



Robots Are Grading Your Papers!

The **Chronicle of Higher Education** has an article about robots being used to grade student essays. Many of us find that a bit scary and wonder if a robot can really tease out the message in our student compositions. I know that I was not impressed with the very cut-and-dried attitude of computer grading for higher level thinking at a recent workshop. However, the writer of the article in the *Chronicle* (Marc Bousquet) makes an excellent point. He first establishes that computers do grade essays as well as humans. He then points out:

The fact is: *Machines can reproduce human essay-grading so well because human essay-grading practices are already mechanical.* [Ouch!]

The article then ventures into the idea of robots teaching. We know that robots are already teaching, just look at the on-line homework help systems offered by various book publishers. The question I have is, how mechanical are we making our teaching? Is mechanical teaching a good or a bad thing? Is this really the future for teaching?



Please note the Department meeting at 12:30 on Monday. If you have some comments about robots teaching, or anything else, please bring them up at the meeting.

-Lou

Department News

Department Meeting

We will have a Department meeting at 12:30 on Monday in 202 Martin Hall. Yes, we will have pizza.

Final Grades for Spring 2012 Semester

Spring 2012 Final Grades are due Tuesday, May 1 at 1:15 pm.

Distinguished Professor

This is a new academic rank that was just approved by the Board of Trustees and will start this fall (applications will be accepted at the end of September, 2012).

Criteria

1. Minimum of five (5) full years in rank as a full professor, at Jacksonville State University.
2. Must have a continuous and sustained record of publications and presentations at the regional, national, or international level
3. Must have a continuous and sustained record of service to the University and to his/her discipline.
4. Portfolio preparation will proceed in the same manner as those applying to faculty advancing in other ranks, including a review of the most recent full five-year period. The portfolio must be positively reviewed by three **outside** reviewers, two of whom will be selected by the dean of the college.
5. Must be recommended by the dean of the college and approved by the provost/VPASA and the president; and
6. This rank and the concomitant salary supplement of \$7500 per year is of limited duration (five years), but is renewable for five (5) years from the date of first appointment; however, the process may be repeated for each subsequent five- year period, with a corresponding supplement of \$7,500 per year for five years.

Note: There is also a new Distinguished Lecturer position. Since we have no lecturer I did not include the criteria for that rank.

Student News

Student Travel Grants

We have funding from Sam Kinsaul to support student travel to present research work at conferences. Applications are due by 30 April 2012. See **Lou** or **Tracy** if you need an application. Requests up to \$500 can be made.

IDEA Course and Instructor Evaluations

Students are reminded to go on-line and provide evaluations for their courses. You can access the link provided via email or you can go to:

<https://theideasonline.org/idea/cs/survey?S=1090979/X/F/F/364541871>

and provide your JSU username (email and Blackboard log-on name). These evaluations are collected by the IDEA company in Kansas and will NOT be shared with JSU until next semester. Students should feel comfortable that their evaluations will not affect their grade. Evaluations must be made by Sunday, 22 April.

University News

Faculty Awards Reception

Please join us for the 2012 Faculty Awards on May 8 (Tuesday) at 5:00 on the 11th floor of the Houston Cole Library, followed by a reception on the 12th floor. The following awards will be presented: Cleo and Carla Thomas Service Award, McWhorter Outstanding Teacher Award, Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award, Ray and Ruth Ringer Award, Fulbright Scholar and Faculty Research Awards. Years-of-Service pins will also be awarded.

Digital Measures Deadline of 1 May is Approaching with Last Minute Training Sessions

Below is a list of additional training sessions for Digital Measures.

The deadline for inputting your faculty activity (starting with Fall 2008) is May 1, 2012.

- Monday, April 23, 1-2 p.m. in Ayers 361
- Tuesday, April 24, 1-2 p.m. in Ayers 361
- Wednesday, April 25, 11-12 noon in Ayers 361

To sign up, please go to: <http://www.doodle.com/459sc72z5fpiyene>

Faculty, be sure to bring a copy of your curriculum vita with you to training.

Top Ten List

Top Ten Robots

I still remember wanting a robot when I was five years old...

Site of inspiration (and source of photos and text):

<http://www.pastemagazine.com/blogs/lists/2011/01/the-40-best-robots-of-all-time-fictional-or-real.html>

10. The Robot (*Lost in Space*)

Created: 1965

Creators: Robert Kinoshita and Irwin Allen

Actor: Bob May

"Danger! Danger, Will Robinson!" The Robinsons couldn't even bother naming the Class M-3 Model B9, General Utility Non-Theorizing Environmental Control

Robot, even though he could play the guitar. Robert Kinoshita also designed one of the first anthropomorphic machines in film: Robby the Robot from *Forbidden Planet*.

