



# U3A Avon Ōtākaro

## Series 4: Advances in technology

**Venue:** St Christopher's Church, 244 Avonhead Road

Talks are on **Mondays**, except for the second Monday of each month, **beginning** at 1.30 pm, followed by afternoon tea at 2.30 pm.

### Series 4: Advances in technology

The past 20 years has seen ever-increasing changes in technology in almost every sphere of life. Medicine, communication, computing, artificial intelligence, to name just a few areas and technologies. As many of us are (perhaps painfully!) aware, these changes are occurring ever more rapidly.

#### 15 July **Human and Robotic Relationships**

**Christopher Bartneck**, associate professor in the department of Computer Science and Software Engineering at the University of Canterbury. One of his research interests is the effect of anthropomorphism on human-robot interaction.

#### 22 July **AI Impact on Employment**

**Richard Green**, Computer Vision Research Lab, University of Canterbury.

#### 29 July **Spaceport America Cup, UC student engineering**

**James Graham and team**, University of Canterbury Aerospace Club.

In June, UC students competed in the Spaceport America Cup, achieving stellar results at the competition. Join the team as they discuss the technical elements and challenges that contributed to their journey and eventual success at the world's largest intercollegiate rocketry engineering competition.

#### 5 Aug **Energy Supply—Hydrogen and Battery technologies**

**Aaron Marshall**, Professor, Chemical and Process Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Canterbury.

#### 19 Aug **How's your Hearing?**

**Gregory O'Beirne**, Professor, University of Canterbury, School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing.

Advances in hearing technology.

### Notices

#### End of Series 'Mix and Mingle' (Afternoon Tea)

As this is the final presentation in the series, we had planned for a catered afternoon tea, as we did last series.

Our apologies, we are **unable to provide this** for this Monday 1 July. We will still have the normal afternoon tea of tea, coffee, biscuits. A big thanks to Sheila and her team for their mahi/work in providing this each meeting.

#### Invite a Non-member Friend

Reminder: As part of our strategy to increase our membership, we are offering non-members the ability to attend one of our series for a cost of \$20. This is a one-off charge for the complete series. There is no option to just pay for one or two presentations in a series. It is \$20 whether they attend one or the complete lecture series. We encourage you to publicise this to your acquaintances.

#### Sergiu Toader, speaker 24 June

On 24 June Sergiu Toader spoke about Ukraine, a most informative yet unsettling talk—the world has changed! He also continues to write and you can read his work at: <https://medium.com/@sergiunz>

An excerpt from his 12 October 2023 article:

It has been a while since we first noticed that our ugly and compassionless world is drifting away from the course. Psychologists, sociologists, scientists and thinkers with a healthy moral and professional compass have repeatedly warned us that we are experiencing an intellectual decline, that we live in a continuous confusion of real values and that the technological revolution hasn't made us smarter but has degraded us and transformed us into an extension of our gadgets. Every gadget has a human extension! Perhaps this explains why our small minds, even those educated, are no longer able to tell black from white, good from evil, crime from punishment and virtue from sin.

#### Covid-19 and Flu vaccination update

Rapid antigen tests are now free until 30 September. A reminder to keep up your Covid and flu vaccinations.

See your doctor or vaccination-approved pharmacy, or book a vaccine through: <https://bookmyvaccine.health.nz/> or search for a vaccination location: <https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/search?q=flu>.

### **NZ Garden Bird Survey**

New Zealand's oldest-running citizen science project has started this week for 2024. Head into the garden (or local park) for one hour on any day between sunrise on Saturday, 29 June and sunset on Sunday, 7 July, and count all the birds you see or hear.

To help you identify birds by sight and sound go to: <https://gardenbirdssurvey.nz/identification/>

Scroll down to reach the section where you can play the sounds of each bird.

### **Museum of Archaeology**

The artefacts recovered from demolitions and excavations during Christchurch's post-earthquake rebuild are on display on-line at: <https://www.museumofarchaeology.org/>

### **Smartphone, dumb-phones, etc.**

Sergiu Toader's comment above leads into noting the recent trend for people to "digital detox" or have "digital minimalism" by ditching their smartphones for 'dumb-phones' which can phone and text and have only a very limited number of apps (e.g. address book, calendar, timer, music). It seems primarily driven by a lack of self-control by adults, although some have concerns over tracking and resulting targeted adverts (but there are ways to avoid most of that). It is unusual to see the tool blamed rather than the user—when someone is stabbed we don't promptly ban all knives or insist they be blunted and have rounded ends! It is also different to the "at what age should children have mobile phones" debate (see the article: Digital damage? Australian New Scientist, 22 June, 2024, p. 31–35.\*). As expected with the "there's an app for that" approach, there are also apps that can be installed on your smartphone to limit your use of it. Smartphones, as with any tool, have a capacity for abuse, but when used appropriately by skilled and disciplined operators they are very useful.

*\*This, and many other magazines, are available free to read online via Overdrive/Libby through the Christchurch Libraries, see: <https://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/overdrive/>*

### **'The Conversation'—a trusted news site**

'The Conversation Australia and New Zealand' is a collaboration between academics and journalists, producing research-based news and analysis. It is a good source of news you can trust, something we need in this age of misinformation and disinformation. The website is: <https://theconversation.com/nz> and you can also have a daily summary by email.

### **2024 Committee**

Officers and Committee have yellow name-tags to make it easier for you to identify them and to suggest programme and activity ideas.

*President:* Miles Ellery

*Vice President:* Judith Miller

*Secretary:* Vivienne Mander; email: [u3a.avon@gmail.com](mailto:u3a.avon@gmail.com)

*Treasurer:* Murray Edlin, ph: 354 3441,  
email: [mredlin@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mredlin@xtra.co.nz)

*Committee:* Viv Grant, Chris Kissling, Gloria Street, Bryan Wright.

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*Note: Hyperlinks (in blue) are live links, just click on them to go to its website or to your email application.*

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