

Professors World Peace Academy: Hopes and Dangers - Future Of Technology

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When Is Tech Good, When Is Tech Bad

The punchline is always this: To the extent that humans are impulsively driven by compassion and concern for others and for the good of the whole there is not a single prospective technological or digital breakthrough that bodes ill in its own right. To the extent that humans are impulsively driven for self-gain with others and the good of the whole as expendable in the equation, even the most primitive industrial/technological development is to be feared.

This view is simple, fundamental, and universal. For example, if humans were fixed in an inescapable makeup characterized by care and compassion, the development of an exoskeletal, indestructible, AI-controlled, military robot that could anticipate my movements up to 4 miles away, and morph to look just like my loving grandmother could be a perfectly wonderful development for the good of humankind. On the other hand, if humans cannot be elevated above the

grotesque makeup in which others and the greater good are expendable in the pursuit of selfish gain, then the invention of a fork is a dangerous, even horrifying thing.

Two Bases To Assess Tech - Human Purpose, And Human Nature

The existence of humans is intentional, not random. This starting point establishes for me two bases for assessing technological progress: How does technological/digital development relate to

Human purpose
Human nature?

Human Purpose

These are the basis for assessing anything, the purpose, and the nature of the agent. This is the same for whether we assess CRISPR gene editing, or if I turn left or right at a street light. The question in both cases is: Does this action serve our purpose? This tells us if the matter in question is good or bad. It simply depends on what we are trying to do (our purpose). If our purpose is to get to our Mom's house, then turning left at the light is a very bad thing to do. If the development of CRISPR gene editing is to elevate dignity for honorable people it is good. If it is to advance the lusts of a demonic corporation, or the career of an ego-insane, "medical" monster, then likewise breakthroughs in CRISPR gene editing are worrisome.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to know what human purpose is. Only religious and spiritual systems recommend what that might be.

Human Nature

The second basis for assessing things (including digital and technological advances) relates to human nature. This is more accessible. We can ask: Does the action comport with our nature?

For simplicity, I've created a limited list of what humans desire (human nature):

Original Desires

- To love and be loved
- Privacy (personal sovereignty)
- To be safe and healthy
- Freedom and the means to create (creativity can be in several areas)
- Ingenuity
- Artistic expression
- Sports and leisure, physical and athletic experience

Perverse and Broken Desires
Pursuit of and addiction to power
Willingness to indulge in conflict

Three Bases To Assess

In sum then, analyzing and assessing technological and digital development by the year 2035 should move along three lines of measure:

1. Does the breakthrough serve the reason why humans exist (human purpose)
2. Which part of human nature does the breakthrough relate to?
3. Can the technology have built-in protections to prevent perfectly exciting, wonderful breakthroughs from becoming a dark and malign force over our lives and human history?

Coming Technological And Digital Developments By 2035

All technology coming in the next 15 years sits on a two-edged sword according to measures for the analysis described above.

Likely Benign - Little Danger

Some upcoming breakthroughs are merely exciting, such as open-air gesture technology, prosthetics with a sense of touch, printed food, printed organs, space tourism, self-driving vehicles, and much more.

Medium Danger

Some coming digital and tech breakthroughs have medium levels of concern for social or ethical implications, such as hybrid reality environments, tactile holograms, domestic service and workplace robots, quantum-encrypted information, biotechnology, and nano-technology, again, and much more.

Dangerous - Great Care Needed

Finally, there is a category of coming developments that should be put in the high-concern category. These include BCI and brain-implant technology, genome editing, cloning, selective breeding, genetic engineering, artificial general intelligence (AGI), deep fakes, people hacking, clumsy efforts to fix the environment through potentially risky geoengineering, CRISPR gene editing, and again many others.

Applying the threefold bases for assessing the benefits and dangers of technological advances in our time can be done rigorously, systematically, and extensively on any item listed here as pending digital and tech developments. They are listed here on a spectrum from less worrisome to potentially devastating.

But it is not the technology itself that marks it as hopeful or dystopic. This divergence is independent of the inherent quality of the precise technology itself. It is tied to the maturation of human divinity and ideal human nature.