



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



AARHUS UNIVERSITET



Workshop: Who am I Online?

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

University of Aarhus, [Kaløvig Centre](#) Organisers

Denmark

Charles Ess (Drury/Aarhus)

10-11 May 2010

Luciano Floridi (Hertfordshire/Oxford)

1st Call For Papers (deadline: 31 March 2010)

As time and technology progress, how we interact with the world and each other becomes increasingly complex and articulated. The quantity and diversity of information in our environment, and the ease with which we can access that information and integrate it into our daily lives, have increased exponentially over the past decade. Indeed, for many of us, the environment with which we interact now includes a range of digital environments, which make possible entirely new ways of working with information and being with others. Psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists - including those whose research is gathered under the general domain of computer-mediated communication (CMC) - have for some time been interested in the ways in which such changes in our informational environment might affect us and our self-conceptions. Interest in these topics has been amplified by the advent of the so-called "Web 2.0", a (continuing) expansion of ever-more interactive venues such as social networking, blogging and microblogging (e.g., Twitter), and "pro/sumer" activities in which the consumers of media content such as music and videos are simultaneously their producers (e.g., videopostings on YouTube). Yet these topics have, thus far, been relatively neglected by philosophers. This should not be so. The relevance of new technologies to our lives has attracted academic attention in large part because it appears to raise questions about how new kinds of interactions with others and our environment might alter, shape or otherwise affect our self-conceptions, our thoughts and other aspects of our cognitive, emotional and moral lives. And the project of ascertaining which properties of ourselves and our moral conduct make essential contributions to aspects of our minds and personhood is one in which philosophers are traditionally engaged. This neglect looks stranger still when considered alongside the emphasis put by recent philosophy of mind on the essential contributions that the environments (in which we are embedded) and our modes of interaction (with those environments) can make to our mental lives. If we acknowledge that our informational environment and our capacities for interaction with it can constitutively shape our mentality and our moral conduct, we should consider whether radical changes in such environment and its interactive affordances may have similarly radical implications for our mental lives and ordinary behaviours, and perhaps for the sorts of persons we are. There is already significant evidence that such changes are upon us in both what we used to call the Western and Eastern worlds - most obviously, as apparent changes in self-conception are affiliated with dramatically changing understandings and expectations of 'privacy,' especially informational or online privacy. So, what implications do new informational environments and affordances have for philosophical and ethical views of personal identity? And what light, if any, can existing philosophical work on personal identity shine on the conceptual issues that arise when talking and thinking about agents, environments and interactions that span or blur the real/virtual and online/offline divides? The workshop will address these issues.

We welcome proposals for papers dealing with the construction of personal identities online. Please submit extended abstracts (between 1000 and 1500 words all included, preferably in MS Word format) for papers suitable for 40-minute presentations to Dave Ward (D.Ward2@herts.ac.uk) by **31 March 2010**.

Bursaries: a number of bursaries for graduate students presenting papers will be available, on a competitive basis, to contribute to travel and accommodation expenses.

Publication: successful submissions will be selected for publication.

Series: the workshop is part of a series of meetings organized as part of the AHRC-funded project "The Construction of Personal Identities Online". More information about the project is available here: <http://www.philosophyofinformation.net/grants/pio/index.html>