

Legal Regulation & Education: Doing the Right Thing?

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"The Worlds' Fair 2014: Internet of Things, Internet of Rights?"

In 1964, Isaac Asimov in his article 'Visit to the World's Fair 2014' envisioned how New York World's Fair of 2014 might look like. Just as Asimov predicted, smart technology is now an indispensable part of everyday life, becoming more and more ubiquitous. Google's latest acquisitions, Boston Dynamics, Nest and DeepMind, demonstrate well the company's intention to build a "real life internet", namely a seamless network of devices making use of their owner's data. The paper takes a sustained look at the Internet of Things (IoT) and discusses the implications the wide use of each individual's data might have for human rights law, an area often overlooked or considered only as an ethical question. The paper begins from already expressed concerns on privacy and goes further to discuss whether the IoT may claim countervailing free speech rights: can it be argued that the machines 'talk' or that algorithm is commercial speech? The current tendency to grant corporations constitutional protection under the First Amendment is investigated in the context of advances in the IoT. It is contended that in the near future, instances of techno-Lochnerism will appear, something that may further blur the edges of human rights theory.