

	Speakers include Theologian Professor Neil Mercer, Neuroscientist Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore and Illusionist, Beau Lotto. Guest Appearance by autonomous robot Dora the Explorer.
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Sneak Preview

There's a chance to see a taster of these forthcoming events by viewing the BBC's coverage of the event we ran last month.

This was held at the University of Reading on 25th September for students and teachers from sixteen schools discussing what is essentially 'human' in the fast-changing, bio-tech world of robotics and cyber-technology.

To get a flavour of the day (which was covered by BBC Breakfast, BBC World news and BBC Newsround) follow either of the links below (or copy and paste them into your browser).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLpuGzNb-4U>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19974380>

Other website news

Our free resources website is still growing and has some new videos and pages. Here are a few examples:



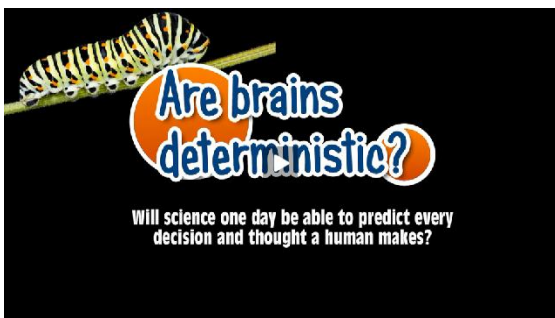
Students in Year 8 at St Edward's School in Windsor held a workshop to think of what they'd like to ask the Archbishop of Canterbury if only they had the chance.

Once the letters were finished, they packaged them up to be delivered to the Archbishop. On this webpage you can see Year 8 asking their questions and what the Archbishop said in reply.



For many people, the suffering that takes place when a natural disaster strikes seems to be a reason to doubt whether God exists.

Professor Bob White is a Professor of Geophysics at Cambridge University. He is also a Christian. Here is what he said to students from St Bede's School about how he tries to make sense of natural disasters.



If the Universe is bound by rules of cause and effect, then surely the outcome of everything that happens is the inevitable result of something else that took place earlier. And if every result is inevitable, then surely we have no choice about what we do. We are, after all, biological systems. Our brains are simply doing what, biologically, they were always going to do – in each situation that arises. This video shows how philosopher, Professor Nancey Murphy, addresses this question.

If you or your pupils have been using the website, www.FaradaySchools.com and feel as enthusiastic about it as we do, we would love to hear from you! We are inviting short website reviews from pupils and teachers (or we can email a mini-survey for pupils to complete).


Following some helpful feedback from teachers we have now improved the Year 7 area.

Posters

We have free A2 posters to send out to schools. If you haven't ordered yours yet, please visit the website and leave your request using the 'contact us' form. Please do leave your school's postal address too!

Courses for teachers

All our CPD opportunities are listed under 'Courses' on the FaradaySchools website.

 <p>CAN A ROBOT HAVE A MIND? Will robots ever think for themselves? Can a robot ever feel emotions or only say it feels emotions. If a machine is so human-like we think it is human, does that make it human? Are robots always destined to be our willing slaves?</p> <p>These questions and more answered by experts in cybernetics, religion and philosophy at FaradaySchools.com Where you find our answers to the big questions of life the universe & everything</p> <p>University of Reading</p>	<h3>One-day Course for Teachers</h3> <p>This new one-day course looks at how to use exciting new case studies such as Robots with Biological Brains to help students think about questions which bridge Science, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics. It is designed for teachers of Science, RE and Philosophy and we warmly invite you to attend.</p> <p>Be informed by our research about how young people think and common areas of confusion so that you can help them make progress while recognising that there are different views in society about religion. Extend your understanding of how to talk about science and religion.</p> <p>This takes place on March 15th 2013 at the Institute of Education, London Road Campus, University of Reading; Cost: £195</p>
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Staff News

The LASAR team are delighted to announce that Liz Smith has joined us as Events Coordinator. Emails for Liz and the rest of the team can be sent to

LASAR@reading.ac.uk

Or you can email the Project Leader directly,

Berry Billingsley, b.billingsley@reading.ac.uk

Background about the project

The LASAR, Learning about Science and Religion, Project was motivated by a concern that there is a strong public perception (reinforced by some popular media) that science and religion are in some sense opposites, that is that science is an atheistic activity. In particular, we were concerned that school pupils may come to accept this as a normative standard: something that is both incorrect, and which could deter students who hold religious faith from considering science as a suitable basis of future study and career. Such an effect would not only be unfortunate when there is widespread concern about the limited numbers of young people seriously considering science careers, but in principle could set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. If people of faith are significantly deterred from science, then science could over time become dominated by atheists!

LASAR is looking at this issue from two complementary directions. We are planning research which will help us find out more about exactly what secondary age students do think about science and religion, something of the factors which they feel influence their views, and how their ideas shift over time. We intend to report our findings widely, and when we have results available we will use this newsletter to direct readers to these reports. We are also looking to develop curriculum materials and approaches which can support teachers in engaging secondary age pupils with something of the broad range of opinions and scholarship in the area of science and religion. In this way we hope to make sure that there are sufficient accessible and balanced presentations to help pupils to recognise that this is a nuanced area where there are no simple answers (so scientists hold a wide range of faith positions and views on religious matters), and offer them interesting resources to stimulate their own thinking in this area.

Yours with best wishes

Berry, Keith, Fran, Helen and Liz

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