THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Department of Information Systems, Business Statistics and Operations Management

IS SEMINAR ANNOUNCEMENT



How Social AI Reshapes Human Interactions and Relationships

by

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DATE	10 November 2026 (Tuesday)
TIME	9:30 - 11:00 am
VENUE	4/F Meeting Room (Room 4047), LSK Business Building

ABSTRACT

AI systems are evolving from functional tools into social actors. This talk focuses on social AI: LLM-powered AI systems that engage with people in public settings such as social media. These systems may have their own identities and respond to users' interaction requests, or act on behalf of human users to interact with others. As social AI increasingly participates in human interactions, it may reshape how people connect with both AI and one another. Social media platforms now deploy LLM-powered agents to help people manage relationships with their audiences, yet it remains unclear how this delegation affects user engagement. In this talk, I examine how such social AI agents shape user engagement. By showing how social AI generates socializing value, my research advances our understanding of AI as a social actor and offers implications for designing such systems.

BIOGRAPHY

Maggie Zhang is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Information Systems at the McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia. She received her Ph.D. in Communication and a Master's in Computer Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She also holds an M.Phil. from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a B.A. from Tsinghua University.

Her research examines how emerging technologies shape individual behavior, with a particular focus on how social AI influences human interactions and relationships. Drawing on large-scale observational data, econometric methods, and experiments, her research offers empirical insights to inform the effective implementation of emerging technologies.