupka, introduction)

10:30AM — 11AM Coffee break at the Live Oak Patio
11AM — 12:30PM. Panel: Conscious Experience in Nonlinguistic Entities. What is it Like to be a Newborn? An Octopus? An AI?

Claudia Passos (NYU), Garrett Mindt (FAU) and Carlos Montemayor (SFSU)

An exploration of the range of beings that have, or may have, conscious experiences, and how we might come to better understand these perplexing cases. Moderator: Susan Schneider

12:30PM — 1:30PM: Lunch on the Live Oak Patio for Speakers and Invited Guests

1:30PM — 2:30PM Stephen Wolfram — “From Emes to the Ruliad: Where do Humans and AIs Fit In?”

2:30PM — 3PM Coffee Break at the Live Oak Patio

3PM — 4:30 PM: Ben Goertzel (SingularityNet) — Keynote: "Three Viable Paths to True AGI"
(Introduction: St Clair).

The deep neural nets and other machine learning algorithms that are absorbing most of the AI world’s attention today are fundamentally unsuited for the creation of human-level AGI. I outline more promising routes.

Hotel shuttle to Wyndham after talk ends.

6:30 PM: Center grand opening dinner-invite only. (For speakers, Center team, press etc). Wyndham, Deerfield Beach Resort, 2096 NE Second St., Deerfield Beach, FL.

March 17: Global Intelligence, Machine Consciousness, and Virtual Worlds

(At the Gruber Sandbox, Wimberly Library, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL)

9:30-11:30. The Global Brain: Workshop on Social Media, BMIs and Distributed Global Intelligence

(For this session only, attendance is limited to those registered for the conference and requires permission. Chatham House rules apply to the meeting discussion. No quoting or recording is allowed.)

Beneath the radar of many is a scenario in which an advanced intelligence consists in a network of spatiotemporally distributed subsystems, drawing from a variety of AI services publically available (e.g., Wiki, Tiktok, Facebook) yet which also is integrated by an underground system by an AI superpower (e.g., an authoritarian dictatorship, a Tech company). How do we recognize when one or more of these systems exist? (These systems can be called, “Global Brain Networks”, bearing in mind that any analogy with the
brain is rough.) An example of such a system would be a Global Google Brain consisting of a large language model (LLM) and/or search engine, other AI services (e.g., Gmail), drawing from much of the Internet. How do we gauge the intelligence of a global brain network? What are the implications for the control problem? What new AI safety problems arise? How will humans interact with, and even be manipulated by, such global systems, and what devices will they use (e.g., BMIs)? What are the implications for the study of intelligent systems, the extended mind approach to cognition and consciousness, the nature of knowledge and justification, etc.?

Speakers and Participants (not an exhaustive list):

Speakers:

Kyle Killian (NIU/Center for the Future Mind)

Mark Bailey (Chair for Cyber Intelligence and Data Science at National Intelligence University)

Congressman Jerry McNerney, former chair, AI Caucus and Center for the Future Mind.

Respondents: Chad Forbes, Ben Goetzel, Will Hahn, etc.

Other participants: Cody Turner (Notre Dame), Rachel St. Clair, Steven Hoover (FAU), Steven Gubka (FAU), Rubin Gruber, Elan Barenholz, Merdad Nojoumian (FAU), MPCR Lab members (FAU), Dave Chalmers (NYU), Claudia Passos (NYU), Scott Kelso (FAU), George Musser, etc.

Please note that the workshop formats will allow for only a few brief presentations and the idea is to allow everyone to have an opportunity for participation. A reader will be distributed with people’s work on the topic and links to brief talks they’ve given in the past on the topic (if they have something to send and wish to send it).

11:30 — 12:30 Lunch at the Gruber Sandbox

1:00 — 2:30 Sentient Bots? Could AI Achieve Sentience, and How Would We Ever Know?

