

February 26th, main themes

1. We will easily be able to make robots more and more human in appearance, but the question of agency still remains. Will they ever be able to make decisions for themselves? #roboethics
2. Should we allow companies to shape our world and our future? Data acquisition in the wrong hands may threaten autonomy and human freedom - Ethics with Dr. Christiane Wooten
3. Dr. Chris Gastmans examined the ethics of SARs, socially assistive robots, in caring for the elderly. Can the benefits of robotic accuracy, efficiency, and non-liability makeup for a lack of human warmth and care? #roboethics
4. Autonomous robotic surgery is already available for surface level procedures like skin operations. In more complex operations, patient safety in the face of potential technological malfunction remains the primary concern, says Houston Methodist surgeon Barbara Bass.

Student Impression: Georgi, one of our undergraduates responds to Dr. Barbara Bass's presentation: "While autonomous robotic surgery in remote areas such as battle zones and space missions seems necessary, I wonder if the cons (lack of human doctor-patient interactions, possibility of mechanical malfunctions, etc.) in clinical settings outweigh the benefits."

Tuesday Morning Address Twitter Messages:

1. Prof. Luciano Floridi says we should not be afraid of robots, but work with them to solve society's greatest problems: poverty, ignorance, health.
2. Prof. Emmanuel Agius: Robotic technologies have abilities to either promote or harm human dignity depending on their application. Robots used for security may promote public safety, but pervasive surveillance threatens personal privacy and human freedom.
3. Vice-Chancellor Peter Opio: The age of robotics reminds us-any investment should be directed towards the well-being of all. Certain new technological uses are promising like blood delivery via drones or iCog, but pre-existing poverty and need for jobs must remain the primary focus.

Student Impression from Early morning: -Chris, one of our interns, shared, "Fr. Agius' argument was simple yet valid: agency comes down to intentionality. Robots don't have intentions, programmers do. Without intention, programmers risk reinventing themselves in their machines and becoming dependent."

Tweets for Late morning session:

1. Changes deeper and wider than first imagined: Marito Carballo of Argentina analyzes the public's view of new technologies which extend as far as homes, businesses, health, and education to impact all areas of daily life.
2. "The greater and more equitable the contribution of the entire human species at each stage [of robotics advancement], the more humane the industry will be" - Kizito Kiyimba, Vice Chancellor of Arrupe Jesuit University, Zimbabwe

Student Impression from Late morning: -One of our interns, Talia, shared, "I was struck that 4 of 5 people are frightened by being operated upon by a human-controlled robot. As one interested in medicine, we must understand not only robotic efficacy, but also their perception and impact on relationships".

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