

The 9th AISB Symposium on Computing and Philosophy: Artificial Sexuality

Sexual activity is central to our very existence; it shapes how we think, how we act and how we live. It is deeply embedded in our society. With cognitive systems development being heavily influenced by human cognition, perception, and interaction, should sexual behaviour and sexuality be part of that influence? Previous research has examined what might happen to us if we form close relationships with machines and intelligent systems. We feel that this is only one aspect of what we term Artificial Sexuality, and suggest that there are multiple and equally important strands that have not yet been fully explored, including – but by no means limited to – modelling sex and cognition, embodiment, gender issues, reproduction, ethics, and law.

With cognitive computing trying to find a way for machines to learn and think, much of the research looks towards humans to understand our own cognitive processes. However, sexuality and sexual behaviour is largely ignored within the discipline despite its central role in human biological and social behaviour. Indeed the relation between sexuality, identity and intelligence is often presumed in evolutionary accounts of human development. Yet, given the hopes and aims of having a machine that is – for example – creative, could we also have a machine that could desire? And if so, what implications might lead from that in terms of sexuality, gender identity, and reproduction?

In order to explore these and related questions, we have brought together scholars from fields including computing, AI, philosophy, and psychology. The authors in this symposium explore topics including: why people might need robot sex dolls and the growing sub culture of people trying to become them; an exploration of the social construction of technology and the question of commodity-fetish; whether sexbots should be developed as artificial ethical agents, and; the question of sexual objectification. The Organising Committee hopes that participants find the even stimulating and provocative.

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