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CLOUD REALITIES

CR006

Christmas Special! Are we living in a simulation, and does it matter? with Anders Indset

Capgemini's Cloud Realities podcast explores the exciting realities of today and tomorrow that can be unleashed by cloud.

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[00:00:00] I thought I'd get a sound in my ear from some kind of video that started to run. I don't know why. Maybe it was one of the voices inside your head. It's a new simulation. We had a collapse of the wave function.

Welcome to Cloud Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm David Chapman. I'm Sjoukje Zaal, and I'm Rob Kernahan.

So usually we talk about cloud right on the show, and we like the idea that you can change your reality through education, action, decision making, and the smart use of technology.

But this week though, as a Christmas treat, we're going to focus on the realities element of the show and explore the hypothesis that [00:01:00] reality itself could be simulated.

With us, I'm glad to say that we have got roving reporter, Rob Snow Kernahan. Made it back from Vegas, Rob. How are you doing? All good. Glad to be back and enjoying the calm of being home, which is a lot better than the intensity of Las Vegas. So yes. That terrifying background buzz and constantly having Tito's and soda fast in your hands.

Yeah that, that was the hardest part. Yeah, absolutely. The Tito's and soda. And I am delighted to say, to help us through this difficult subject. And to educate us, I'm sure, we have Anders Indset with us, a philosopher, author, and renowned speaker. And we're delighted to have you with us, Anders. So want to say hello and just tell us a little bit about yourself.

Yeah, I'm Anders. I'm an author, business philosopher, based out of Germany, born in Norway, writing. around the quantum economy, where I explore the potentialities of technology, but also the part of the mensch, the human [00:02:00] being and how through education we can use practical philosophy as foundation, how to tackle the challenges ahead with technology and the activation of the mensch.

Let's just, let's then dwell on a simulation hypothesis. So for those who haven't. really delved into this too much. Just frame that up for us. What was your going in point? Yeah, the going in point is basically the coffee table discussions that people are having. And of course, back in 2003 Swedish philosopher Nick Bostrom popularized the simulation hypothesis.

There were other people that have reflected on that. But what we have. As in a general public interest started maybe to be more broadly looked upon with the matrix. But then more lately there have been predominant pros and cons, Elon Musk has gone out and said there's a billion to one chance out of one in a billion chance that we do not live in a [00:03:00] simulation.

Pop cosmologist Neil deGrasse Tyson said there's a high likelihood and even David Chalmers who has done amazing work in the field of consciousness says that there is a high likelihood and his new book Reality Plus tackles, a lot of the things that I've also been working on over the years in terms of, how to live a meaningful life in a virtual world and what are virtual worlds and are they real and all that.

So there have been a lot of like popular discussion around the whole notion of simulation. And I think as the world and our lives become more absurd we have the paradoxes, we have weird things happening. People don't think about you. This could be a simulation, but then again, it would make little sense to discuss this with you or anyone else, because then most likely all of us are in a simulation.

What does this give us to have a thought conversation on that? So I've been interested in this. For many years. And together with my colleagues that are, distinguished quantum

physicists, we met in Vienna some months [00:04:00] ago and we were having a wonderful evening. And I challenged a good friend of mine, Florian, about a very simple thing.

Yeah. If you're, we're talking about the simulation and then prove to me. with your physics and your background, use your team, whatever, and prove to me that we are not living in a simulation. Not saying I believe we do live in a simulation, but try to find a foundation to stand on to prove to us, prove to me that we are not living in a simulation.

And some weeks later, he called me up and said, I have slept in week, Anders. And then simulation or not, I haven't slept in weeks. Yeah. Yeah. So that led one thing led to the other and we gathered some. people and we started to think about how to approach this and to build experiences and what kind of restrictions, what kind of foundation we have to stand on to at all explore this.

For those who haven't read Bostrom he argues that either humans are highly likely to have become extinct before the advent of a post human stage, or any post [00:05:00] human civilization is highly unlikely to run a number of simulations based on their evolutionary history, e. g. You haven't got the volume to be able to create a simulation, or three, we're almost certainly living in a computer simulation.

And he claims it's likely that we live in one based on the argument that there are many civilizations and these civilizations build computers that run simulations of conscious beings, then there are many more simulated conscious beings than real ones. So we, the conclusion he comes to is we are likely to live in a simulation.

