



# Being Humane in a Digital World

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# DIGITAL THOUGHT

23 September 2019  
University of Turin

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

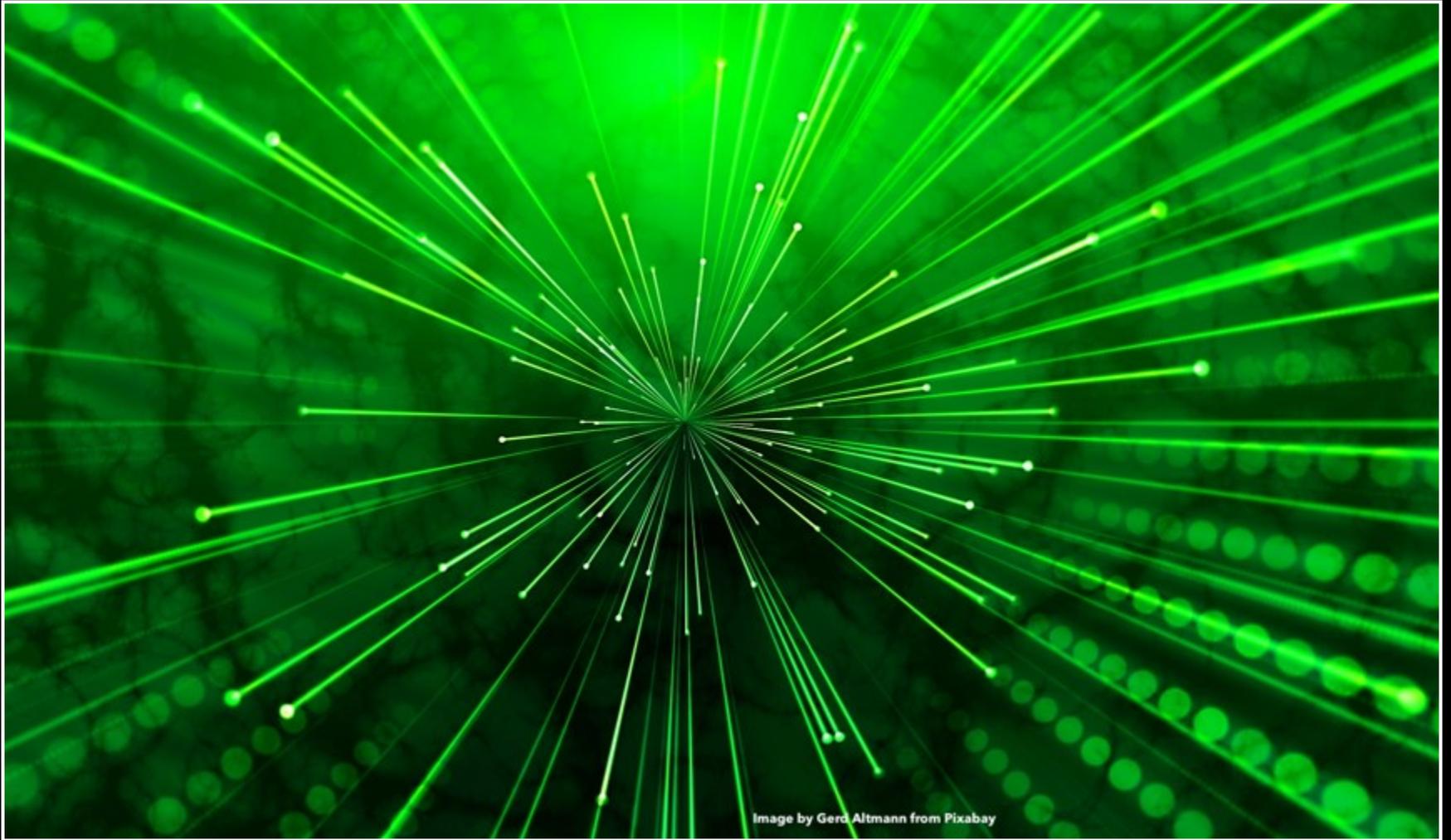


FROM MAP TO APP  
1983-2019

# Setting the argument: Tools are tools but human beings are ends and not means

My key argument is that human beings are by nature technological beings. That is, they use their knowledge to create tools they can use to solve their problems, meet their needs, and achieve their desires. Human beings are also narrative beings. They use their language to share information, make sense of things, and teach each other what they have learned. But to be humane means more than just acquiring information, sharing it and creating tools. Being humane means to understand the consequences of the action we take with the tools we create. It means to exercise judgement and in doing so to place ourselves as the other, to feel sympathy and empathy.

