

MATTHEW J. DENNIS

PhD (Monash-Warwick), PGCert (London), MA (Warwick), BA (Sussex)

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SUMMARY

- Researching how to live well with online technologies, focusing on how to improve digital well-being.
- Interdisciplinary publications on ethics of technology (AI, social robots, virtual assistants, self-care apps).
- Teaching on how digital well-being is affected by gender, education, and intercultural factors.

RESEARCH FOCUS

AOS: Human Flourishing • Digital Well-Being • Behaviour Change Technologies

AOC: Ethics of Technology • Empirical Philosophy (x-phi) • Applied Ethics (Engineering, Business, Medical)

POSTDOCTORAL EMPLOYMENT

- **Research Fellow in Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies** | May 2021 – Present
TU Eindhoven, Department of Industrial Engineering & Innovation Sciences.

Project title: 'Behaviour Change Technologies for Moral Improvement'

Funded by the NWO (Gravitation Grant).

3-year research fellowship on the NWO's *Ethics of Socially Disruptive Technologies Project* (2019–29).

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow** | October 2019 – September 2021
TU Delft, Department of Values, Technology, and Innovation.

Project Title: 'Cultivating Ourselves Online'

Funded by European Commission (Horizon 2020, Grant No. 707404).

2-year fellowship on how online technologies be used to improve digital well-being. Hosted at TU Delft with a research visit to the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge. Elected member of Junior Research Council of TU Delft's AI Lab (from 2020/21).

- **Early Career Innovation Fellow** | December 2018 – September 2019
University of Warwick, Institute of Advanced Study.

Project Title: 'Technologies of the Self for the 21st Century'

Jointly funded by Institute of Advanced Study and Warwick Ventures.

10-month fellowship to research the rapid rise of self-care app technology. This involved two US trips to meet with UX designers from Google and Facebook, and holding structured interviews with representatives of major self-care app companies (Happify, Calm, Headspace) and wearable manufactures.

EDUCATION

- **Joint Monash-Warwick PhD Philosophy** (highest honours) | 2015–18

Dissertation title: 'Cultivating Our Passionate Attachments'

Supervisor: Prof. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Warwick).

Examiners: Prof. Edward Harcourt (Oxford) and Prof. John Sellars (London).

Submitted: 28th September 2018. Viva passed with no corrections: 11th February 2019.

Funded by the Australian Research Council. Winner of Monash Postgraduate Publication Award.

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Management of Teaching and Learning** (distinction) | 2008–10
Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK.
Funded by the UK Higher Education Academy
- **MA Philosophy** (distinction) | 2006–08
University of Warwick, UK.
- **BA Philosophy** (honours) | 2001–04
University of Sussex, UK.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

- Principle Investigator for seed-funding application: 'Visions of the Anthropocene'. The British Academy (BA) and Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (KNAW). January 2020.
- Nominated for European Commission's MSCA Lab Competition: 'Breaking the Walls of Digital Well-Being.' Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture. 29th September 2020.
- Winner of the Australian Society for Continental Philosophy Postgraduate Essay Prize (2017). My article, 'On the Role of Philosophy in Self-Cultivation', was subsequently published in *Parrhesia: Journal of Critical Philosophy* (2018).
- Winner of international PhD funding competition by the Australian Research Council as part of a 3-year research project, 'Re-inventing Philosophy as a Way of Life.' Hosted by Monash University, Australia.
- Winner of collaborative funding for a two-year research project (2014–15), 'Prospects for an Ethics of Self-Cultivation', which received a £20,000 award from the Monash-Warwick Alliance. This project hosted two international conferences and included a funded widening participation programme. Full video documentation is hosted on the University of Warwick website.
- I have also received competitive travel grants from British Academy, Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (KNAW), Aristotelian Society, Mind Association, John Templeton Foundation, Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, UK Higher Education Academy.

