



Hamilton Institute

The Future of Machines

Professor Sir Alistair MacFarlane

Thursday, September 8th, 2005
2.00 – 3.00pm

Abstract

Technology is the sum of the ways in which social groups manipulate order in the world to achieve their ends. It is central to our well-being and vital for our future survival. Our future is thus inextricably bound up with the future of machines. Their future development is considered from a coherent point of view in terms of the fundamental concepts of information and agency. Machines and human agents are compared and contrasted in an overall framework of information and agency, and it is argued that, for the foreseeable future their roles in society will be complementary. Limits to, and threats posed by, the continuing evolution of such a society of agents are examined.

Bibliography

Professor Sir Alistair MacFarlane has held positions as rector of the University of the Highlands and Islands, Vice Chancellor of Heriot Watt University, and was for many years Professor of Control Systems Engineering, University of Cambridge.

He is internationally known for his distinguished contributions to control theory, education and practice, and was knighted in the 2002 New Years Honours List for his services to education and science.

Venue: Seminar Room, Hamilton Institute, Rye Hall,
NUI Maynooth

Time: 2.00 - 3.00pm (followed by tea/coffee)

Travel directions are available at www.hamilton.ie