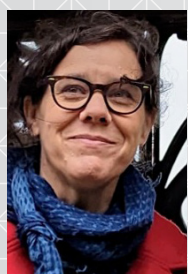


AI and the Race for Interspecies Communication



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In contrast to the moral panics about the ways that AI chatbots may be shrinking people's social worlds by replacing human-to-human interaction, there is an incredible optimism in some corners that AI will radically open up the social world to include animals, enhancing or enabling new forms of interspecies communication. In this new research project, Prof. Handman explores the different ways that AI is transforming our ideas about language and humanness by seeing how people are imagining some kind of AI-enabled interspecies communication. How are animals-as-speakers getting folded into democratic, legal, and even economic systems? People who are interested in interspecies communication range from animal behaviorists, to Silicon Valley investors, to members of the public. One of the current challenges of the project is how to describe this world of interspecies communication in a way that pays close attention to the diverse forms of participation in it.

Thursday, November 13, 2025

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM



Levis Faculty Center,
Room 208
919 West Illinois Street, Urbana



The new initiative, **Living in Multi-Species Worlds**, asks—with all of our shared knowledges—what can or do we know beyond the human? What difference might that make to our laws, ethics, acts of representation, interpretation, values, designs, and more, if we challenged the specifically anthropocentric starting points of so much that we do and know? How might such a reorientation reconfigure our disciplinary knowledges? Our methodologies? Social formations? Challenge our imaginations? Reshape some of the foundational questions that our scholarly and creative work engages? Ultimately, how might it expand the range of contributions we hope our universities can make in the future?

CAS Resident Associate **Jane Desmond** (Anthropology) oversees this initiative which includes an ongoing public events series of lectures and symposia, among other activities. Professor Desmond is also the Resident Director of the CAS Human-Animal Studies Initiative@Illinois.