Smart, Autonomous, and Social: Robots As Challenge to Human Exceptionalism

Luciano FLORIDI
Oxford Internet Institute
University of Oxford, UK

Abstract of Plenary Lecture

In this paper I shall discuss some consequences of robots' increasingly smart, autonomous, and social behaviour. The main thesis supported is that robotics (and AI in general) offers a historical opportunity to rethink human exceptionalism in at least three ways. Intelligent behaviour is confronted by smart behaviour, which can be adaptively more successful in the infosphere. Free behaviour is confronted by the predictability and manipulability of human choices, and by the development of artificial autonomy. And human sociability is confronted by its artificial counterpart, which can be both attractive for humans and indistinguishable by them. In the conclusion, I shall suggest that the development of artificial agents does not lead to any fanciful realization of science fiction scenario, which are irresponsibly distracting. It rather invites us to reflect more seriously and less complacently on who we are, could be, and would like to become. I shall suggest that human exceptionalism is not incorrect but that it lies in a special and perhaps irreproducible way of being successfully dysfunctional. We are a glitch in the natural system, not the ultimate app. We shall remain a bug, while robots will be more and more a feature in Galileo's mathematical book of nature.

Relevant Publications

[1] L. Floridi, *The Fourth Revolution - How the infosphere is reshaping human reality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014.
[2] L. Floridi, *The Ethics of Information*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013.
[3] L. Floridi, *The Philosophy of Information*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011.
[4] L. Floridi, *Information – A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010.
[5] L. Floridi (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.
[6] L. Floridi, J. W. Sanders. On the morality of artificial agents., *Machine ethics* **14** (2004): 349-379.
[7] L. Floridi, Artificial Agents and Their Moral Nature, *The Moral Status of Technical Artefacts*. (pp. 185-212), Springer Netherlands, 2014.
[8] L. Floridi, Energy, risks, and metatechnology, *Philosophy & Technology* **24** (2011), 89-94.