Description:

The recent controversy concerning chatbots possibly being sentient, together with the increasingly impressive ability of large language models (LLMs) like Bing, ChatGPT and Google’s largest model, PaLM (540 billion parameters) to converse, raise several important questions. (1) As AI becomes more human-like, individuals will increasingly suspect that they are interacting with conscious machines. What methodological requirements are appropriate for deciding whether a machine is or isn’t conscious? (2) Will
ongoing AI projects that attempt to model the neural basis of consciousness in humans succeed in creating AIs with the felt quality of experience and enhanced intelligence? What if they have quantum or even biological components? What will the most sophisticated AI’s of the future even look like, for that matter? (3) And importantly, even if we can build conscious AIs, should we?

Participants (everyone is welcome to participate; this is not an exhaustive list): Ed Turner, David Chalmers (NYU), Claudia Passos (NYU), Elan Barenholtz, Will Hahn, Ben Goetzel, Carlos Montemayor (SFSU), Edwin Turner (Princeton), Michael Solomon (UT Austin), George Musser, Dan Turello (LoC), Steven Gubka (FAU), Garrett Mindt (FAU), Rachel St Clair (FAU), MPCR Lab students (FAU), etc.

Format: 1 speaker to get the ball rolling and organized discussion focusing on the above questions.

Speaker: David Chalmers (10 min overview of recent paper, distributed beforehand)

Moderator: Curt Jaimungal (Theories of Everything)

3:15PM — 4:30PM David Chalmers’ keynote: Reality Plus: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy

(At the Friedberg Auditorium, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, 777 Glades Rd, CEH 31D, Boca Raton). Free with student ID and free to conference participants.

Introduction: Congressman Jerry McNerney

Chalmers takes a mind-bending journey through virtual worlds, illuminating the nature of reality and our place within it. In this talk, Chalmers discusses his new book, Reality +, a highly original work of “technophilosophy.” He argues that virtual worlds are not second-class worlds, and that we can live a meaningful life in virtual reality. We may even be in a virtual world already. Along the way, Chalmers conducts a grand tour of big ideas in philosophy and science. He uses virtual reality technology to offer a new perspective on long-established philosophical questions. How do we know that there’s an external world? Is there a god? What is the nature of reality? What’s the relation between mind and body? How can we lead a good life? All of these questions are illuminated or transformed by Chalmers’ mind-bending analysis.

After talk: van to conference hotel for participants at hotel.

Beachfront terrace BBQ 6PM (vegan friendly)! (Van departs conference hotel for beach BBQ at 5:45PM)
Hotel Options

Remember to ask for the FAU rate. (Note: some hotels do not extend the rate on weekends.) You may also consider checking Expedia for rates.

Recommended Hotels on the Beach (all near each other)

Conference Hotel: Wyndham Deerfield Beach Resort
2096 NE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, FL US
Tel: 954-428-2850
FAU Rates: $235 for a city view, $269 for ocean view. Waived the 30$ hotel service fee and free complimentary self-parking.

City View (2) Queen Beds - $235 going for $419 right now.
25% discount on bicycle rentals (based upon availability), access to the fitness center, complimentary coffee in room with coffee maker, enhanced high speed internet access. (Note: we do not recommend biking on the streets but there is a nice path in front of the beach.)

PARKING:
$20 Complimentary Self-Parking $25
Valet-Parking

Other nearby hotel on the beach (no FAU rates, however):

Comfort Inn Oceanside, Deerfield Beach
50 South Ocean Drive (A1A), Deerfield Beach, FL, 33441

Royal Blue (expensive/luxury) https://royalblueshotel.com

Other hotels near FAU campus (about 1 mile from beach, cheaper, and convenient for conference):

Marriott Boca Raton at Boca Center
5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton, FL USA
Tel: 561-392-4600
FAU Rates: ~$285

Sonesta Select Boca Raton
2000 NW Executive Center Circle, Boca Raton, FL USA

Tel: 561-241-7070
FAU Rates: $124 for Deluxe Room, $169 for Suite

Wyndham Boca Raton
1950 Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431
Tel: 561-368-5200
FAU Rates: ~$155 for Standard Room, ~$205 for Suite