Distinguished Speaker Series
on Ethics and Policy of Big Data, AI and other emerging technologies

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Big Brother, Internet Style: **Monday, April 23, 2018**
New Sources of Online Influence Are Invisibly Impacting **CBIS Auditorium, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm**
the Decisions That Billions of People Are Making Every Day **Refreshments at 3:30 pm**

Research conducted since 2013 has revealed multiple unprecedented and powerful means of influence that internet search engines make possible - so powerful, in fact, that the search engine can reasonably be called the most powerful mind control device ever invented. These new means of influence include the Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME) (http://bit.ly/1REqzEY and http://bit.ly/2xY4nB5), the Search Suggestion Effect (SSE), and the Answer Bot Effect (ABE). SEME is the impact that ordered search results have on people's opinions and behavior; SSE is the impact that search suggestions have; ABE is the impact that definitive answers, such as those provided in "featured snippets," have. These new means of influence are virtually invisible to people, which makes them especially dangerous. In 2016, the team that discovered SEME and SSE deployed a system to track and archive search results related to the US presidential election. The worldwide deployment of monitoring systems of this type will help to identify and expose high-tech forms of manipulation as they appear and hence to protect democracy and human freedom.

Speaker Biography: ROBERT EPSTEIN is Senior Research Psychologist at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology (AIBRT) and the former editor-in-chief of Psychology Today magazine. A Ph.D. of Harvard University, he has published 15 books on artificial intelligence, creativity, stress management, and other topics, as well as more than 250 scientific and popular articles, including scientific reports in Science, Nature, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). His 2015 report in PNAS entitled "The Search Engine Manipulation Effect (SEME) and Its Possible Impact on Elections" (http://bit.ly/1REqzEY) has been downloaded more than 90,000 times from PNAS's website and is ranked in the top 1 percent of all papers PNAS monitors in all the sciences. SEME (pronounced "seem") is one of the largest behavioral effects ever discovered, and it is nearly invisible as a source of influence, which makes it especially dangerous. Dr. Epstein's research suggests that SEME is currently determining the outcomes of upwards of 25 percent of the world's national elections and that it is affecting a wide range of opinions, not just voting preferences. In 2016, Dr. Epstein discovered that the search suggestions we see in Google's "autocomplete" can also be used to shift votes and opinions without people's knowledge - a manipulation he calls the "Search Suggestion Effect" (SSE). A thought leader in the behavioral sciences, Dr. Epstein is typically interviewed by journalists more than 50 times a year. You can learn more about his work at http://drrobertepstein.com or http://AIBRT.org.