DLi @ CORNELL TECH
Digital Life Initiative

Digital Life Seminar Series
Fall 2019

Salome Viljoen is a Research Fellow at Cornell Tech's Digital Life Initiative as well as at NYU's Information Law Institute. She is also an Affiliate and former Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Salome's research focuses on the intersection between law, technology and inequality, and draws together multidisciplinary approaches from political economy, law (particularly critical legal thought), and legal philosophy. She studies how the law governing the data economy structures current data collection and sharing practices, and explores the empirical and normative underpinnings of current data regimes as well as proposed alternatives. She also studies the distributive impacts of privacy and cybersecurity law. Salome was previously an associate at Fenwick and West, LLP, where she worked with technology company clients on a broad variety of matters. She has a JD from Harvard Law School, an MsC from the London School of Economics, and a BA in Political Economy with minors in Mathematics and History from Georgetown University.

Ben Green is a PhD Candidate in Applied Math at Harvard, an Affiliate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard, and a Research Fellow at the AI Now Institute at NYU. He studies the social and policy impacts of data science, with a focus on algorithmic fairness, municipal governments, and the criminal justice system. His book, *The Smart Enough City: Putting Technology in Its Place to Reclaim Our Urban Future*, was published in 2019 by MIT Press.

Abstract: The field of computer science is in a bind: on the one hand, computer scientists are increasingly eager to address social challenges; on the other, the field faces a growing awareness that many well-intentioned applications of algorithms in social contexts have led to significant harm. We argue that productively moving through this bind requires developing new practical reasoning methods for those engaged in algorithmic work. To understand what such an intervention looks like and what it may achieve, we look to the twentieth century evolution in American legal thought from legal formalism to legal realism. Drawing on the lessons of legal realism, we propose a new mode of algorithmic thinking— "algorithmic realism"—that is attentive to the internal limits of algorithms as well as the social concerns that fall beyond the bounds of current algorithmic thinking. Algorithmic realism is a practical orientation to work, and thus will not on its own prevent every harmful impact of algorithms. Nevertheless, it will better equip engineers to reason about the sociality of their work, and provide a necessary first step toward reducing algorithmic harms.

Date ## Thurs 10 Oct	**Guest Speakers** ## Salome Vijoen **Cornell Tech | NYU**
Time 12.30pm - 1.45pm	## Ben Green **AI Now | Harvard University**
Venue **Room 131** **Tata Innovation Center** **Cornell Tech** **Roosevelt Island**	**Title** **Algorithmic Realism: Expanding the Boundaries of Algorithmic Thought** www.dli.tech.cornell.edu | @dlicornelltech