

# THE TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE FORUM @ MIT

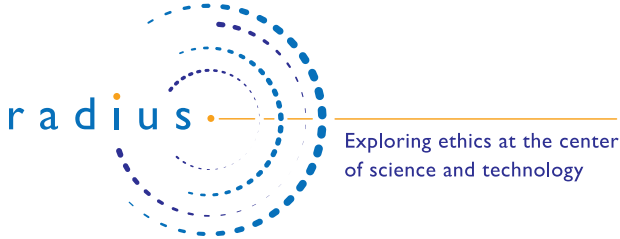
# 2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT



The Technology and Culture Forum turns 50 this year! Help us celebrate five decades of remarkable conversations. We're planning a special forum and festive dinner on November 6th. Please watch for your invitation early this fall.

*The Technology and Culture Forum is a program of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.*

# INTRODUCING RADIUS



Recently I ended up at a dinner party with a local media personality, a man with an excellent reputation among Boston intellectuals. He asked me about my work and listened attentively as I described the birth of the Technology and Culture Forum in 1964, when Episcopal Chaplain Mike Bloy created a space for MIT faculty to discuss the meaning and impact of their work. It's a story I love to tell, because I am proud to join this legacy of fifty years of conversations about the questions that matter most.

Back at my office, I was flipping through our archive of past programs and a name caught my eye. My dinner companion led a forum for us not so long ago, but he showed no glimmer of recognition when I spoke about the Technology and Culture Forum.

My colleague Trish Weinmann and the members of our Steering Committee have had decades of similar experiences. People respond with enthusiasm to the quality of our programs, but outside the circle of our supporters, collaborators and friends, there is little awareness of who put this great panel or speaker series together. After decades of excellent work building relationships on campus and publicizing our events, the name still doesn't stick in people's minds.

When Mike Bloy convened that first faculty seminar, putting technology and culture together was a fresh idea. Scholars were just beginning to break down the illusion that science and technology exist on a separate plane of objective reality, free from cultural assumptions or moral concerns. Now we look around the MIT campus and see an abundance of research into the connections between technology and culture: the Program in Science, Technology and Society; the Technology and Policy Program; the Program in Art, Culture and Technology; and more.

We believe it is time to reintroduce ourselves to MIT and the wider community. We have something unique to offer in our passion for ethical questions and our skill in bringing diverse perspectives together. This work is too important to get lost in the mix of a busy campus.

Beginning in the fall of 2013, we met with students, alumni, staff and faculty who are connected to the Technology and Culture Forum. We asked them what was most valuable about our history and our current work. Using the insights we gained, we worked with professionals with expertise in naming, marketing, graphic design, social media and web design to develop a new identity for the program.

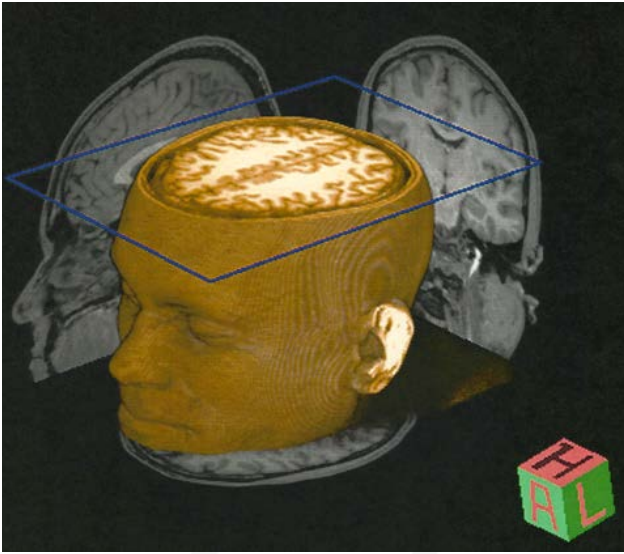
We are pleased to introduce to you *Radius*, a program devoted to "exploring ethics at the center of science and technology," and the beautiful logo created for us by Tim Blackburn. The name and the logo design express our commitment to finding the moral center of scientific discovery and technological innovation. This new image conveys our mission to spark conversations that welcome every possible perspective, allowing us to get a true 360-degree view of any question.

