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Abstract



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Is Ethics Evaporating in the Cyber Era?

The first paragraph provides a quick insight on the humanistic approach to cyber technologies starting from the early debate about the new class of objects from the ontological standpoint, the early approach to cyber ethical issues to include the pervasive use of cyber devices and technologies including the evolving use of intelligent algorithms and machine learning to manage companies and support governments. Follows a paragraph summarising the key aspects of The UNESCO IFAP Code of Ethics for the Information Society and related follow ups.

The following paragraphs analyse the side effects of tangible and intangible impacts of cyber technologies with specific focus on the oversupply of information (info-obesity), resulting in its devaluation and loss of trust to professional media; monopolization in the field of communication, information and digital technologies (mainstream communication, freedom of speech); the transformation of the Internet from a space for the free exchange of ideas into a tool for supervision, management and control (the betrayal of IT revolution). Internet companies turned into digital giants, moving from digital platforms to digital private ecosystems and annexing not only cyberspace, but also real sector industries (monopoly and dominant position); the massive decrease in the level of critical thinking and the emergence of waves of information epidemics of national and global levels (mainstream communication, limited contraposition, censorship, fake news); post-truth in its heyday, with public perception shaped more by means of addressing feelings and personal opinion rather than actual facts, with fakes, clickbaits, hypes and other tools introduced to form post-reality in the political and media culture; changing the system of values – with the “new” normal (semantic shifts, etc) off course politically correct, new ethics putting personal free will and freedom of choice under question; traditional cultural regulators of social relations and processes being displaced by automated social algorithms (increasing role of algorithms and ML); blurring the borders between the real and the digital world, wide spread of simplified virtual mock-ups and simulacra; mass collection of data for managing people’s behaviour (evaporation of privacy, data protection), formation of an appropriate economic imperative to direct the development for business, society and states; increasing the level of conflict in society (between individuals and groups – haters, discrimination) and between states (XXI Century warfare, soft concerns).

Brief Bio :

Alfredo M. Ronchi (M) – expert/advisor in e-Services, active member of the WSIS since 2003, Secretary General of the MEDICI Framework of Cooperation, and MEDICI delegate at UNESCO IFAP. Head of the JRC S2D2 (ICTs 4 Safety & Security). Mr Ronchi is member of the following Boards of Directors: Global Forum, World Summit Award, European Youth Award, European Education New Society Association, Fondazione Italiana Nuove Comunicazioni. Member of the Keio University NoE. Ronchi is appointed as an expert by: European Commission, Council of Europe, Italian Association of Banks, National Research Council. National and international project coordinator. He cooperated as organizer or programme chair in W3C, ACM, IEEE conferences. Author/contributor of more than 400 papers and various books on: e-Services e-Culture, IPR, e-Government, e-Health, and e-Learning. Mr. Ronchi is a professor – Engineering Faculty, Politecnico di Milano.