

Tech Entrepreneurs in Fiction

Workshop

Vienna, October 27, 2022, 13-17 h

Austrian Computer Society, Kaminzimmer, Wollzeile 1, 1010 Wien, Stg.1, 1.Stock

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Companies have become important drivers of ethical change in societies. At least implicitly, they are changing what is deemed acceptable behaviour, both online and in the real world. Many entrepreneurs argue that an urge to make the world a better place is driving them. Yet, in pop culture, a typical *ethos* of entrepreneurs in technology is what may be identified as '*The unethical Businessman*'; a character who has a blind spot for the societal consequences of his business, who lets business drive science, makes big money, and abuse science by playing God.

Obviously, this *ethos* joins the list of characters who are deemed to create dystopic (or even apocalyptic) worlds where technology ruins everything. Examples include *The Freaky Genius* (an exiled scientist such as Dr Frankenstein who, driven by his own curiosity, forgets about responsibility) or *The Irresponsible Amateur* (who tinkers with science and technology in his garage, without regulatory oversight or ethical standards). But what about desirable futures? What about *reasonable* genius, *responsible* scientists and especially, *ethical* tech entrepreneurs?

In this workshop, we aim at exploring how tech entrepreneurs are depicted within our own common representations. We wish to question how their *ethos* is built, whether in fictional or actual contexts and especially when they are seen as role-models; who are the entrepreneurs driving ethical changes today? And who could they be so as to take everything a step further? We also aim at discussing the difficulties in imagining and building the *ethos* of a role-model.

The event will be held in person in the city of Vienna, *October 27, 2022, 1:00 – 5:00 pm*. It will gather computer scientists, tech entrepreneurs, screenwriters and narrative specialists. The workshop targets the discovery of three fictional stories that introduce potential role-models. Participants will then be invited to comment on the *ethos* of the characters (how is it built? Could it be built differently? How are the characters *ethical*? Is it likely that such characters act the way they do? How should business characters act to be considered ethical by the audience?

This workshop is part of a research project on ethical entrepreneurship at the University of Vienna, Department of Philosophy, Philosophy of Media and Technology, Prof. Mark Coeckelbergh.

Workshop languages will be English, potentially German in a sub-group where possible.

List of participants

Entrepreneurs, Investors

- Mihai Cata, AI Entrepreneur, TU Wien, Vienna
- Birgit Hofreiter, TU Wien, Director I2C, Vienna
- Karl Vieider, InvestEquity, Vienna
- Florian Hochreiter, I2C, TU Wien

Researchers, Engineers

- Prof. Stefan Woltran, TU Wien CAIML, Vienna
- Brigitte Krenn, ÖFAI, Vienna
- Arthur Flexer, JKU (AI), Vienna
- Boris Abramovic, University of Vienna
- Eugenia Stamboliev, University of Vienna

Screenwriters, Writers, Illustrators, narrative artists

- Celia Ducaju, scientific illustrator, Brussels
- Tom Mackinger, Illustrator, Vienna

Organizers

- Céline Pieters, Universität Wien
- Erich Prem, Universität Wien