It is always strange to begin calling something by a new name, especially when it is an institution we know and love like the Technology and Culture Forum. Even for those of us closest to the naming process, it took several weeks of talking about the name and looking at logos before *Radius* really took hold. We invite you to try out the new name with us. We believe you'll find, as we did, that *Radius* is a fresh and exciting way of saying what we have always valued most about this work.

  
The Rev. Thea Keith-Lucas

# GETTING BEYOND US AND THEM

## OUR BRAINS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE



On Tuesday, February 4, we hosted an exciting conversation with Dr. Emile Bruneau, Researcher in the Social Cognitive Neuroscience Saxelab at MIT, and Dr. Joshua Greene, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Harvard University and author of *Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason and the Gap Between Us and Them*.

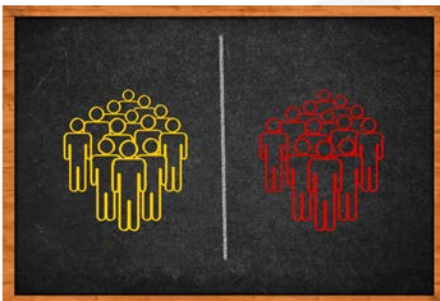
New brain imaging studies show us that our instincts and assumptions can set us up to experience greater conflict, especially between groups that have differing moral codes or unequal access to power. Dr. Greene and Dr. Bruneau shared insights from their research into why we encounter conflict. They also offered strategies on ways to overcome our brains' automatic responses, thus creating new opportunities for compromise, coexistence and peace.

## ETHICS SEMINAR

Our Spring ethics seminar, *Getting Beyond Us and Them: Living Ethically in a Complex World*, attracted thoughtful, highly engaged students from a variety of disciplines. We looked closely at the problem of communicating across cultural and philosophical differences, with a special focus on Utilitarian philosophy and disability rights. Guests included Brendan Dill, G, Philosophy; Dr. Emile Bruneau, Social Cognitive Neuroscience Saxelab; Debra Levy, Tufts University; Sam Brinton, '14, Nuclear Science and Nuclear Policy; Jason McKnight, Assistant Dean for Graduate Education; and Grace Teo, G, Health Sciences and Technology and co-founder of the Open Style Lab.



At the end of the course, the students made presentations regarding ethical questions that mattered to them. Questions included: *Where do I draw the line between what is or is not my responsibility? What are my responsibilities to the greater good? How much can mainstream society accommodate people with special needs, and at what cost? How can we avoid using harmful stereotypes in fundraising efforts?*



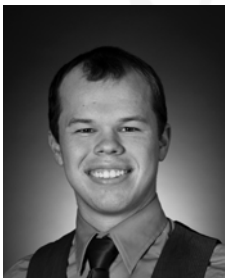
Every week, there was a new and rich conversation. We are especially grateful for the support of Holly Sweet, Associate Director of the Experimental Study Group, and our faculty advisor, Sam Allen.

# GLOBAL ZERO

MIT Global Zero kicked off this year with a film screening of the acclaimed documentary, *Countdown to Zero*, on October 3. Following up on November 20, we offered a substantive view of the remaining global nuclear arsenal with Jim Walsh of the MIT Security Studies Program, who discussed *Small Risk, Catastrophic Consequence: The Challenge of Nuclear Terrorism*. Additional sponsored and co-sponsored programs included *The Cold War Hangover: Nuclear Risks and Political Realities in the 21st Century*; *Diplomacy in Danger: The Nuclear Build-up and Interim Deal with Iran*; and *Persia: The Pertinent History of the Islamic Republic of Iran*.



*Jim Walsh shares his views on the nuclear talks with Iran at a packed lunchtime discussion.*



We would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Sam Brinton, out-going president of Global Zero, as he completes his master's degree and continues his work on nuclear disarmament in Washington, DC. In Dr. Jim Walsh's words, "Sam Brinton has been nothing less than a force of nature. His boundless energy, sense of humor, high aspirations and leadership have made MIT Global Zero one of the most successful college chapters in the country."

Ms. Mareena Robinson, a PhD student in Nuclear Science and Engineering, is GZ's incoming president. Her research centers on verification and detection in the enforcement of arms control treaties. Welcome, Mareena!



## BUSTANI MIDDLE EAST SEMINARS

We are proud of our ongoing partnership with the excellent Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar. The talks, and the conversations that follow, exemplify the ideals of rigorous inquiry and respectful debate. The Bustani seminars for 2013-14 included: *Is Syria Being "Lebanized" or is Lebanon Being "Syrianized"?*; *Was the Arab Spring Just a Moment?*; *The Ides of April: The Presidential Succession Crisis and the Dilemmas of the Algerian Oligarchy*; and *The Nuclear Agreement with Iran and Its Ramifications for the Regional Politics of the Middle East*.