Was that the, dark point of where you guys then started to try and unpick that a bit. Yes. It is a starting point of the argument or the hypothesis. The challenge is that here a lot of scientists have, claimed this to be pseudoscience. One of the famous online YouTube stars of the moment, Sabine Hossenfelder, has been very clear about this, that this does not belong to any.

scientific endeavour. And again, this is an absolute statement. And my [00:06:00] interpretation of science or to be a physicist is basically to, to strive for better explanations. And with the Nobel prize of quantum physics just a couple of months ago we are certainly looking differently at the subatomic level when it comes to physicality.

And and that is, of course, something that what does it tell us? What does it mean? And it changes that the notion of what is the quantum theory or what is modern physics really telling us? And it's very difficult, I believe, to make an absolute statement of a theory modern physics that is not a complete theory.

Most, I think, scientists would see that as an incomplete theory. There are things to be figured out, be it the relationship between Einstein's general relativity and quantum physics, or some other aspects that are very difficult to argue. So there are very views [00:07:00] on how to tackle that. And how we came at it was basically to say that let's It's very difficult to run experiments on a modern physics or a physics beyond what we what we understand today.

So we have to have some basis and we are very, conscious and aware of arguments coming from People like Donald Hoffman, where you say that consciousness is foundation and anything else emerges out of consciousness. And that is, those are things that are nice theories, but they're very difficult to run a scientific experiments on.

So to us, it was important just to have the basis of what is there to work with today. And then try to. To do observations, how would we build a computer that could run all of these

simulation? That was basically how we started out. When you think about all of this, when you talk about the concepts behind it, has it ever been explored from, we're seeing about the motivation of why we would, [00:08:00] somebody or something would create a simulation that we then exist within.

So for me, there's a big part about why then if we do, and we are, then what's the motivation behind the simulation. Thank you. Yeah, I think when I liked an analogy that Swedish philosopher Alexander Bard did a couple of years ago, where he turned the whole notion of the creator upside down. And he argued from the standpoint of we don't need a creator in terms of a God to create the universe.

It was physics. But what we're doing is basically we are building God the famous deus ex machina, God from or out of a machine where we strive for, longevity or bliss or divinity from a computerized world of bits and bytes. And you can always, so always go from it or bit. You can argue from a technological standpoint, and if you do you're still If you're in a simulation, you would have to reflect at least a little bit about what is outside of that [00:09:00] simulation.

So coming back to what Dave said the argument from Boston, says that most people would then be living in a simulation. So that means that we would have billions of simulation because if everyone could simulate their own world, apply some kind of physical laws that we have some kind of consciousness or we are aware of, there is still something that we could argue.

You against that there is any kind of physicalism. There is no reality as such. Dave Dennet has talked about consciousness being an illusion, whatever that would mean for the simulation. But still, if you do that, you run into a simulation chain that there is a simulation within a simulation.

at infinitum. And basically that is where the challenge comes for our physical laws of nature. Basically reversing global entropy. So a simulation chain has a lot of restrictions which would exhaust any computer based on any physical [00:10:00] law that we have today. That is where we were.

went looking and we came up with some arguments and some observation that we did, but basically I'm making absolute claims on assimilation is not possible. I think it's not possible to argue against, nor is it possible to argue for living in assimilation, but it's certainly interesting to play with. And what I found quite surprising based on that comment when I was doing the research for this is that a lot of the writing does.

Seemed, and the research around this, and I guess opinion pieces around it, does seem to fall. in two different camps. There was like very definitively, it's real and we are living in a simulation and some very definitively not real. So to just set that up a little bit and give some context, Scientific American argues that we already run simulations that are bounded by processor speeds.[00:11:00]

Now, What they speculate on is if we're living in that assimilation then some of those bounding factors would be known within the simulation. The argument in Scientific American is that the speed of light could well be a hardware artifact showing that we're living in a simulated universe. What's your perspective on coming at it from that point of view?

Yeah, I've looked at quite a few different arguments and theories on the argument. I am not a physicist, but I have seen what we did was basically that any external programmer of such a simulation would from our perspective right now, have to have a full understanding of the

physical laws covering evolution, the universe composition and down to a level of whatever that would be a foundational level.

So it's about creating life and so on and so forth. But then if you [00:12:00] take that and you take the laws of quantum physics as the most fundamental physical laws that we know today, then there are some limitation. There are some scales. There are some units. that you access the limits of time, that time, space and mass and temperature.