PUBLICATIONS

Books and Edited Volumes

- M. J. Dennis, J. van den Hoven, G. Isamaev, S. Umbrello (eds.) (under contract). *Values for a Post-Pandemic Future*. Springer Publishing.
- M. J. Dennis (2020). *Cultivating Our Passionate Attachments*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–191.
- M. J. Dennis & S. Werkhoven (eds.) (2018). *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–234. Preface by Prof. Michael Slote.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- M. J. Dennis (under review). 'Towards a Theory of Digital Well-Being: Reimagining Online Life Under Lockdown.' Submitted to *Science and Engineering Ethics* (24th November 2020).
- M. J. Dennis (2021). 'Digital Well-Being Under Pandemic Conditions.' *Ethics and Information Technology* (online first).
- M. J. Dennis (under review). 'Social Robots and Digital Well-Being: How to Design Artificial Agents.' Submitted to *Mind and Society*.
- M. J. Dennis & T. Harrison (2020). 'Unique Ethical Challenges for the 21st Century: Online Technology and Virtue Education.' *Journal of Moral Education*. Online first.
- M. J. Dennis (2020). 'Technologies of Self-Cultivation: How to Improve Stoic Self-Care Apps.' *Human Affairs: Special Issue on Philosophical Reflection and Technological Change*. Vol. 30, pp. 549–58.

- M. J. Dennis (forthcoming; accepted 2nd February 2020). 'We Don't Need Another Guru: AI and Digital Well-Being.' *Conference Proceedings of Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and the Simulation of Behaviour*. Taylor and Francis Group. [Publication delayed due to COVID-19.]
- M. J. Dennis (2020). 'Virtue as Empowerment.' *Epoché: Journal for the History of Philosophy*. Vol. 4 (2), pp. 411–31.
- M. J. Dennis (2019). 'Nietzschean Self-Cultivation: Connecting His Virtues to His Ethical Ideal.' *Journal of Value Inquiry*. Vol. 53, pp. 55–73. Downloaded 2480 times from publisher's website since online first version on 23rd May 2018.
- M. J. Dennis (2018). 'On the Role of Philosophy in Self-Cultivation.' *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*. Vol. 28, pp. 136–55. (Winner of ASCP Postgraduate Essay Prize 2017).

Book Chapters

- M. J. Dennis (2020). 'Cultivating Digital Well-Being and the Rise of Self-Care Apps.' *The Ethics of Digital Well-Being: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. C. Burr & L. Floridi (eds.). New York: Springer Publishing, pp. 119–39.
- M. J. Dennis (2020). 'Passionate Individuation.' *Nietzsche and Epicurus: Nature, Health, and Ethics*. V. Acharya & R. Johnson (eds.), Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 125–40.
- Q. Cassam (first author), M. J. Dennis, S. Werkhoven (2018). 'Reflections on the Value of Self-Knowledge.' *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. M. J. Dennis & S. Werkhoven (eds.). Routledge, pp. 222–30.
- M. J. Dennis (2016). 'On the Role of Maxims.' *Nietzsche's Engagements with the Kantian Legacy: Aesthetics, Anthropology, and History*. M. Branco & K. Hay (eds.). Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 251–72.

Editorial Articles

- G. Ishmaev (first author), M. J. Dennis, J. van den Hoven (eds.) (2020). 'Ethics of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Myths, False Dilemmas, and Moral Overload.' *Special Issue of Ethics and Information Technology: The COVID-19 Crisis*.
- M. J. Dennis & S. Werkhoven (eds.) (2018). 'Editors' Introduction.' *Ethics and Self-Cultivation: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, pp. 1–15.
- M. J. Dennis & D. Rowthorn (eds.) (2014). 'Editors' Introduction.' *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 25, pp. 1–7.

Edited Collections

- J. van den Hoven (editor-in-chief), E. Aizenberg (guest editor), M. J. Dennis (guest editor). *Topical Collection of Ethics & Information Technology: Prospects for Ethical Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources*. (Expected publication: fourth quarter 2021).
- J. van den Hoven (editor-in-chief), M. J. Dennis (guest editor), G. Ishmaev (guest editor). *Special Issue of Ethics & Information Technology: Technology & Ethics of the COVID-19 Crisis*.
- M. J. Dennis & D. Rowthorn (eds.) (2014). *Special Issue of Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy: Nietzsche's Free Spirit Works*. Vol. 25, pp. 1–237.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS

I have now presented over 25 research papers at high-profile conferences and departmental seminars. Each presentation was invited or peer-reviewed.

- 'Designing for 21st Century Digital Well-Being.' *Philosophy of Human-Technology Relations Conference*. TU Twente. Panel Presentation with P. Vermaas (TU Delft), H. Robbins (TU/e), & H. Wiltse (Umeå). November 2020.
- 'Online Exemplars and Self-Cultivation.' John Templeton Foundation Colloquium: Exemplar Narratives in Character Development, University of Northampton. September 2020 & 'Philosophy of Fame and Celebrity Workshop', Tilburg University, December 2020.
- 'Cultivating Digital Well-Being Under Pandemic Conditions.' *Digital Innovation in Mental Health*. Virtual Event with Dr. Becky Inkster (The Alan Turing Institute & University of Cambridge). August 2020.
- 'Reimagining Digital Well-Being.' Virtual Seminar, Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge. June 2020.
- 'Ethical Roadmap to a Pandemic: From Triage to Tracing and Beyond.' Department of Values, Technology, and Innovation, TU Delft. June 2020
- 'We Don't Need Another Guru: AI and Digital Well-Being.' Radboud AI Centre, Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL. November 2019.
- 'A New Vision for Engineering Ethics.' Teaching Design for Values Workshop, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft. February 2020
- 'Technologies of Self-Cultivation for Contemporary Life: How to Improve Stoic Self-Care Apps.' Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, Oriel College, University of Oxford, UK. January 2020.
- 'Ethical Challenges of the 21st Century: Online Technology and Virtue Education' (with T. Harrison). Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, Oriel College, University of Oxford, UK. January 2020.
- 'Reinventing Self-Care Technology for the 21st Century.' 4TU.Ethics Bi-Annual Conference: Ethics of Disruptive Technologies, TU Eindhoven, NL. November 2019.
- 'Reimagining Digital Well-Being: Better Ways to Design for Meaningful Activity Online' (with M. Sand). Dutch Research School of Philosophy (OZSW) Conference, University of Amsterdam, NL. November 2019.
- 'Cultivating Ourselves Online.' 'Technology and Society Conference.' WGPT (Working Group on Philosophy of Technology), KU Leuven. September 2019 & at Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham, UK. July 2019.
- 'Toxic Masculinity Online.' Gender and Digital Well-Being Workshop, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Warwick, UK. June 2019.
- 'Interrogating App-Based Technologies of Self-Care.' Centre for Computing and Social Responsibility, De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. January 2019.
- 'Virtue and Experimental Philosophy: Understanding Character Excellences Empirically.' Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, Oriel College, University of Oxford, UK. January 2019.
- 'Self-Cultivation in Modern Moral Philosophy.' Department of Philosophy, Hong Kong University, Hong Kong, China. April 2017.
- 'Virtues of Self-Cultivation.' British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference, University of York, UK. April 2015.
- 'Varieties of Virtue Ethics.' Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, Oriel College, University of Oxford, UK. January 2015.

I have also organised panels for 3 of these events: OZSW Symposium: 'Values and Technology: A Reciprocal Relationship' (with M. Sand), 'Gender and Digital Well-Being' (with B. Evans), and 'Self-Cultivation' at British Society for the History of Philosophy Annual Conference.

TEACHING

I hold a Postgraduate Certificate in the Management of Teaching and Learning (PGCert) from the University of London. All previous my student evaluations and teaching observations are available on request.

