

August 2 & 3
2018

ParTecK 18

BACKGROUND

VISION & CALL TO ACTION

ParTecK18 aims to shape the discourse on tech and ethics by exploring concretely how to nudge culture towards a future in which consumers become wisened and companies have robust ethical strategic plans. A future where it will be easier to be a truly “good” tech company who is “making the world a better place”

Come explore and work together on nudging a culture that calls forth the best, truest, and most beautiful life-world that humans can create. We have the technological means, but do we have the will to do better?



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ParTecK18: Big Data - Ethics, Governance and Culture

Welcome to ParTecK 2018, the continuation and evolution of a deep, lively exploration that started last August at ParTecK17, bridging technology makers, consciousness ‘psychonauts’, academics and more in generative conversation leading to numerous collaborations. A theme emerged around how can the novel mix of these intersections can be put to use in the world to make a difference? Good question! And one we feel called to respond to, with your participation, expertise and bright shining being at ParTecK 2018.

So how do we make a difference, not just at the level of improved speed or scale, but one that makes for a big-data-tech world that sustains human thriving and promotes a vibrant society? By contrast, visions of dystopian near-futures filled with anemic, tech-addicted screen zombies seem less far-fetched as the pace and reach of AI increase exponentially.

Can cultural values and norms in the industry fill in some gaps where regulation can’t keep up? Is more self-regulation needed? A genuine regulation that is deeper than good optics, one that matures industry from a “move fast and break things” culture to one tempered with more forethought and a dose of discernment, one that future generations will perhaps be proud to inherit.

Practices we have now - like collecting data on people who don’t even sign up for a service, are a product of the values and social norms that implicitly govern what’s acceptable in a group (company, society, nation, etc.), and especially so in the absence of regulation. How do we make a sustainable, tenable human life-world for everyone in a big data / AI future?



Governance and Regulation: late to the party

The benefit of open data for accountability in governance, along with breakthrough discoveries in numerous fields, is indisputable.

Likewise, the use of big data profiling to enact discrimination, as well as numerous issues that arise from increased surveillance and decreased privacy, is becoming increasingly known and problematic. It's a gnarly situation!

In face of these seemingly irreconcilable realities, it's natural to get a little panicky

and look to leadership - in industry, government, or heck, even pop-culture - for stabilizing influence.

Regulation and policy are typical means to providing more stability, as well as balancing power between the executive - in business and in government - and the populations they are responsible to. Enter the General Data Protection Regulation introduced in the EU and now enforceable as of May 25, 2018. The reach of data collection and

norms around its use, trade, hoarding (yes we just said that) etc., were getting out of synch with the values of the larger society on which the industry relies for its existence. Though they may chafe, regulations can be beneficial when there are clear measures, pathways to enforcement, outcomes and a general cultural buy-in to the mores being reflected in them, and the GDPR is a step in this direction.

REG·U·LA·TION

the word "regulation", sans baggage, simply means to "control or maintain the rate or speed of a machine or process so that it operates properly" or "to adjust something to a desired level or standard".

The rub of course is agreeing on what is proper or desired, and how to attain that. Regardless, regulation is how life and ecosystems sustain themselves. A body does this for example by sweating when it gets too hot - it regulates itself to cool down, thus sustaining life, operating properly to a desired level. If industries are to contribute to a sustainable planet and world-space for humans, likely they need to do the same.

REGULATING BIG DATA AND AI - MIND THE GAP!



Recent events highlight issues around privacy and undue influence enabled by using big data and AI. Data-related scandals prompt a whole new discourse around the good - and not so good - society that can be carved with the tools of Big Data and AI. What are the impacts of using these tools in various ways?

Have they really made the world a better place? For whom? In what ways, at what cost, and how do we measure either?

Government is the usual choice for regulating industry. Part of the disruption of our times is that there are significant challenges unique to regulating the tech industry. The tech industry moves fast - the fastest perhaps of any - whereas the speed of Government and bureaucracy is typically...not so fast. How is Government to keep up?

How do we close the gap? With new capacities emerging almost daily in tech, how can government, or anyone really, know where to begin? If those at the cutting edge of tech aren't in the habit of pausing their forward motion long enough to really think through the potential downside consequences of interactions between numerous technologies, protocols and algorithms, and Government can't keep up - who or what is driving this bus? Are we going to like where it ends up?