And you have that as a basis, the Planck scale and those assumptions you can play with. And if you could figure out a way to unite quantum physics with general relativity, or we could say move beyond quantum physics, of course, there might be other views but from quantum physics standpoint being the foundation, then within the simulation running that adfinitum, there would be limitation as to how many change or how this could be set up.

So a computer would, exhaust to that extension that there would be other energy forms that would be needed most likely that we might not be accessible to us today. And that's what we leave it with. Yeah. It's that thing about being constrained by the thinking of our [00:13:00] time.

So we tend to try and bound it by what we understand how a computer works today, we try and extrapolate that forward. But we don't know what we haven't discovered to your point, which is don't be constrained by your thinking. There could be a lot more out there we just don't understand or know that would remove these bounds that are used for arguments that we absolutely aren't in.

It could just be we don't understand enough yet, and we need to keep working hard on thinking a bit more about what that world could be. It seemed to me as a layman that the work that Ringel and Kovrizi at Oxford Uni, they did some work that seemed to be based on looking at advanced computer models run something like today's computer games.

And then as a result of that research, and I think you know, I'm coming at this from a layman, so apologies if I I am misstating this research, but I think, Rob, it came from a similar place that you were just describing, and it said that creating such large simulated universe is practically impossible because there's not enough particles in the known universe that could sustain the computing power necessary for a simulation of that scale.

[00:14:00] So unsurprisingly, they came down in the, it's definitely not real camp. But that to me did seem particularly bounded and extrapolated from what we know today, rather than what the sort of, future tech could look like. There's a base assumption there that processing continues in the construct that we know today.

But you know what, we went from clockwork to digital to whatever else is, beyond. So we're assuming it's a electron running through a, a gated chip set. In a million years time, that could be very different, couldn't it? But let me make a bold statement here and there's something that I've just recently started to to claim or to have challenged.

I think that what we will see in the sciences is that if you go back a hundred years, there were theoretical explanation of the understanding of the universe. So we created physical laws, we got a better understanding of the math. Richard Feynman said, if I can't build it, I cannot understand it, right? It was a a mathematical and scientific endeavor.

brought to [00:15:00] life. So we build application, we build solutions on top of the foundations of physics. What I believe is that we are at the pivotal time right now, and I talk about this as being the final or the last narcissistic injury of the human species because I often give myself narcissistic injuries.

Yeah, but yeah, coming from the Freudian narcissistic injuries, the three injuries of Freud, but I think it's the last because we either, we we put everything in technology and strive forward, and we will continue to build things that we do not understand. We have seen some things around it.

The recent releases of OpenAI are things that start to say, okay, what are the limitations here? But if you look at a simple thing like a chess computer, right? We build the Stockfish, you put all the chess plays into that computer, and you have a good understanding of the basic rules of the game and human beings have intuitively learned to play and play this game [00:16:00] in into a very broad human trait type of thing.

We said it's difficult for a computer then the computer was built, it beat the human being and will forever continue to beat the human being and will be not looking back. And what happened now is that people didn't stop playing chess. So what they did was they started to look at how this computer plays.

Chess and not even the engineers that build the computer knows why the computer plays these crazy moves. Some of these moves lead to a totally losing position based on the best chess computer stock fish that we have or the human beings have ever built. So Magnus Carlson the world champion, he started to play what was called the Alpha Zero Move where he.

took a pawn on the side and moved it forward and everyone thought he was losing and seven, eight steps down the road, he was probably, winning or up. And what happened here is that no one understands exactly why. And if we fast forward three to five years or 10 [00:17:00] years moving towards what might be singularity or whatever, I think that this is what is changing right now.

Now, technological progress, meaning businesses invest in quantum computing, quantum technologies, and we build stuff before we understand it. So what happened is that we expand the realm of possibilities. And if we don't take time to dig into that, to understand the underlying, forces or the laws of physics or whatever we have created, then, we will become some kind of homo obsoletus and we will upload our minds and, link them up and we don't know where that point, whatever that is.

