

J

f

Digital Ethics by Futurist Gerd Leonhard

January 29 · Issue #2 · View online Futurist Gerd Leonhard's latest findings from the intersection of humanity and technology, focusing on Digital Ethics i.e. the ethics of exponential technological change and related Technology/Humanity topics

This newsletter is a highly curated weekly collection of topics and opinions that bring additional nuance to the **Digital Ethics** conversation. I am always interested in your opinion so please feel free to ping me anytime with comments or feedback.

Live long and prosper!

Futurist, Humanist, Author and Keynote Speaker Gerd Leonhard Zurich / Switzerland or on the road

This newsletter is co-created by Futures Agency Curator Peter Van Check out my best-selling book 'Technology vs Humanity' for more context, now available in 10+ languages

Introduction

Welcome to the second issue of my Digital Ethics Newsletter, and a special thank-you to the folks who have already subscribed for the first issue! We are publishing this newsletter every Tuesday, going forward. If you enjoy the content presented here, please feel free to share it on social media (see links below).

7 weeks ago Gartner Research declared Digital Ethics (a meme that is presented in my book Technology vs Humanity) as the #1 topic for 2019, Many organisations, technology and ICT companies are now jumping on this topic, and it Digital Ethics turned out to be a key topic at WEF in Davos, as well (check out this WEF debate on Al).

The future is no longer just something that may happen tomorrow, the future is something that is already happening today but we just didn't pay attention! (Gerd Leonhard, 2016)

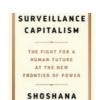


Technology vs Humanity - The Future is already here. Barcelona 2017

Highlights

Thieves of Experience: How Google and Facebook Corrupted Capitalism - LA Review of **Books** LAREVIEWOFBOOKS.ORG - Share

Is AI a danger to humanity? - Well... It's



Excellent book review by Nicholas Carr of Shoshana Zuboff's "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism". Some great quotes throughout in this review, such as this one, about Google:

"And so the company began to deploy its stores of behavioural data not for the benefit of users but to aid advertisers – and to juice its own profits. Surveillance capitalism had arrived."

In a fascinating build up of his argument, Carr lands on the essence of his review and criticism:

"Behaviour modification is the thread that ties today's technologies. What the industries of the future will seek to manufacture is the self."

complicated!			(Ð
WWW.THEHINDU.COM - Share	9.8		ë
In an interesting display of "Yes, No, It's complicated", three	-	.6 \$ 5.	-
Indian researchers reflect on whether AI is a danger for			
humanity. Check out a summary of this reflection in this			
recent blog post			



My latest film: We need to talk about AI - almost 500K views already!

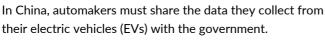
The AI Wars Have Not Even Begun WADHWA.COM - Share

Vivek Wadhwa is a like-minded thinker and Distinguished Fellow at Harvard Law School. In this post, he talks about superiority of human decision making versus AI (this is a key point I talk about a lot, as well: androrithms vs algorithms)



"Humans can deal with uncertainty and doubt; AI cannot. Google's Waymo self-driving cars have collectively driven over 9 million miles. yet are nowhere near ready for release. Tesla's Autopilot, after gathering 1.5 billion miles' worth of data, won't even stop at traffic lights"

Surveillance, EVs and the ethics of tech OZ.COM - Share





The data collected includes location, battery performance, charging time, and a charging heat map. A single EV on the road in China can provide as many as 61 data points to the platform.

Even more worrying is that the automakers sharing information with the government aren't just Chinese ones-global brands like Volkswagen, Nissan, and Tesla, are also part of the program.

Challenges

WWW.FUTURISTGERD.COM - Share

The World Is Choking on Digital Pollution?

In the slipstream of the digital exhaust, the world is now choking on digital pollution. Following "data as the new oil", we now also have 'negative externalities' in the form of data pollution. Read this rather grim but relevant article via the Washington Monthly. I called this Digital Obesity in 2014

- "The drive for profits and market dominance is instilled in artificial
- intelligence systems that aren't wired to ask why. But we aren't machines; we can ask why. We must confront how these technologies work, and evaluate the consequences and costs for us and other parts of our society."

After greenwashing, is "machine-washing" next? WWW.BOSTONGLOBE.COM - Share



In the 70's, 'big oil' launched massive ad campaigns portraying themselves as 'friends of the earth', later dubbed as "greenwashing." Today's 'big internet' companies are also highly skilled at dressing up their real agenda...

"AI, which is still emerging, is simply too powerful a force to entrust entirely to self-interested businesses. So beware of machinewashing. The only way to ensure that today's technologies evolve in a healthy direction is through thoughtful, truly independent oversight."

