March 24, 2021 5:00 pm - 8:20 pm
Welcome and Introduction

Harald Mahrer
President, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Harald Mahrer (born 1973) is President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and was appointed President of the Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank) in September 2018. He was Austrian Federal Minister for Education, Science and Business until December 2017. Prior to that, he was State Secretary in the same department from September 1st 2014. As graduate of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, he gained political experience as chairperson of the Austrian National Union of Students and subsequently completed a Doctorate in Social and Economic Science. After several years as a research assistant focussing on information systems and digital businesses he founded Austria’s first incubator and his first company, legend consulting. He then took over as managing partner of Austria’s leading PR & strategic communications agency, Pleon Publico. For more than 15 years, he has been an active business angel and promoted startups in different industries. From 2011 to 2015, he was also President of the Julius Raab Foundation – one of Austria’s leading think tanks. He founded the Austrian Association of Philanthropic Foundations, worked intensively in the area of disruptive innovation, corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, and individual freedom and establishing new strategic priorities for the development of Austria and Europe.

Margarete Schramböck
Austrian Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs

Karl Koster
Executive Director, MIT Corporate Relations
Director, Alliance Management
MIT Office of Strategic Alliances & Technology Transfer

Karl Koster is the Executive Director of MIT Corporate Relations. MIT Corporate Relations includes the MIT Industrial Liaison Program and MIT Startup Exchange.

In that capacity, Koster and his staff work with the leadership of MIT and senior corporate executives to design and implement strategies for fostering corporate partnerships with the Institute. Koster and his team have also worked to identify and design a number of major international programs for MIT, which have been characterized by the establishment of strong, programmatic linkages among universities, industry, and governments. Most recently these efforts have been extended to engage the surrounding innovation ecosystem, including its vibrant startup and small company community, into MIT’s global corporate and university networks.

Koster is also the Director of Alliance Management in the Office of Strategic Alliances and Technology Transfer (OSATT). OSATT was launched in Fall 2019 as part of a plan to reinvent MIT’s research administration infrastructure. OSATT develops agreements that facilitate MIT projects, programs and consortia with industrial, nonprofit, and international sponsors, partners and collaborators.

He is past chairman of the University-Industry Demonstration Partnership (UIDP), an organization that seeks to enhance the value of collaborative partnerships between universities and corporations.

Harald Mahrer, President, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
Prior to the onset of the COVID crisis, the industrialized world was undergoing rapid employment growth, so much so that The Economist magazine declared in May 2019, “Most of the rich world is enjoying a jobs boom of unprecedented scope”. Despite these encouraging trends, a cross-national Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2018 found that majorities of citizens in advanced and emerging economies anticipated that robots and computers would probably or definitely take over many jobs, exacerbating inequality, and making it more difficult to find work. The COVID crisis has upended these predictions, bringing to an end the longest economic expansion in U.S. history and causing a worldwide spike in unemployment. Ironically, technological advances generally, and automation specifically, had almost nothing to do with this reversal of fortune. Should we now stop worrying about technological unemployment and focus instead on conventional threats? Or are all prior bets simply off?
As Covid-19 has made it necessary for people to keep their distance from each other, robots are stepping in to fill essential roles, such as sanitizing warehouses and hospitals, ferrying test samples to laboratories, and serving as telemedicine avatars. There are signs that people may be increasingly receptive to robotic help, preferring, at least hypothetically, to be picked up by a self-driving taxi or have their food delivered via robot, to reduce their risk of catching the virus.

As more intelligent, independent machines make their way into the public sphere, engineer Julie Shah is urging designers to rethink not just how robots fit in with society, but also how society can change to accommodate these new, “working” robots.
Claudia Unterweger

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Andrew McAfee
Principal Research Scientist
MIT Sloan School of Management

Andrew McAfee studies the ways that information technology (IT) affects businesses and business as a whole. His research investigates how IT changes the way companies perform, organize themselves, and compete. At a higher level, his work also investigates how computerization affects competition, society, the economy, and the workforce.

He and Erik Brynjolfsson are co-authors of the ebook *Race Against the Machine: How the Digital Revolution is Accelerating Innovation, Driving Productivity, and Irreversibly Transforming Employment and the Economy*. The book brings together a range of data, examples, and research to show that the average US worker is being left behind by advances in technology.

He coined the phrase “Enterprise 2.0” in a spring 2006 *Sloan Management Review* article to describe the use of Web 2.0 tools and approaches by businesses. He also began blogging at that time, both about Enterprise 2.0 and about his other research. McAfee’s blog is widely read, becoming at times one of the 10,000 most popular in the world (according to Technorati). He also maintains a Facebook profile and Twitter account.

In addition to the blog that is part of this site, McAfee also writes a blog as part of harvardbusiness.org’s “HBR Voices.” His posts are also regularly reprinted at forbes.com.