Culture is part of the problem -

BIG DATA
SUSTAINABILITY
DEMANDS AN ETHICS
OF ATTENTION AND
OF MEASUREMENT

Big Data demands that we consider ethical implications if it is to help sustain human life well. The concept of Environmental and Social sustainability are familiar to most. In the rush of technological advances supported by AI and Big Data, the less tangible but no less precious resource of human attention is being extracted, influenced and monetized in ways that most people are unaware of.

When a business looks at filling a niche, it fills a need. By current standards, that the need gets filled, and some profit is made from it, counts as success. What about measuring the level, durability, and sustainability of satisfaction that the product or service provided? In satisfying a need, did it end up short-changing another need?



As a thought experiment, let's say government is able to adequately regulate the tech industry. If a regulation is perceived by a company as too burdensome, too costly to comply with, or creates too much drag in production time, a norm in many industries is to find a "work around". Even when a company wants to comply with regulations, there can be many challenges - such as when third party components are used that may or may not comply with regulations and a culture of unhealthy competition in the market-place makes it necessary to find 'work arounds' to compliance just to survive, or else to make attractive enough returns.

Given this reality, it becomes obvious that a discourse focussed on tactical and technical solutions to ethical

Can we make it more of a solution?

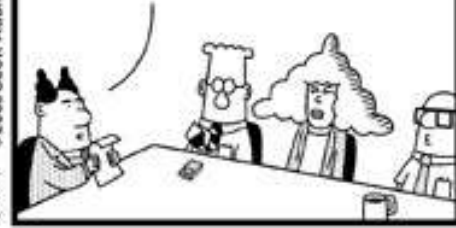
"A DISCOURSE FOCUSED ON TACTICAL AND TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS...DOESN'T REALLY SPEAK TO THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM..."

challenges doesn't really speak to the elephant in the room - the larger cultures and values that govern the way the Big Data - AI industry works in the first place. As the saying goes, "culture eats strategy for breakfast".

Culture consists of tacit values, norms, ethics and justifications that set standards of what behaviours are acceptable. Scandal directly reveals when one or more of these tacit norms are out of alignment with a broader cultural values. Concerns about the impacts of AI and Big Data on employment, wealth distribution and visions of potential dystopian futures is beginning to temper the values around progress - at almost any cost.

Concerns about privacy and inferring identity from multiple data sets, about how and when our data is collected, stored, shared and

STARTING TODAY,
ALL PASSWORDS MUST
CONTAIN LETTERS,
NUMBERS, DOODLES,
SIGN LANGUAGE AND
SQUIRREL NOISES.



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“MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE”

How is Silicon Valley measuring that? What you measure is what you care about. What is being measured? (# of rounds of funding, dollar amount of funding raised, revenues, net worth, shareholder return). How do you measure how much better - or not - the average person is doing, feeling, relating? What would it take for SV to value measuring these as a reflection of how they are doing at making the world a better place?

Borrowing from Max-Neef's work on sustainability of need satisfiers, ParTeck 18 will add to the discourse by shedding light on what we choose to measure and for what purpose. In these seemingly small acts lies the seeds of a sustainable future. We're excited to have you join us for the planting party that is ParTeck 2018.

The Culture of Ethics in Big Data - is CSR big enough for big data?

Big Data is inextricable from business - it's the new superpower in this field. Ethics in business is nothing new, from policies to practices related to trading, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance and the like. Business ethics are usually either driven by law, to gain public acceptance or because business leaders truly aspire to it. Out of this has evolved Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which has come a long way in industries like manufacturing where the processes have clear links to social and environmental sustainability. CSR in the tech sector is still nascent and more complicated, as described here:

“Analyzing the [tech] industry's production process does not illuminate responsibility strategies as it does for traditional manufacturing. On the human side, labor protections take a very different form than they do for other fields. The notion of a vulnerable line worker is replaced with that of a well-compensated programmer. Environmental concerns center on and are largely confined to reducing carbon emissions by increasing the computing efficiency of data equipment. What has become a conventional approach to developing responsibility strategies simply does not suit the technology sector very well, nor does it address the main criticisms the industry faces.”
[\(Morfit, 2014\)](#)



Large tech companies like Google are replete with examples of CSR, yet this is heavily connected to physical environmental impact, such as reducing emissions (, and not so much to the everyday lived experience of human beings ([Pratap, 2017](#)). Is CSR a big enough framework for big data ethics issues, like job displacement, AI rights, etc. As we have seen with the sustainability movement, the whole system needs to up level, from suppliers, manufacturers, to consumers, for it to work. And that means addressing the juggernaut of how Big Data can be used to make the world a better place, not least by surmounting the challenge of naming and finding a humane way through the cultural differences of what constitutes a better world.



