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ASIA EDITION

EmTech Asia 2020 explores ethics of Artificial Intelligence

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The global AI agenda examines the potential for companies across industries to share data in new ways that result in value for businesses and consumers.



EmTech Asia conference is all set to be held on 25-26 February 2020 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre in Singapore.

EmTech Asia 2020, a conference co-organised by MIT Technology Review and Koelnmesse, tackles the granular issues that the tech community is facing everywhere. Key researchers and industry figureheads will discuss AI, its potential impact on society, and address questions of ethics and AI.

EmTech Asia speaker Toby Walsh, Scientia Professor of Artificial Intelligence at Technical University Berlin and University of New South Wales says, “We’ve seen many examples of technology companies behaving in ways that challenge us. But what is it about AI that is different than other technologies which have touched our lives in the past? What old ethical issues does AI put on steroids? And what new ethical issues does AI bring to the table for the first time?”

At the conference, Professor Walsh will examine a range of technological challenges from autonomous cars through predictive analytics to killer robots that may present ethical challenges.

Issues of ethics around AI calls into question the design of intelligent systems, as machines increasingly make decisions on behalf of humans. Roland Chin, President and Vice-chancellor of Hong Kong Baptist University believes that the design of intelligent systems and relevant decision-making processes needs to align with accepted moral values and ethical principles.

“The challenge is not just to code fixed ethical values into intelligent systems but also to operationalise diverse and evolving ethical values across cultures and nations. Bottom-up approaches seek the shared ethical values of the crowd by involving many people to arrive at accepted decisions about ethical dilemmas, whereas top-down approaches rely on philosophers to develop principles from humankind’s collective ethical wisdom amassed over generations and across cultures,” he says.

During his presentation, Professor Chin will call for a holistic approach; integrative learning in ethical awareness and competences, instead of treating ethics as an add-on subject in STEM programs.

While AI can be used for good, it also has a dark side.

Co-author of *Ghost Work, How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a Global Underclass*, Mary L. Gray, Principal Researcher at Microsoft Research, questions the good of AI. At EmTech Asia, she will discuss how, although AI has been heralded as a salve for much of the web’s ills and a revolutionary tool for humankind, it’s not a panacea, and that in reality, there are armies

of human labourers being used by tech companies to step in when AI doesn't work. She poses the question, "What will the future of this workforce be, and how can labour laws adapt to meet changing needs?".

It is important that the development of AI creates new opportunities to improve the lives of people around the world. Speaker Peter Norvig, Director of Research, Google Inc. says that the subject is also raising new questions about the best way to build fairness into these systems. At EmTech Asia, Peter will explore these issues and outline what AI scientists can do to build fairer AI systems.

Overview of AI

Claire Beatty, Editorial Director, MIT Technology Review Insights will present the latest trends in AI and the outlook for Corporate Data Alliances at EmTech Asia.

Along with insights into trends in global AI adoption, focusing on the leading use cases, challenges, and risks involved, Claire will also present the results of a survey of 1,000 business leaders worldwide, "The global AI agenda" examines the potential for companies across industries to share data in new ways that result in value for businesses and consumers.

Erin Bradner, Director, Robotics Lab, Autodesk will outline technology trends expected to shape how industrial robots will look and operate in the future. These trends include machine learning, modular robotics, closed-loop control, new user interfaces, and advanced computer simulation. She draws on research from academia and industry to help us understand why robots will become increasingly more adaptable, flexible, and interconnected.