9. Marvin the Paranoid Android (*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*)

Created: 1978

Creator: Douglas Adams

Actors: Stephen Moore and Alan Rickman

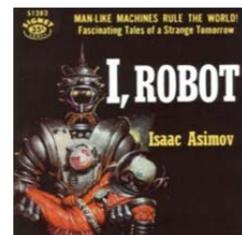
Bender wasn't the first robot to struggle with depression. "I didn't ask to be made: no one consulted me or considered my feelings in the matter. I don't think it even occurred to them that I might have feelings. After I was made, I was left in a dark room for six months... and me with this terrible pain in all the diodes down my left side. I called for succour in my loneliness, but did anyone come? Did they hell. My first and only true friend was a small rat. One day it crawled into a cavity in my right ankle and died. I have a horrible feeling it's still there..."

8. Robbie (*I, Robot*)

Created: 1939

Creator: Isaac Asimov

The protagonist of the first short story "Robbie" in Asimov's *I, Robot* collection saves the life of a little girl who thinks of him as her best friend. Asimov did as much as anyone to shape the way we think about human-robot interaction.



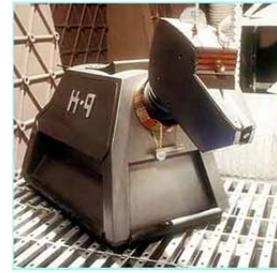
7. **K-9 (*Doctor Who*)**

Created: 1977

Creator: Bob Baker

Voice: John Leeson, David Brierley

The Daleks were flesh and blood on the inside, and the Cyber-Men were, well, part men. But we'd have picked the good Doctor's robotic dogs anyway, even though we had no idea Mark III got his own spin-off in 1981 (*K-9 and Company!*).



6. **ASIMO**

Created: 2000

Creator: Honda

Honda wasn't kidding when they named this astronaut looking creation "Advanced Step in Innovative MObility." Pronounced "ah she mow," this is the robot we all wanted as a kid. See him in action in this British Honda commercial



(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZngYDDdfW4>)

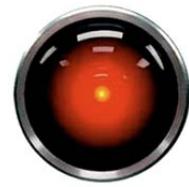
5. **HAL 9000**

Created: 1968

Creator: Arthur C. Clarke

Voice: Douglas Rain

We debated whether HAL belonged on this list. He's a computer program with artificial intelligence, but his only physical representation is a camera eye, though he does control the *Discovery*. But he was one of the inaugural inductees in the **Robot Hall of Fame**, so that kind of settles it.



4. **Sojourner (Mars Rover)**

Created: 1996

Controllers: The Jet Propulsion Laboratory at California Institute of Technology

Delivered by the Mars Pathfinder on Independence Day 1997, the 23-pound Sojourner studied the Martian surface and atmosphere—a relative bargain at \$150 million for the mission. Its name was chosen by a 12-year-old from Connecticut honoring abolitionist and feminist Sojourner Truth.



3. **Data (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*)**

Created: 1987

Creator (real): Gene Roddenberry

Creator (fictional): Dr. Noonien Soong

Actor: Brent Spiner

The sentient android who wanted to be human, this Pinocchio couldn't tell a lie—or a joke. Data was the best character from the best *Star Trek* series, and Spiner was brilliant at giving life to his alter-egos: his evil brother Lore, characters on the Holodeck and, of course, his creator Dr. Soong.



2. R2D2 (*Star Wars*)

Created: 1977

Creator: George Lucas

Actor: Kenny Baker (Yes, there was a guy *inside*)

Voice: Ben Burtt

Like Charlie Brown's teacher, we never knew what the little guy was saying, but you didn't have to speak R2 to know he had an attitude. Despite C-3PO's protestations, there were no delusions of grandeur—Luke Skywalker's astromech droid made a habit of saving the galaxy.



1. Wall-E

Created: 2008

Director: Andrew Stanton

Ambitious. Daring. Incredible. A work of art. Pixar's loftiest film yet happens to be all of those things and more. It also happens to be near-perfect, especially in its near-silent first half. Its deceptively-straightforward tale of two robots in love is shrewdly enmeshed in a environmentally-friendly story with a rather scathing critique of American consumerism and decadence. The pure sense of wonder and level of artistry in WALL-E continues to be nothing short of astonishing.



Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact **Tracy Casey** before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.