



We The People

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We the People 269 The Fourth Industrial Revolution

Good Day to you. If you find life in general complex and challenging and even uncertain then today's narrative may be a timely offering. This is about the **fourth industrial revolution** involving AI or Artificial Intelligence and robotics and so on. The rate of technological advancement is accelerating and already creating a huge impact on most Australians and indeed the rest of the world. The revolution is based on computing power but even more importantly the ability of computers to learn and to read, write, understand and recognise images and solve problems. The world is changing rapidly and wages have stalled for many people because labour is being devalued with the introduction of technology. This raises the question about what our grandchildren will do for a job because many jobs will simply be redundant. As a result of this wage stagnation and lack of traditional roles comes the demise of middle class Australia over time. The 'have's' will have more and the 'have not's' will be the majority.

Computer technology is now advancing exponentially and conceptually the areas of AI - Artificial Intelligence and robotics are merging. As clever as the robots appear when welding and assembling cars they are in fact following a predetermined path without any reasoning. While the technology is amazing and very accurate, quality control still falls to humans and the judgement a person brings. However AI is a whole new ball park where the computer can be programmed to learn autonomously. So, an experiment set a computer to work playing a game of chess against itself and after some time, taught itself how to beat itself at the game. Think about that because it's a real brain stretch and not based solely on a known set of algorithms or logical predetermined steps. It can be said the computer taught itself yet that is without emotion so when it won against itself it wasn't exhilarating, so what's the point. Satisfaction and emotional states are the domain of humans but if a computer is controlling a surgical procedure it can be argued that emotion is not needed. Does this mean AI is any less intelligent especially if it can outperform a human. So AI to me means a machine that can operate autonomously and make decisions and can if necessary, recognise various states of human activity even emotion by reading faces and body language. This is truly the stuff of science fiction.

Now let's shift gear and think about this.....humans are capable of amazing intelligence and amazing stupidity. For AI to truly parallel human thinking and reasoning it surely has to have the capacity to be foolish. It would then have to be able to change its functions to a better form if it chose to, just like people. So if a super computer with Artificial Intelligence can beat itself at chess then surely it must be capable of teaching itself to make bad decisions and then believe they are right or is that the exclusive domain of mankind. So the cross over point of clever programming and artificial intelligence is important and I suspect rapidly becoming a new man made religion, be it a false one. If and when we begin to worship machines we will have elevated them to have God like qualities which potentially rule us though their apparent power and that time will mark the beginning of madness. However this process has already begun and the 'have nots' will be the servants of society and middle class Australia will be pushed down the ladder and so the future of our grandchildren is a vital subject. Today you may fly from one point to another on autopilot or have x-rays checked by a machine. Google watches what you use the computer for and anticipates your next move and highlights products and information you might like. Computers can recognise and translate speech, watch your home, read and write and control your stock market activity. On line feedback forms can be read and understood by a computer, so no human is involved yet we assume a person reads our feedback. The point is that there will not be enough jobs in the near future for everyone and I encourage you to help set a clever path for your grandchildren. It goes without saying that the earth's population must be stabilised then reduced for many reasons before quality of life is further lost. It's a brave new world and one with great promise and great danger and where ethics and integrity will be challenged.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley