

**Prof.dr. George Fletcher**  
**June 16, 2023**



**INAUGURAL LECTURE**

# **What we talk about when we talk about data**

**TU/e**

**EINDHOVEN  
UNIVERSITY OF  
TECHNOLOGY**

**DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE**

## **INVITATION**

Prof.dr. George Fletcher was appointed full-time professor of Data Management Systems in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) on July 1, 2020. He will deliver his inaugural lecture on June 16, 2023.


The Executive Board of Eindhoven University of Technology cordially invites you to attend the inaugural lecture of Prof.dr. George Fletcher on **Friday, June 16, 2023, at 4.00 PM**. The public lecture will be delivered in the Blauwe Zaal of the Auditorium. You do not need to register.

The title of the lecture is

**'What we talk about when we talk about data'**

After the lecture, drinks will be served in the Senaatszaal.

All full professors are invited to join the cortège. If you want to join the cortège, please register in advance with the GA staff secretary which organizes all academic ceremonies, telephone +31 (0)40 247 25 15, e-mail: [GA.staffsecretary@tue.nl](mailto:GA.staffsecretary@tue.nl).



**Prof.dr.ir. F.P.T. Baaijens**

Rector Magnificus

After June 16, 2023, the text of the inaugural lecture will be available online at [www.tue.nl/lectures](http://www.tue.nl/lectures).

George Fletcher (PhD, Indiana University Bloomington) is professor and chair of the Database Group at TU/e. He studies and teaches data systems, increasingly with a focus on the human context of data, e.g., data systems education and knowledge graph management. He has held invited visiting academic appointments in the UK, France, Japan and Italy, and has taught and mentored undergraduate and graduate students in North America, Asia and Europe. In addition to being closely involved in the design and management of BSc, MSc and PhD programs in computer and data science, he has also served in the industry-academia Linked Data Benchmark Council and as an executive board member of the EDBT Association, the leading international scientific organization of Europe for promoting and supporting research and progress in data management systems.

### **About the lecture**

What is data? The question seems so simple given how much we have talked about data over the past decades, from big data to data science, from data-driven science, humanities and industry to data intelligence. In this lecture we will deep-dive together into how we approach this question in the research field of data management systems, highlighting that there are no easy and simple answers. We will see that, fundamentally, data is inextricably intertwined in people and what we do together with and through data. I will show that despite half a century of research, the data systems community has just begun to scratch the surface of understanding what it would mean to place people in the center of our investigations. Such insights are critically needed, as they will guide us in how we might build better data systems for the future. This is vitally important work which will require us to rethink basic tenets of data systems research and education towards reimagining data systems in society. In closing, I will outline where we are going in Eindhoven in putting people in the center and present a call for participation in the emerging social turn in the study of data systems.

**Visiting address** Auditorium, Building 1, Groene Loper, Eindhoven

**Navigation address** De Zaaie, Eindhoven, [www.tue.nl/map](http://www.tue.nl/map)