- *Dissertation Tutor* (PhD). 4TU.Ethics Writing Retreat. 90-minute session on 'Dissertation Writing' for PhD students from the 4TU.Ethics network. November 2020.
- *Marking Team* (BSc). 'Ethics of Transportation.' Marker for exams on ethical issues of transport with Asst. Prof. F. Santoni de Sio and Dr. J. Bergen. TU Delft, April–May 2020.
- *Dissertation Supervisor* (MSc). Supervisor of MSc dissertations on 'Digital Well-Being and Online Self-Care' at TU Delft (April 2020) and BSc dissertations at University of Amsterdam. February–July 2020.
- *Guest Lecturer* (PhD). 'Digital Well-Being.' Moral Psychology and Technology PhD Seminar, The Dutch Research School of Philosophy (OZSW). Hosted at TU Delft with Prof. Mark Alfano. October 2019. (Overall course evaluations were 9.6/10, published on 26th October 2019)
- *Course Leader* (MA). 'Cultivating, Tracking, and Documenting the Contemporary Self.' Universität der Künste, Berlin, Germany. Invited by Prof. Stefan Klein (author of *The Science of Happiness*). June–July 2019.
- *Course Leader* (MA). 'Technologies of Passionate Self-Cultivation.' Stillpoint Spaces, Berlin, Germany. 5 graduate-level lectures on cultivating our passionate attachments. July–August 2019.
- *Course Leader* (MA). 'Philosophies of Self-Formation.' Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, Melbourne, Australia. 5 graduate-level lectures on self-cultivation in philosophy. Feb–March 2017.
- *Guest Lecturer* (BA). 'On Love' (4th April 2016), 'On Pleasure' (21st March 2016), 'On Virtue' (14th March 2016), Faculty of Arts and Education, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia.
- *Seminar Leader* (BA). 'Philosophy, Happiness, and the Good Life.' Deakin University, Australia (spring 2016).
- *Seminar Leader* (BA). 'Introduction to Ancient Philosophy.' University of Warwick, UK (2012–13).
- *Seminar Leader* (BA). 'Aesthetics.' Goldsmiths College, University of London, UK (2009–10).
- *Seminar Leader* (BA). 'Critical Studies.' Goldsmiths College, University of London (2008–09).

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- **Self-Care in the Digital Age** | March–April 2019.
Institute of Advanced Study and Warwick Ventures, UK.

Designed and led seven focus groups for tech users on how to improve online self-care technology. Hosted by University of Reykjavík (28th March), Copenhagen Business School (6th April), Stockholm School of Economics (10th April), Universität Hamburg (12th April), EDC Paris Business School (16th April), Brussels Business School (18th April), Amsterdam Business School (23rd April). Funded by Warwick Ventures (£6000).
- **Study Skills in Higher Education** | Sept–Nov 2008.
British Academy, London, UK

Research assistant for Prof. Joan Turner (Goldsmiths) to investigate proofreading practice in undergraduate students. I organised 6 focus groups, as well as writing a report analysing the most significant findings from each group. Funded by the British Academy (£2000).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- *Workshop Organiser*. 'Visions of the Anthropocene: AI, VR, & Imagining a Post-Pandemic Future.'
- *Invited Review*. 'Solving the Social Media Dilemma Together.' Ethical Intelligence Associates. October 2020.
- *Invited Article*. 'Digital Well-Being: A New Frontier in Human Flourishing.' Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham, UK. December 2020.

- *Invited Participant.* Symposium: 'Artificial Intelligence and the Challenges of the Anthropocene.' Joint seed-funding event. The British Academy (BA) and Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (KNAW). November 2020.
- *Invited Researcher.* European Commission's 'Digital Education Action Plan.' Organised by EU Science Hub, the European Commission's science and knowledge service. 25th August 2020.
- *Funding Pitch.* *European Innovation and Technology Institute.* 'The Golden Ethical Standard for Self-Care Products.' Proposal to create an internationally recognised trademark for self-care apps that are based on values of human well-being, especially those that reflect cultural, ethnic, and gender differences. January 2020.
- *Public Lecture.* 'Digital Self-Care: Progress of Paradox.' 2-hour interactive session for TechFestival on the ethical issues raised by self-care apps, and how speculative design can change our approach to digital well-being. Hosted by *TechFestival Copenhagen: Where Humans and Technologies Meet.* 108 participants registered for session. 5th Sept 2019.
- *General-Audience Article.* 'Cultivating Character and the Promise of Online Technologies.' Commissioned article on self-care app technology for the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, University of Birmingham, UK. Available online as part of their Insight Series. 13th August 2019.
- *Public Workshop* (co-organiser). 'Gender and Digital Well-Being.' Hosted with Brigid Evans. Presented on 'Toxic Masculinity Online.' Institute for Advanced Study, University of Warwick, UK. 10th June 2019.
- *Public Lecture.* 'The Promise of Technologies of Self-Care.' Stillpoint Spaces, Berlin, Germany. Approx. 28 registered participants for session. 16th May 2018.

