

Anthropology for Affective Robotics: Collaborative Workshops toward Data Rich and Culturally Sensitive Modeling Practices in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Informatics

Introduction

Anthropology for Affective Robotics (AfAR) is a workshop platform for building collaboration between anthropologists and engineers working in robotics, artificial intelligence, and informatics. Workshops are hosted by Dr. Daniel White and Dr. Hirofumi Katsuno, both cultural anthropologists working at the intersections of robotics, artificial intelligence, and the cultural variability of emotion. AfAR is part of a larger anthropological project titled Model Emotion, which aims to integrate research on anthropology, artificial intelligence, and affective wellbeing.

Purpose

Workshops are designed to broaden opportunities for both anthropologists and engineers to share approaches to the modeling of culture, communication, and emotion. The workshops have three primary aims:

1. Create platforms for mutual exchange and benefit between anthropologists and engineers on the latest methods for modeling culture and emotion
2. Increase awareness of cultural variability in order to improve modeling practices in laboratories and companies working on robotics and AI
3. Establish sustainable connections between the human and hard sciences for thinking about the social, ethical, political, and legal implications of AI and robotics research

Who are they for?

Workshops are designed primarily for scientists and students working in the fields of robotics, AI, or informatics interested in modeling culture, communication, and especially emotion. Although they best suit a research laboratory or university seminar with a mix of graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty, they can be tailored to undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, faculty, as well as industry and corporate settings. In short, they are for anyone interested in enriching their simulations and modeling practices with a sensitivity to cultural diversity while avoiding bias.

Structure

Each workshop consists of three primary parts:

1. Description of individual and team research projects by lab members, with a focus on their approaches to or problems encountered with modeling culture and/or emotion
2. Introduction of basic principles of culture and emotion theory in anthropology, including latest research findings
3. Dialogue session including (A) suggestions from workshop hosts for individual and group projects; and (B) suggestions from lab members for workshop hosts on the anthropological approach to culture and emotion

Workshops can also be tailored to meet more specific aims of research teams (such as a specific focus on social signaling, gestures, or facial expression) or more general aims of labs and classrooms (such as on artificial intelligence more generally). They can be offered in English or Japanese.

Workshops can be tailored to 90-minute; three-hour; and six-hour sessions.

Contact

For more information or to schedule a workshop, contact

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