



Cambridge Public Library Launches New Science and Technology Lecture Series

Third Draft

CAMBRIDGE, MA – – The Cambridge Public Library (CPL) is delighted to announce the launch of a new series of talks that will explore breakthroughs in technology and their impact on society as part of its Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) programming.

The *Horizons: Exploring Breakthroughs in Science and Technology and their Impact on Society* series will consist of lectures and panel discussions, featuring leading researchers in academia and industry. Talks will examine the ethical, cultural, political, and economic implications of developments in fields such as artificial intelligence, genomics, and astrophysics. *Horizons* hopes to engage a diverse audience on issues of broad interest. The series will be linked thematically with other elements of the CPL's STEAM programming.

The first panel of the series, “*Is A.I. Laughing at Us*” will take place on Monday, February 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the Main Library Lecture Hall. Panelists include Jessica Fjeld, lecturer and assistant director at the Harvard Law School's Cyberlaw Clinic, David Weinberger, senior researcher at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, and Nikhil Dharmaraj of Harvard's MetaLab. The panel discussion is a corollary of the “Laughing Room,” an interactive art installation co-sponsored by the CPL, MIT, and the MetaLab at Harvard. This installation included an artificially intelligent room, designed to resemble a 1980s sitcom TV show, that played a laugh track whenever the participants said something that the room's algorithms deemed to be funny.

“Breakthroughs in science and technology have resulted in many positive developments across many disciplines,” observed Dr. Maria McCauley, Director of Libraries for the City of Cambridge, “As significant as some of these developments have been in enhancing our lives, it is important that we continue to evaluate their ethical, cultural, political and economic impacts to ensure that they serve a purpose that is beneficial to all.”

About the Cambridge Public Library:

The Cambridge Public Library opened in 1889 and serves the community of Cambridge, Massachusetts. It provides free access to information for over 105,000 Cambridge residents and provides an engaging community space for innovative events and programming.

Media Contact:

Muna Kangsen, Manager of Communications, Programs, and Events Cambridge. [857-235-9809](tel:857-235-9809) – mkangsen@cambridgema.gov