Davos 2019: The real agenda is to get rid of human workers





As a follow-up of the previous newsletter entry on machinewashing, the elites at the Davos Promenade are using a long list of euphemisms to disguise their real agenda: digital transformation is corporate lingo for "Why can't we do it with 1 percent of the people we have?". You got that right: not the usual 5-10% reduction of workforce, but a slashing of 99%!

In public, executives wring their hands over automation's negative consequences for workers. In private, they talk about how they are racing to automate their own work forces to stay ahead of the competition, with little regard for the impact on workers.



"If we are just data, then this may be our logical destination"

Technology

CRISPR must be scrutinised and regulated MEDIUM.COM - Share



It's not only AI that needs digital ethics. CRISPR is another technology that should be subject to scrutiny. Two ways of looking at this technology. One rather positive overview of what is possible today. But Vint Cerf already sends out his warning:

"All of this will bring up serious issues as to how we see ourselves - and behave – as a species. While the creation of multicellular organisms that are capable of sexual reproduction is still a long way off, in 2019 we will need to begin a serious debate about whether artificially evolved humans are our future, and if we should put an end to these experiments before it is too late."

This is not only about augmented humans but all sorts of new synthetic forms of life. Check out this article about the top biotech and medicine advances to expect in 2019. I found the concept of gene drives particularly worrying. Now the targeted population are mosquitos, what if they would target a human minority?

Gene drives, on the other hand, have the power to wipe out entire species.

Crypto has an ethics problem

MEDIUM.COM - Share



Super critical post by Michael K. Spencer on everything that smells cryptocurrencies. "Human Leadership is the Bar, Consensus is the Vice", and goes on:

Don't talk to me about decentralization, if your community was built by deceit. If your tribe is built on the backs of the profiteering of a few at the top. That's not blockchain, that's corrupt human nature and greed at work.

A Community has no Value if it's based on Fraud

"Crypto has an ethics problem and it's making a mockery of

Industries

decentralization"

Amazon falls to 5th place for ethics WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM - Share

Measure what matters. When ethics are part of the equation, super start Amazon drops to fifth place in customer satisfaction poll.

Amazon did not feature in the top 10 for ethics, which was added for the first time, although it did in two other areas. In a score out of 10 for doing the right thing, in terms of its business practices and impact on employees and society, it scored seven.



My latest video on Digital Ethics, AI, Humanity and Brands

The Case for CRISPR Babies - or not? MEDIUM.COM - Share

In November 2018, a Rubicon was crossed in biomedical science. Chinese researcher He Jiankui announced he had



created the first "CRISPR babies" - infants whose genomes were edited before they were born.

Scientists have called for a moratorium on editing the genome of human embryos until the methods are perfected and the moral

implications – including the fear of "designer babies" – are hashed out. Although it is clear that for some families with severe genetic disorders, the

experiment offers hope, I join the scientist in their call for some sort of moratorium.

"Do we want what we can do? If someone wants it, can it be stopped?"

Organizations

World Economic Forum says "It's time to stop talking about ethics in AI and start doing it" WWW.WEFORUM.ORG - Share



It is that time of the year again, when the elites are gathering in Davos for the annual WEF Summit. Besides climate change, digital ethics seems high on the agenda. In this post,

Dharmesh Syal, Chief Technology Officer, BCG Digital Ventures, lists 3 strategies

- 1. Bring in a human in sensitive scenarios 2. Put safeguards in place so machines can self-correct
- 3. Create an ethics code

However, the suggested recommendations for creating such ethics code fall short. They are based on an old perception that "you are the product" into today's situation where "you are the territory (for AI warfare)".

GSMA: Forty CEOs Back Launch of Digital Declaration at Davos (better late than never) WWW.BUSINESSWIRE.COM - Share



The GSMA launched its 'Digital Declaration' at the World Economic Forum in Davos. The declaration captures key principles that serve as a guide. This is great news: it shows Gerd's suggestion for what he's calls the Digital Ethics Council is timely.

"A new form of responsible leadership is needed to successfully navigate this era. We are on the cusp of the 5G era, which will spark exciting new possibilities for consumers and promises to transform the shape of virtually every business. In the face of this disruption, those that embrace the principles of the Digital Declaration will strive for business success in ways that seek a better future for their consumers and societies. Those that do not change can expect to suffer increasing scrutiny from shareholders, regulators and consumers," he added."



Look out for a new paper on this topic, penned by Gerd, soon!

Reports/Whitepapers

14 Working Groups on AI Ethics at IEEE

ETHICSINACTION.IEEE.ORG - Share Our good friend John Havens at IEEE just sent out a call for your participation in one of the 14 Standard Working Groups to move AI Ethics forward. They're free and over 750 global participants are already involved. Move "From Principles to Practice" and join. You're needed. @IEEESA

People

TIME.COM – Share

It's Time for Action on Privacy, Says Apple's CEO **Tim Cook**

Like in his 2018 address to the European Commission, Tim Cook once again takes the lead on privacy, and lays out four principles to guide legislation:

"First, the right to have personal data minimized. Companies should challenge themselves to strip identifying information from customer data or avoid collecting it in the first place. Second, the *right to knowledge*-to know what data is being collected and why. Third, the right to access. Companies should make it easy for you to access, correct and delete your personal data. And fourth, the right to data security, without which trust is impossible."

