

The Philosophy of Contemporary and Future Science Seminar Series



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The Asian Epistemology Network

presents

How good are artificial neural networks at providing understanding?

Claus Beisbart

Universität Bern



Abstract

On a popular view, artificial neural networks (ANNs) are good at prediction and classification, but bad at providing understanding. The reason given is often that they are themselves poorly understood. Recently, some philosophers, e.g. Pietsch and Sullivan, have challenged this view. In this talk, I provide a systematic analysis to investigate to what extent ANNs can provide understanding. I argue that, on a wide range of accounts of understanding and explanation, ANNs can make predictions without fostering human understanding. More optimistic views on ANNs typically concentrate on examples in which some prior explanatory knowledge is at hand. My analysis allows me to pinpoint the kind of knowledge about an ANN that is needed if we are to say that it provides an explanation.

Date: Wednesday, January 17

Time: 9:30AM CET / 4:30PM HKT

Zoom:

<https://lingnan.zoom.us/j/8973947961?omn=91646712712>

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