McAfee’s book on *Enterprise 2.0* was published in November 2009 by Harvard Business School Press.
Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most important technologies in the world today. The United States and China compete for dominance in its development. CEOs believe it will significantly change the way they do business. And it has helped companies such as Facebook, Google, and Apple to become among the largest in the world. But how will this technology affect work in the future? Will it lead to a permanent underclass of people who are no longer employable because their jobs are being done by computers? Will super-intelligent computers someday take over the world, finding little use for the humans who created them? Or will robotic servants usher in a golden age of human leisure and prosperity?
Applying New Education Technologies to Meet Workforce Education Needs
Sanjay Sarma
Vice President for Open Learning
Fred Fort Flowers (1941) and Daniel Fort Flowers (1941) Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Sanjay Sarma is the Fred Fort Flowers (1941) and Daniel Fort Flowers (1941) Professor of Mechanical Engineering at MIT. He is the first Dean of Digital Learning at MIT. He co-founded the Auto-ID Center at MIT and developed many of the key technologies behind the EPC suite of RFID standards now used worldwide. He was also the the founder and CTO of OATSystems, which was acquired by Checkpoint Systems (NYSE: CKP) in 2008. He serves on the boards of GS1, EPCglobal and several startup companies including Senaya and ESSESS.

Dr. Sarma received his Bachelors from the Indian Institute of Technology, his Masters from Carnegie Mellon University and his PhD from the University of California at Berkeley. Sarma also worked at Schlumberger Oilfield Services in Aberdeen, UK, and at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratories in Berkeley, California. He has authored over 75 academic papers in computational geometry, sensing, RFID, automation and CAD, and is the recipient of numerous awards for teaching and research including the MacVicar Fellowship, the Business Week eBiz Award and Informationweek's Innovators and Influencers Award. He advises several national governments and global companies.

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What are the lessons from learning science and new technologies that could make online education, including workforce training, more effective? Our current workforce education system faces many gaps, from underinvestment to a deep disconnect between the still-separate worlds of work and learning. However, new models for workforce education delivery are developing to help fill these gaps. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has underscored the need for a better workforce education system to create better quality jobs. To meet the needed scale, online education, which has been growing in recent years, could be a key tool. But online education is a very different medium than the traditional classroom, and there are lessons from learning science only now being understood that will apply to it in different ways. For online workforce education to work and to scale, it will have to be a better system, incorporating learning lessons and advanced technologies to optimize the new medium.

[Panel Discussion] The Global Futures of Work and Cities
Katja Schechtner
Research Fellow, MIT Senseable City Lab
Advisor to the Austrian Minister of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Technology and Innovation

Georg Russegger
Knowledge Transfer Centre, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

Mary Anne Ocampo
Lecturer of Urban Design, Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Principal, Sasaki
Cognitive Science as a New People Science for the Future of Work

John Gabrieli

Grover Hermann Professor of Health Sciences and Technology and Cognitive Neuroscience
Director, Martinos Imaging Center
MIT McGovern Institute for Brain Research

McGovern Investigator John Gabrieli directs the research and administrative activities of the center, providing executive-level leadership and oversight to the center’s operations. Gabrieli, who is also a professor in MIT’s Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences and the Harvard-MIT Division of Health Sciences and Technology, is interested in the neural basis of memory, thought and emotion in the human brain, and he also seeks to understand the brain abnormalities that underlie neurological and psychiatric disease.

View full bio

Traditional approaches to understanding skills and abilities in people (people science) do not satisfy the needs of the modern employer in regard to job fit, soft skills, fairness, and flexibility. The foundations of a new people science builds on advancements in fields like cognitive science and neuroscience that can be used to understand individual differences among humans. Best practices should govern the application of the new people science theories to real-world employment contexts. An example comes from one how one platform company has used the new people science to create hiring models for five high-growth roles. These insights need to be made actionable in the context of retraining employees for the future of work.
Constructive Communication in the Age of Fragmentation
Deb K Roy
Professor of Media Arts and Sciences at MIT
Director of the MIT Center for Constructive Communication
Executive Director at MIT Media Lab

Deb K Roy is Professor of Media Arts and Sciences at MIT where he directs the MIT Center for Constructive Communication and is Executive Director of the MIT Media Lab. He leads research in applied machine learning and human-machine interaction with applications in designing systems for learning and constructive dialogue, and for mapping and analyzing large scale media ecosystems.

Roy is also co-founder and Chair of Cortico, a nonprofit social venture that is developing and operating the Local Voices Network to foster constructive public conversations across political and cultural divides. Roy was co-founder and CEO of Bluefin Labs, a media analytics company that analyzed the interactions between television and social media at scale. Bluefin was acquired by Twitter in 2013, Twitter’s largest acquisition of the time. From 2013-2017 Roy served as Twitter’s Chief Media Scientist.

An author of over 160 academic papers, his popular TED talk Birth of a Word presents his research on his son’s language development that led to new ideas in media analytics. A native of Canada, Roy received his Bachelor of Applied Science from the University of Waterloo and PhD in Media Arts and Sciences from MIT.

Political, media and technological forces have driven us into isolated, like-minded camps hostile toward outside views and ripe for the spread of misinformation, mischaracterization of others, hateful discourse, and even violence. The loudest, most extreme voices now dominate the public sphere, stifling communication that might bridge ever-widening and increasingly dangerous divides. The MIT Center for Constructive Communication is bringing together researchers in AI, computational social science, digital interactive design, and learning technologies with software engineers, journalists, artists, public health experts, and community organizers to explore and address the effects of deepening societal fragmentation in America.

Led by Professor Deb Roy and based at the Media Lab, the Center will leverage data-driven analytics to better understand current social and mass media ecosystems and design new tools and communication networks capable of bridging social, cultural, and political divides.

Wrap Up & Closing
Mariana Kühnel
Deputy Secretary General, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Michael Otter
CEO of Advantage Austria, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

Adjournment