

Transcript



Title: Data, technology, systems and transformation (Society 4.0 Forum)

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Nick spoke about the need for humanity to be the core focus of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. He spoke of three myths that should always be challenged.

(1) Technological determinism - technology is not determining society, rather humans are making the technology.

(2) technology is overwhelming and we must either choose to accept it or reject it. We have the capacity to open conversation and question technology.

(3) technology is a value-neutral tool. Technologies are political and value-laden.

Nick believes now is the time to bring social science research, reflective practice, community expectations and public discourse to challenge what we have taken for granted regarding technological change. It is time to close the gap between law makers and technology developers.

Historically, the Product Design and Development stages of the Technology Development Cycle received the most attention when experiencing problematic technology. Nick spoke about the need for other influences of the Technology Development Cycle to be included in conversations during times of technology calamity.

These include: the organisational culture and business models, system incentive structure, technological architecture and investment portfolio rationales.

Nick's major theme of his talk centred around the need to view technology development as value based.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution needs a society who looks at systems, not technologies, who sees technology as empowering, not determining, and as a product of design, rather than default.

And if you want really scary, harrowing stories about how people are getting hurt by technology mostly in this case in the Third Industrial Revolution, but developing beyond it, this is just the tip of the iceberg of a set of studies and stories and narratives on the way that emerging technology is harming people, particularly marginalised communities and communities with less voice already today. Virginia Eubank's fantastic three major case studies. Safiya Noble's work on racism and really focussing on the issue of 'search' and Cathy O'Neil who has this fantastic aspect drawing from her

experience in the finance industry. So three book recommendations. And there is huge pressure coming along and affecting us today. Affecting companies today to take these things seriously.

So, you know, I've been working on these topics for about four years now. This year was the year that the space opened up to have to be invited into the heart of the people building the railroads of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to have conversations with them you know. Many of my colleagues and Ed and others have started to have those conversations. It's not easy, but right now is the time to bring social science research, reflective practice community expectations and very public discourse into the space and really challenge what we've taken for granted but also closing the gap between this guy and the guy that he was talking to in the senate and the congress. Because that was the scariest thing I've seen this year around emerging technologies. It was not the capabilities of Facebook's algorithm nor the mis-specified nature of some of the ways that it was operating (and they've made some changes recently to try and correct some of that) but it was just the complete gap in communication between some of the most powerful law makers in the most powerful kind of norm setting country in the world and one of the most powerful people in three world in terms of setting up that social media infrastructure. So, this opening, you know what happened in Google last week with the walk out we have this social momentum just start to build and the question is, what do we talk about, how do we talk about it?

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