"Technology has the potential to keep changing the world for the better, but it will never achieve that potential without the full faith and confidence of the people who use it."

Davos 2019: George Soros comments on China and Al QZ.COM - Share

The billionaire investor said he's particularly concerned about China's social credit system, the dystopian project that would grade people's actions and habits, with rights potentially deducted for bad behaviour.

"Soros said he wanted to "call attention to the mortal danger facing open societies from the instruments of control that machine learning and artificial intelligence can put in the hands of repressive regimes.""

Snippet of the week

Why 'upgrading' humanity is a transhumanist myth (says Douglas Rushkoff) BIGTHINK.COM - Share

We're big fans of @rushkoff here at #DigitalEthics. He is in the middle of his book launch tour, and snippet after snippet is hitting the attention fan. Who is hubristic? The ones who

claim they can upload our brain to chips, or the ones who claim we are weird? "Human beings are still special. We're weird. We're quirky. We've got David Lynch movies and weird yoga positions and stuff we don't understand, and we're ambiguous and weird and quirky. You know, we deserve a place in the digital future. And he said, oh, Rushkoff, you're just saying that because you're human. As if it's hubris, right?"

Podcasts

version is here

Interview with Futurist Keynote Speaker Gerd Leonhard at SIBOS 2016, Digital Ethics and Technology - still very timely SOUNDCLOUD.COM - Share



grading" humanit

shumanist myth

This interview covers a wide range of topics related to Gerd Leonhard's book 'Technology vs Humanity', including privacy, artificial intelligence, the end of dying, digital ethics, the future of money, the United States of Europe, cyber-security, autonomous vehicles and much more. Youtube

Meme of the week

Humanity is already going cyborg...? WWW.LINKEDIN.COM - Share

In "Gradually, Then Suddenly" (a term frequently used by Gerd





ETHICS · N·ACTION



as well) Tim O'Reilly gives an excellent overview of disruptive technologies and opens with:

"The most important trend for readers of this newsletter to focus on is the development of new kinds of partnership between human and machine."



Exponential game changers and the Singularity: "Gradually, then suddenly..."

We need a Digital Ethics Council. Locally, nationally and internationally!

Digital ethics are evolving into a burning, un-ignorable issue for every individual and organization. The most basic privileges we once took for granted, such as freedom of choice in consumption and independent, 'free will' in lifestyle, could become vestigial echoes or the preserves of ultra high-net-worth individuals. It's time for action. We need to talk about the Digital Ethics Council!



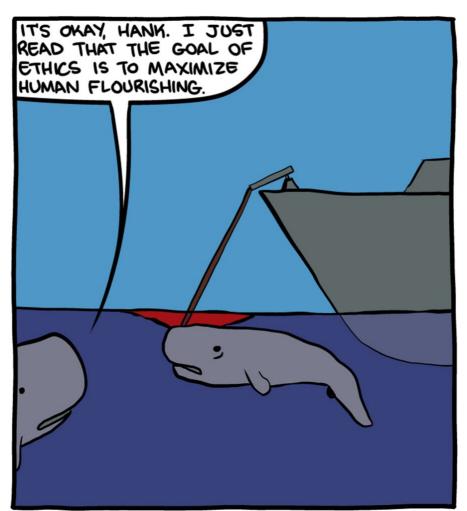
A Global Digital Ethics Council-- Gerd comments

Smiley

Should I grow a beard? A philosopher considers the ethics of facial hair OZ.COM - Share



"We ought to respect the beautiful and create it where possible: if one can grow beautiful facial hair, one should, as it has moral worth."



Humans and wales flourishing together in ethical waters - By Zack Weinersmith

End note

Please share your feedback.

The Digital Ethics (DE) newsletter will remain free of charge. If you are reading it and value it, I wouldn't mind if you gave my digest some love through <u>Twitter</u> :-) Or just forward it to a friend.

Warm regards,

Gerd Leonhard, Futurist, Keynote Speaker, Author, CEO The Futures **Agency**

Contact: @gleonhard or (new!) @ethics4digital

LinkedIn

Videos from my talks: <u>Gerdtube.com</u>

My main website: Futuristgerd.com

My book: Technology vs Humanity

Did you enjoy this issue?



If you don't want these updates anymore, please unsubscribe here If you were forwarded this newsletter and you like it, you can subscribe here

Powered by Revue

The Futures Agency, Zurich, Switzerland