The question for every one of us, but more so for us as teachers and for universities, is how to prepare our future generations for a world where machines and technology will think for them. Our task is not just to equip students with technology, but with knowledge and wisdom.



The digital-techno explosion

**THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE 'WE ARE NOT  
SURE YET', AND THE UGLY**

# Artificial intelligence: improving healthcare

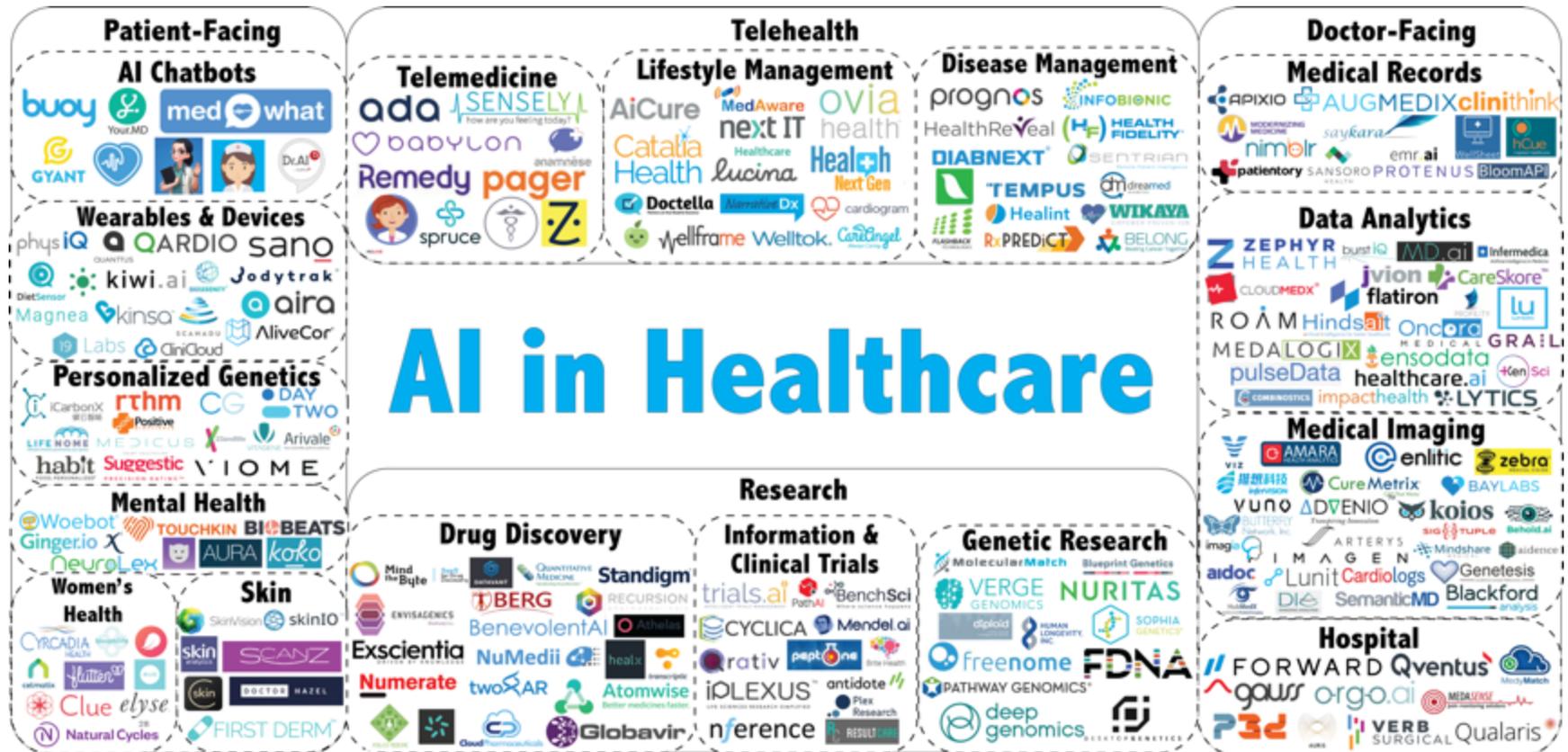


Image from: [Kuo, E. AI in healthcare: industry landscape](#) - December 11, 2017

The solution to  
privacy, safe  
finance and  
accountable  
procurement?

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## Why 2019 May Become The Year Of Enterprise Blockchain



**Andrew Arnold** Former Contributor ©  
Under 30



GETTY

Last year, **95% of companies** across different industries were investing in blockchain tech projects. In 2019, those pilot projects are finally moving from the test stage to the end users. Goldman Sachs, a former vocal skeptic of the blockchain, has launched a crypto-investing product for their clients in the end of last year. Beyond **investing and finance**, major blockchain projects have been released in several other industries including **cybersecurity, healthcare and agriculture**.

[Forbes, February 21, 2019](#)



Dr Cristina Devecchi  
Ali Hadawi CBE  
Dr Scott Turner  
Prof Ale Armellini  
Prof Ian Brooks  
Barbara Mellish  
VC Prof Nick Petford  
Prof Olinga Ta'eed

# Blockchain educational passport

## Blockchain Education Passport

Decentralised Learning Ledger (DLL)

# Or fintech and the loss of money control?

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[The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk)

# Bias

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The viral selfie app ImageNet Roulette seemed fun - until it called me a racist slur  
*Julia Carrie Wong*



During a strange week for Asian Americans, the app - which is part of an art project - achieved its aim by underscoring exactly what's wrong with artificial intelligence



▲ Viral selfie apps 'cater to the part of us that, aware of how much time we spend looking at screens, starts to wonder what the screens see back - a shortcut to selfie-awareness'. Photograph: Jae C Hong/AP

[The Guardian](#), 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## 'Disastrous' lack of diversity in AI industry perpetuates bias, study finds

Report says an overwhelmingly white and male field has reached 'a moment of reckoning' over discriminatory systems

San Francisco

11:47 BST

877



▲ Biased AI systems can be largely attributed to the lack of diversity among those who design and build them, the report said. Photograph: Jens Schlüter/EPA

Lack of diversity in the artificial intelligence field has reached “a moment of reckoning”, according to new findings published by a New York University research center. A “diversity disaster” has contributed to flawed systems that perpetuate gender and racial biases found the survey, published by the AI Now Institute, of more than 150 studies and reports.

The AI  
'diversity  
disaster'



Technology  
addiction

—  
Dependency,  
(over)-reliance

# Children digital technology – Google search

## Top stories



**BBC launches 'digital wellbeing' Own It app for children**

**BBC** · 1 day ago



**Digital Parents: How Connectivity Has Improved The Way We Bring Up Children**

**HuffPost UK** · 7 hours ago



**YouTube's fine and child safety online**

**The Guardian** · 1 day ago

→ [More for children digital technology](#)

[717,000,000 results \(0.52 seconds\)](#)

# Information, disinformation, misinformation and just lies



This Analysis Shows How Viral Fake ...  
buzzfeednews.com



Explained: What is Fake news? | Soci...  
webwise.ie



Real Fake News: Activists Circulate ...  
npr.org



The Fake News Stories That Reeled In ...  
rferl.org



Denzel Washington hit by Face...  
bbc.com



5 important stories that aren't fake ...  
pbs.org



Fake Casino Using Fake News...  
cherylgallant.com



Fake news is a convenient scapegoat ...  
vox.com



Fake CNN Website Taken Offli...  
wired.com



How advertisers are being exploited by ...  
consultancy.com

Images from 'Fake news articles' [Google search](#)

