



**Ethical implications of new technologies in social services and healthcare**  
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*As technologies spread and evolve it is important to question and review the implications that they may have on humanity, ensuring that humanity's best interests are always at the core and that human autonomy is preserved.*

New ideas and technologies are developed and as they evolve, new needs and applications for them are found. You can see this happening with data today. Big data is now seen as the key to unlocking huge government savings by bringing about improved decision making and effectiveness in policy. Data is used everywhere and for everything. Look at the Internet of things as an example of the widespread use of data. In hospitals, decision making is done using big data and other technologies such as sensor activated devices and telemedicine solutions. IBM Watson® is soon going to change the way humans use data entirely, being capable of making decisions faster and more accurately than a human can. This technology will undoubtedly revolutionize the health care system.

With these fast evolving technologies changing the way we live and work, the lines among nature, biology and technology will become increasingly blurred in the future. The “age of the digital self” is fast approaching.

With these changes happening rapidly, it is vital that researchers stop and ask themselves what the side effects may be. Again, in the case of data, you can see that this is something that is happening as the data industry evolves. The issues that come with collecting and analyzing data, such as privacy rights violations, are only being realized after the technology has developed and gained roots. Therefore, going forward, it is important that researchers ask more questions. Some questions to consider are:

- What technology evolution is good for society and what part is bad?
- Who should have access to certain technologies? Maybe some devices should be restricted to certain groups?
- Who has the benefit and who will be harmed?
- Is the information for your own self-interest or for the common good?
- Which technologies enable us to develop as humans?
- How should new technologies be distributed amongst the public?
- Can the data harm people?

Different cultures will have different feelings about technology. For example, in Japan, people are happy to use assistive robots to provide care, while in Europe, people would be very much against this idea.

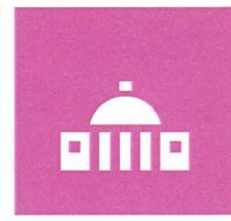
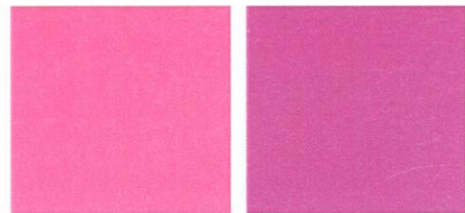
As humanity gradually becomes more and more reliant on technology, there is a risk that eventually no one will take responsibility for how technology affects people. The more artificial the system becomes, the more critical it is to question whether technology supports or erodes human autonomy.





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