# YOUTH SUMMIT

On Saturday, May 10, the halls of the Stata Center teemed with over 160 middle and high-school students ready to make a difference on climate change. Over 40 schools were represented, including schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and upstate New York.

This annual event is hosted by the Technology and Culture Forum and organized with the Boston Latin School's Youth Climate Action Network (YouthCAN) and co-sponsored with ACE (Alliance for Climate Education).

MIT workshop leaders included Charlotte Kirk '14; Dr. Travis Franck, MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Climate Change; and Thea Keith-Lucas. Special thanks to Jessica Huang and the team from D-Lab who offered a terrific interactive display in the exhibitors' gallery.

We're thankful to Robert Randolph, Chaplain to the Institute, for his support.

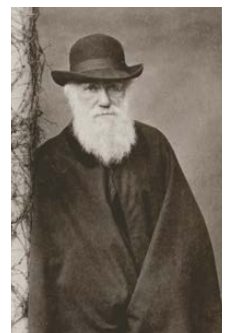


## THE ORIGINS OF FREEDOM

## THE CONTINUING DEBATE OVER EQUALITY



On February 12, 2014, we celebrated the shared birthdate of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin (February 12, 1809) with a lively forum on the intertwined issues of human evolution and human equality. This program was co-sponsored with the Dean of Humanities, the Dean of Science, and the Darwin Bicentennial Project. Guest speakers included Helen Elaine Lee, School of Humanities, Arts and Social Science, MIT; John Stauffer, Program in the History of American Civilization, Harvard University; Jonathan King, Biology, MIT; and David Houseman, Biology, MIT.



# NOTHING TO HIDE? ILLUSIONS OF PRIVACY AND SECURITY

On June 13, we co-hosted a provocative and interactive evening at the MIT Museum's 'Second Friday.' The program, *Nothing to Hide? Illusions of Privacy and Security*, explored the questions of privacy and security, the issues of living online and how much, as a society, are we willing to reveal in exchange for convenience. The evening was enlivened by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's installation, *Please Empty Your Pockets*, alongside digital art, documentary footage and live performances by



the Underground Railway Theater.

*The premiere of "Screened," a new short play by Owen Doyle, featuring Owen Doyle and Debra Wise, Artistic Director of the Underground Railway Theater, was part of the evening's offerings.*



*Two Museum guests are questioned by "security personnel."*

The event concluded with an in-depth discussion with Catherine D'Ignazio of the Center for Civic Media, MIT and Sara M. Watson of the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University. John Durant, Director of the MIT Museum, moderated the conversation.

## SPECIAL THANKS

### ANNUAL SUPPORT 2013-2014

#### Endowment Leadership

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Wendell  
David Gordon  
Wilson

*We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Class of 1941 for their extraordinary generosity. A thousand thanks to Bill Leitch, Cam Searle, Al Wilson and the rest of our loyal donors and friends for their generous support. And a very special note of appreciation to Reid Weedon for his decades-long commitment to T&C.*

*Our warmest welcome to two new T&C Steering Committee members, Alison Hynd, Program Director for the MIT Public Service Center and Mareena Robinson, G, Nuclear Engineering! Best wishes to Sam Brinton as he heads to Washington, DC.*



#### The Technology & Culture Forum at MIT

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Cambridge, MA 02139  
MIT Room W11-007  
web.mit.edu/tac

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

Samuel M. Allen, *Materials Science and Engineering*  
Sam Brinton, '14  
Nazli Choucri, *Political Science*  
John Durant, *Director, MIT Museum*  
Sally Haslanger, *Philosophy*  
Alison Hynd, *Program Director, MIT Public Service Center*  
Henry Jacoby, *Sloan School of Management*  
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William R. Leitch, '56  
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Ruth Perry, *Literature*  
Robert Plotkin, '93  
Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *Urban Studies and Planning; Director, MIT Program in Human Rights and Justice*  
Mareena Robinson, *G*  
Bishwapriya Sanyal, *Urban Studies and Planning*  
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Patricia-Maria Weinmann  
*Associate Coordinator*  
Christina English  
*Program Associate*