And the  
uglier

P A R E N T A L  
**ADVISORY**  
E X P L I C I T C O N T E N T

Warning Adult Content Background ...  
[depositphotos.com](https://depositphotos.com)

WILLIAM CRABET BUSINESS 07.13.2018 09:00 AM

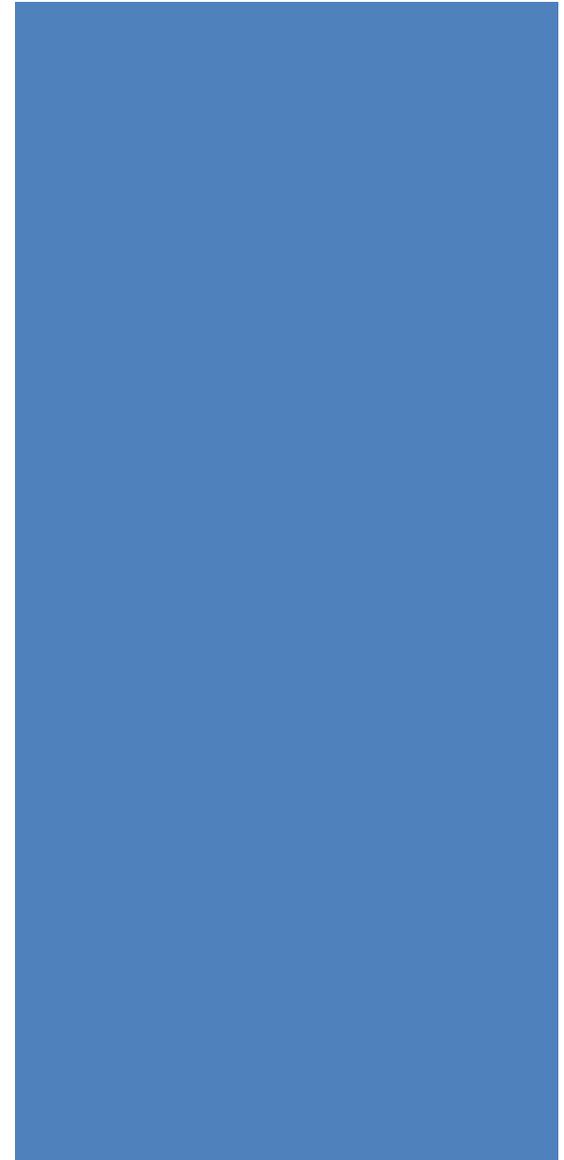
## The Toxic Potential of YouTube's Feedback Loop

Opinion: I worked on AI for YouTube's "recommended for you" feature. We underestimated how the algorithms could go terribly wrong.



ELINA LAEY, BETTY BRADIS

- <https://www.wired.com/story/the-toxic-potential-of-youtubes-feedback-loop/?verso=true>





