

Number	LANCS-D4.3-RN-Machine-Rights	A-PI--
<b>Title</b>	Research Note (RN) for D4.3	
<b>Subtitle</b>	Issues in Focus : <b>Machine rights</b>	
PROBLEM	SOLUTION	
	Research Note	X Selected Annotation

Categories: | | |

### Summary:

This note addresses the rights and responsibilities of working machines and takes issue with confused understandings about how their rights and responsibilities can be legitimated.

## CONTEXT

The development of machine rights is contemplated to some degree outside the science fiction literature. Developments to that effect are likely, but not because machines become equal to humans in their decision-making capacities, sentience or other features typically ascribed to humans, but because they are put to work in places where they can easily be subjected to vandalism.

## FACTS

Robotic developments for assistance in homes, in nature, outer space and in public spaces, assume that robots will be left to do their job uninterrupted and harrass-free. They also assume that robots will be 'responsible' for doing the jobs ascribed to them, safely and reliably. In other words, questions of rights are bound up with questions of responsibilities, although, somewhat different conceptions of safety and reliability may apply to military robots because they are sent into enemy territories (see key readings, Asimov, 2004; Arras and Cerqui, 2005; Arkin, 2008; Capurro et al, 2006; Sparrow, 2009; Christensen et al, 2009; Murphy and Woods, 2009; Weng, 2009; Whitby, 2008; Dautenhahn, 2004).

## COMMENT

One key problem turns on the uncertainties associated with criteria for protecting and trusting machines in unstructured and semi-structured environments.

Another key problem turns on the issue of confused understandings of where a 'right' and a 'responsibility' might lie.

- Will there really be machine rights or simply owner / user rights?
- How are such rights upheld and protected if machines operate without supervision?
- Will there really be machine responsibilities or simply the responsibilities of those who own them, configure them, operate them, discard of them, and so on?