Resource List

TECH

Big Data and Regulation

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
<https://gdpr-info.eu/>

Towards a GDPR compliant analytics strategy
<https://blog.count.ly/towards-a-gdpr-compliant-analytics-strategy-a6be4bad3a6b>

“Won’t Somebody Think of the Children?” Examining COPPA Compliance at Scale
<https://petsymposium.org/2018/files/papers/issue3/popets-2018-0021.pdf>

U.S. data protection laws fall short in the age of big data
<https://searchdatamanagement.techtarget.com/opinion/US-data-protection-laws-fall-short-in-the-age-of-big-data>

It is time to overhaul Canada’s data protection—your rights are at stake
<https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/it-is-time-to-overhaul-canadas-data-protection-your-rights-are-at-stake/>

Big Data and Ethics

Big Data and Social Physics: Reflections on Society, Ethics, and Algorithms
<http://boldthinking.national.ca/blogs/big-data-and-social-physics/>

Perspectives on Big Data, Ethics, and Society
<https://bdes.datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Perspectives-on-Big-Data.pdf>

The Ethics of Big Data: Balancing Economic Benefits and Ethical Questions of Big Data in the EU Policy Context
<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/qe-02-17-159-en-n.pdf>

Big Data Ethics - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_data_ethics

Can companies resist wrongdoing in a digital world?
<http://businessresearcher.sagepub.com/sbr-1775-98200-2717708/20160215/technology-and-business-ethics>

The ethics of big data as a public good: which public? Whose good?
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5124068/>

Attention exploitation: the indirect threats of online persuasion
<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/spark/358-moderation-persuasion-attention-1.4131151/attention-exploitation-the-indirect-threats-of-online-persuasion-1.4131155>

What is technology doing to us?
<https://www.samharris.org/podcast/item/what-is-technology-doing-to-us>

Big Data and Social Responsibility

Responsible Data
<https://responsibledata.io/>

What Does Corporate Social Responsibility Mean for the Technology Sector?
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/what_does_corporate_social_responsibility_mean_for_the_technology_sector

Corporate Social Responsibility for a Data Age
https://ssir.org/articles/entry/corporate_social_responsibility_for_a_data_age

CSR and Sustainability in the Technology Industry
<https://www.cheshnotes.com/2017/10/csr-sustainability-technology-industry/>

Ten simple rules for responsible big data research
<http://journals.plos.org/ploscompbiol/article?id=10.1371/>





TOOLKIT

Fundamental Human Needs

Fundamental Human Needs—Max Neef
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_human_needs

Development and Human Needs—Max Neef
<http://3awww.alastairmcintos.com/general/resources/2007-Manfred-Max-Neef-Fundamental-Human-Needs.pdf>

Adaptive Leadership

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership
<https://keithdwalker.ca/wp-content/summaries/m-p/Practice%20of%20Adaptive%20Leadership.Heifetz%20et%20al.EBS.pdf>

The Work of Leadership
<http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/users/p/padilla/www/435-Leadership/Heifetz%20and%20Laurie%20The%20work%20of%20leadership.pdf>

Theory U

Theory U and Presencing
<https://www.toolshero.com/leadership/theory-u-scharmer/>

INTEGRAL

An Overview of Integral Theory: An All-Inclusive Framework for the 21st Century
http://www.dialogue4health.org/uploads/resources/IntegralTheory_031809.pdf

Get a Feel for Integral
<https://integrallife.com/get-feel-for-integral>

Wake Up, Grow Up: Enlightenment in the 21st Century
<https://integrallife.com/wake-grow-edge-unknown-human-being/>

The Future of Artificial Intelligence
<https://integrallife.com/future-artificial-intelligence/>

Big Data in Little China
<https://integrallife.com/big-data-little-china/>

The Shape of Things to Come: A Singularity in All Four Quadrants
<https://integrallife.com/singularity-all-four-quadrants/>

ORGANIZATIONS

Council for Big Data, Ethics, and Society
<https://bdes.datasociety.net/>

Institute for Ethics And Emerging Technologies
<https://ieet.org>

Responsible Data
<https://responsibledata.io/>