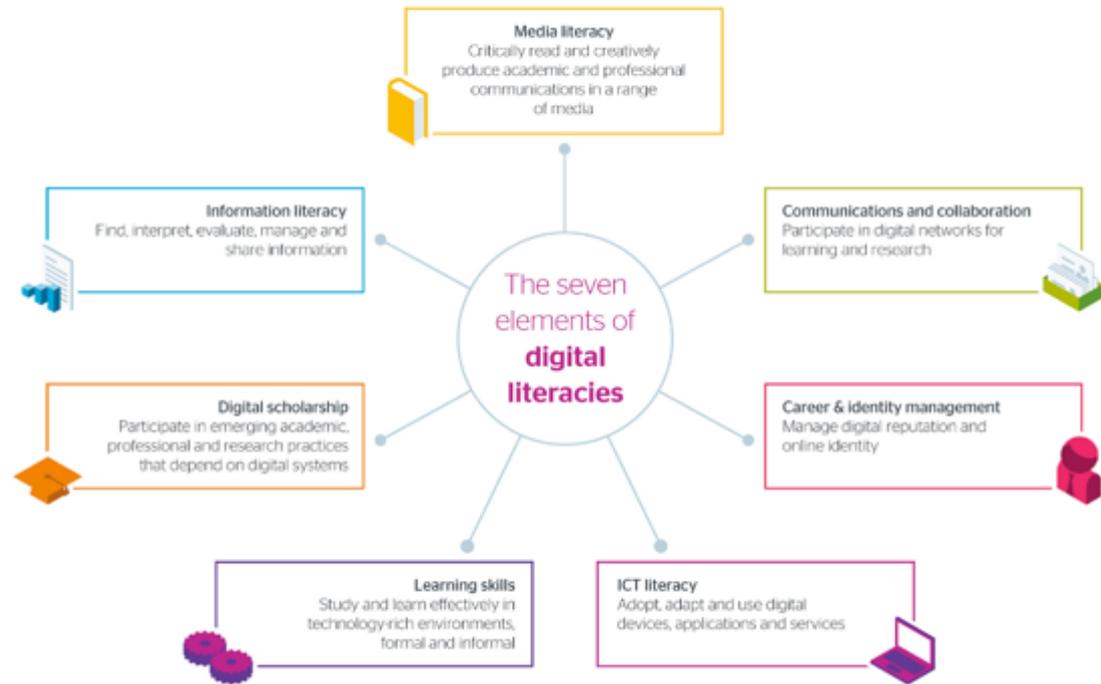
# **BEING HUMAN IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

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Dr Frankenstein or the limits of  
'conoscenza'

... being human is being able to exercise judgement based on knowing. In the western tradition this means to make knowledge informed decisions. It is about having *conoscenza*, which is difficult to translate in English but which roughly equates with 'knowledge of the facts', know what and know how. As human beings it is our curiosity, insatiable thirst for knowing, for pushing the boundaries and limits of what we know that has been the trademark of our evolution and development. Deep down in each one of us lies a Dr Frankenstein, a 'mad' scientist pushing the boundaries of the known and acting as a Creator. We all know what the consequences of such endeavour can be. We can, despite all good intentions, create monsters.

## Enabling digital literacy



- This is about the effective use of technology for the purpose of learning and future work
- We need to develop DL in ourselves and in our students
- Not just at HE level but starting from primary schools
- <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/digital-literacies>
- <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/developing-digital-literacies>

# Digital citizenship

## 9 Elements of Digital Citizenship



<https://francisjimtuscano.com/2017/10/19/why-digital-citizenship-matters/>

Rescuing the Frankenstein  
monster: having a  
'coscienza'

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# BEING HUMANE IN A DIGITAL WORLD



If we are, as I argued before, both the creators of new technology and the creations of the technology, are we also monsters? In answering this question, I would like to make you reflect on the 'humanity' that lurks within the monster. Not unlike other monsters, famously the cyborg in Blade Runner, monsters are more than what meets the eye. There is in them a quality of being human which transcends just knowing facts. It transcends the technicality of having a brain, transplanted maybe. Rather, the monsters in my examples, know that they are and therefore have both *conoscenza* and *coscienza*. They have knowledge and conscience.

Being **humane** therefore is not just about knowing, but about being aware of ourselves knowing and using this knowledge with a view to act upon it with judgment. It is about shedding the value laden notion of value-free. It is about acting with wisdom, that is, with a sense of deep responsibility towards ourselves, others and the planet we all live in. It is about designing and using technology which is not just effective and efficient, but above all fair and just.

# Digital ethics: science with conscience

In a world where we are made to believe that science and technology can solve our problems with objective impartiality, we need to be aware more than ever that there lies the greatest challenge. If we are the creators, our creations will be imperfect as we are. There would be human creations. But to be humane, we need to have more than just knowledge. We need to have a conscience. To do this we need to do more than just teach digital literacy and digital citizenship.

Rather, we need to teach ethics, **digital ethics**, and embed ethical requirements as part of science courses. We need to embed humanity and the humanities in the teaching of science and science in the teaching of humanities. Away with reductivist over-specialisation at a younger and younger age, we have the opportunity to start a new 'humanism' to develop a stronger, fairer view of what it means to be humane in the new digital world.

ANY  
QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

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