MEDIA

- *Invited interviewee.* Interview: 'A Scientist's Opinion: Interview with Matthew J. Dennis about Digital Well-Being.' For the European Parliament's Science Media Hub. www.sciencemediahub.eu/2020/11/11/a-scientists-opinion-interview-with-matthew-james-dennis-about-digital-well-being/
- *Invited interviewee.* Article by R. Fanni: 'The Potential of Digital Well-Being in Times of Physical Social Distancing' with S. Diefenbach. www.sciencemediahub.eu/2020/11/11/the-potential-of-digital-well-being-in-times-of-physical-social-distancing/
- *Invited Participant* (with E. Ozcan). Webinar: 'Digital Technologies for Well-Being and Mental Health.' *TU Delft Safety & Security Institute.* 24th June 2020.
- *Invited interviewee.* Interview: 'COVID-19 Track-and-Trace Apps' with S. C. Ibrahim & G. Ismaev for Swiss Broadcasting Commission. www.swissinfo.ch/eng/switzerland-launches-swisscovid-contact-tracing-app-for-residents/45859778
- *Invited interviewee.* Interview: 'Digital well-being and COVID-19' with E. Thans. 'Design for Values in Times of COVID-19.' TU Delft X-Salon. 2nd June 2020. www.tudelft.nl/en/events/2020/tu-delft-x/04-april/0206-salon-design-for-values-in-times-of-covid-19

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- *Lead of Coordinating Team for Working Group on COVID-19.* March 2020 – ongoing.
Coordinating Delft Design for Values (DDfV) and 4TU Centre for Ethics and Technology (4TU.Ethics) joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This role involved (1) organising a 4TU.Ethics podcast on COVID-19, (2) a (proposed) OZSW PhD course on 'The Philosophy of Pandemics', as well as (3) funding applications to ZonMw and 4TU.Ethics. Further details at: www.delftdesignforvalues.nl/working-group-covid-19-crisis
- *Invited Expert: Ethics of COVID-19 Technologies.* The Expert Portal for Dutch Social Sciences and Humanities. University of Amsterdam. <https://ssh-covid19.nl/experts/matthew-j-dennis/>
- *Peer Reviewer: Philosophy and Technology, Journal of Value Inquiry, Ethics and Information Technology, Science and Engineering Ethics, Techné: Research in Philosophy and Technology, Human Affairs, Journal of Moral Education.*

- *Manuscript Reviewer: Palgrave Macmillan, Bloomsbury, Routledge.*
- *Grant Reviewer: European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST).* Reviewer of research grants for ethics of technology. 2020 – ongoing.
- *Grant Reviewer: European Commission (ID: EX2019D357442).* Reviewer of research grants for philosophy of technology, digital health, and well-being. 2018 – ongoing.

MEMBERSHIPS

- *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Alumni Association (MCAA).* Member of MCAA. 2019 – ongoing.
- *4TU.Ethics.* Member of 4TU.Ethics. 2019 – ongoing.
- *Society for the Philosophy of Technology (SPT).* Member of SPT. 2019 – ongoing.
- *Dutch Research School for Philosophy (OZSW).* Member of OZSW. 2019 – ongoing.

END OF CV [Updated March 2021]