In every era of communications technology – whether print, radio, television, or Internet – some form of government censorship follows to regulate the medium and its messages. Today we are seeing the phenomenon of “machine speech” enhanced by the development of sophisticated artificial intelligence. Ronald K. L. Collins and David M. Skover argue that the First Amendment must provide defenses and justifications for covering and protecting robotic expression. It is irrelevant that a robot is not human and cannot have intentions; what matters is that a human experiences robotic speech as meaningful. This is the constitutional recognition of “intentionless free speech” at the interface of the robot and receiver. Robotica is the first book to develop the legal arguments for these purposes. Aimed at law and communication scholars, lawyers, and free speech activists, this work explores important new problems and solutions at the interface of law and technology.

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About the Authors

Ronald K. L. Collins is the Harold S. Shefelman Scholar at the University of Washington Law School. Before coming to the law school, Collins served as a law clerk to Justice Hans A. Linde on the Oregon Supreme Court, a Supreme Court Fellow under Chief Justice Warren Burger, and a scholar at the Washington, DC, office of the Newseum’s First Amendment Center.

Collins has written constitutional briefs that were submitted to the Supreme Court and various other federal and state high courts. In addition to the books that he coauthored with David Skover, he is the editor of Oliver Wendell Holmes: A Free Speech Reader (2010) and coauthor with Sam Chaltain of We Must Not Be Afraid to Be Free (2011). His last solo book was Nuanced Absolutism: Floyd Abrams and the First Amendment (2013). Collins is the book editor of SCOTUSblog and writes a weekly blog (First Amendment News), which appears on the Concurring Opinions website.

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Together, Collins and Skover have authored The Death of Discourse (1996 and 2005), The Trials of Lenny Bruce: The Fall & Rise of an American Icon (2002 and
About the Authors

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About the Commentators

Bruce E. H. Johnson is a partner at Davis Wright Tremaine in Seattle, Washington. He is a veteran litigator who represents information industry clients on issues involving media and communications law as well as technology and intellectual property matters. His expertise includes advising on First Amendment law issues, particularly involving commercial speech, commercial transactions, and consumer rights. Mr. Johnson is the author of Washington’s Reporter’s Shield Law enacted in 2007, and Washington’s Uniform Correction or Clarification of Defamation Act enacted in 2013. Mr. Johnson is the coauthor with Steven G. Brody of Advertising and Commercial Speech: A First Amendment Guide (2nd edn., 2004).

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Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

– Albert Schweitzer

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