

# Committee on Philosophy and Computers

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## *2017–2018 Membership*

Marcello Guarini, chair (2019)

Fritz J. McDonald (2018)

Susan Schneider (2018)

Gary Mar (2019)

Dylan E. Wittkower (2019)

Robin Smith (2020)

Susan G. Sterrett (2020)

Piotr Boltuc, newsletter editor

# APA COMMITTEE ON PHILOSOPHY AND COMPUTERS ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Chair: Marcello Guarini (2019)

Associate Chair: Piotr Boltuc

Members: Gary Mar (2019)  
Dylan E. Wittkower (2019)  
B. Jack Copeland (2020)  
Robin Smith (2020)  
Susan Sterrett (2020)  
Daniel Susser (2020)

Newsletter Editor: Piotr Boltuc

Past Chair: Thomas M. Powers

## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The committee welcomed long-time newsletter editor Piotr Boltuc as Associate Chair. New members also include B. Jack Copeland, Robin Smith, Susan Sterrett, and Daniel Susser. The committee thanks Fritz J. McDonald and Gualtiero Piccinini, both of whom have completed their terms on the committee.

## RECONSIDERATION OF THE CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE

While the Philosophy and Computers committee is scheduled to be dissolved in 2020, in the spirit of “better late than never,” the Chair and Associate Chair drafted a new charge that better reflects the activities of the committee. The original charge read as follows:

The committee collects and disseminates information on the use of computers in the profession, including their use in instruction, research, writing, and publication, and it makes recommendations for appropriate actions of the board or programs of the association.

The revised charge, which was well received by the committee, is broader in scope:

The committee works to provide forums for discourse devoted to the critical and creative examination of the role of information, computation, computers, and other computationally enabled technologies (such as robots). The committee endeavours to use that discourse not only to enrich philosophical research and pedagogy, but to reach beyond philosophy to enrich other discourses, both academic and non-academic.

The revised charge better captures both the multi-disciplinary scope of the committee’s activities as well as its creative dimension. Its original contributions were always about more the collecting and disseminating. The upcoming issue of the Newsletter (vol. 18, no. 1) contains a discussion, authored by the Chair and Associate Chair, of the history of the committee and the evolution of its activities.

## AWARDING OF THE BARWISE PRIZE

The winner of the 2017 Barwise Prize is B. Jack Copeland, who has since become a member of the committee. Dr. Copeland was selected after extensive email deliberations by the committee. Professor Copeland is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, and Department Head, at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, where he is Director of the Turing Archive for the History of Computing. Jack Copeland is the world-wide expert on Alan Turing and a leading philosopher of AI, computing and information. He is an author of influential books (2017, 2013, 2012, 2010, 2006, 2005, 2004, 1996, 1993). He has published over a hundred articles, including pioneering work on hypercomputing, which is based on Turing's work but goes far beyond it. He authored the influential entry "The Church-Turing Thesis" for the The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. While Professor Copeland was unable to give an address at a 2018 meeting of the APA, we are scheduling him for a talk in 2019.

## ORGANIZATION OF APA EVENTS

Members of the committee have been organising sessions for the 2019 Central and Pacific APA meetings. Details will be provided in next year’s report. As for the past year, the committee held sessions at each of the APA meetings. Eastern APA 2018 saw Ed Zalta give his Barwise prize address, with Christopher

Menzel and Branden Fitelson serving as commentators. At Central APA 2018, Piotr Boltuc chaired a session on Machine Consciousness, with papers by Boltuc, Gualtiero Piccinini, Jack Copeland, Stephen Thaler and Troy Kelley. Pacific APA 2018 saw committee member Fritz MacDonald chair a session on New Technologies in Online Teaching of Philosophy, with presentations by Keith Hess, John Min, Vasile Munteanu, and Beth Seacord.

## NEWSLETTER

As well as organising successful session at each of the APA meetings, two issues of the Newsletter were produced, vol. 17, nos. 1 and 2. Articles continue to be submitted, and the Newsletter is poised to continue publishing until the committee is dissolved.

For the APA Committee on Philosophy and Computers  
Marcello Guarini (2016-2019)  
Professor of Philosophy  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences  
University of Windsor