So I think there is a, there's a very big switch here from the scientific community to first you build it. then you understand it. And if we don't take that time, that could be a very pivotal point for human beings. We can imagine all the particles in the body [00:18:00] being rebuilt, all the 83 billion neurons being simulated or rebuilt, but somewhere there is some kind of that subjective experience, the qualia, what it feels to, what it feels like to be talking into this microphone and does that.

ever get lost? Is it something that is a physical trait that we don't know? So playing with it is dangerous if we don't know. What I'm saying is basically we have consequences, probably one, like the last one taking that one pill turns off the light of the physical perceived reality, right?

And in your research then to come back to the work that you've done, Enlighten us, where did you get to? So what was your process like? And then what kind of conclusions did you come to? Yeah, by, by, by all due respect, most of the math and the parts coming from quantum physics have been done by my colleagues, of course.

And of course, but I've been there challenging with questions and and I think that. To me it's that all these absolute statements that are put out there [00:19:00] regarding the

simulation hypothesis, I respect them very much but I have difficulties when I challenged the foundations of the absolutism of the assumptions that are made.

So that those I like to play with, what kind of assumptions, what kind of. computer what kind of restrictions have you built the argument on? And that was what we would try to do was to outline some restrictions what kind of things must happen for human being to build such a computer within the current understanding of physics, what are the limitations and so on and so forth.

So that was basically our conclusion was to say, we want to have a discussion around this and we will, we can come at it from a. philosophic scientific perspective, where we say progress is there, there will be things beyond we cannot calculate with things we don't know. So we have to have some assumptions and then we could imagine things we could put up a if you have a computer that would have infinite [00:20:00] computing capacities, right?

What would then be our limitation? So we played with those type of things and we had some ideas on how an external program can temporarily circumvent the exhaustion of the computational resources, like to basically say, okay, there is some kind of, pause. Of the explored universe. And we had some of these scenarios and have that in the paper lined out for the community to start discussion on how can we proceed.

Maybe that would also help us think about other, ways to do things in terms of building computer and also to, to reflect on the simulation hypothesis. I think it's interesting that you start with those constraints and try to work your way through, again, understanding them and bounding the situation.

How in your mind does that correlate with if there are indeed those sorts of constraints, does that not immediately put you in the space of what American... scientific was saying when they were basically [00:21:00] saying that if there are processing constraints around the simulation, it'll be visible in the simulation.

Yeah, that is true. To that extent that we don't know, what are the limitation? Today there's no scientific understanding on how entropy could global entropy could be reversed. I think so. So you think there is some, but is that possible to play with from a philosophical standpoint?

Yes, of course. It is, right? If the laws of quantum mechanics are just a step then yeah, of course but still, the new laws, the modern laws of physics was then give us all the other stuff, be it evolution or, Newton's laws or whatever. So I think it's hard to make those absolute statements because then you would take out that notion of progress.

And there is also a and I don't want to become like to come into the spiritual realm or into the energy part, but there is so much. to be explored at the interface of spirituality, [00:22:00] Eastern philosophy, things around experiences that has not been scientifically proven, you would dismiss all of that, right?

And that is a thing that I would not do. I would leave that open. And when People like Donald Hoffman, who's very clear about that going off that trying to explain consciousness as fundamental out of which everything evolves, then it's interesting and more power to these people.

Exactly to that point. And you mentioned her earlier Sabine Hossenfelder. I like where she came at it. from in a lot of ways and she said those who believe it make maybe unknowingly really big assumptions about what natural laws can be reproduced with computer simulations and they don't explain how this is supposed to work.

But finding alternate explanations that can match our observations to high precision is really difficult. The simulation hypothesis there just isn't a serious scientific argument. This doesn't mean that it's [00:23:00] wrong. But it means you have to believe it because you have faith in it, not because you've got logic on your side.

How did you tackle that type of intersection in the way you just described? So the sort of spiritual of faith and the religious element with the sort of hardcore science and philosophy elements of it. Now, I think it's, if you. To me, if you're a scientist progress is all you have, right? And I don't think there would be someone with a flag standing at the bottom of the smallest, whatever that is and saying, Hey, now you reached the final theory of the universe.

I don't see there interesting things to say about string theory and all the things that have been approached, but for us as a scientist, I would say progress is. possible through human endeavor. And what does that mean? That means that we have infinite progress, which also means that claiming that it's not scientific would basically say then I have [00:24:00] taken my position out of my scientific endeavor.

Instead, I would like to say it might not be applicable within the current laws of physics, but me as a scientist, I want to explore that. I do get what Sabine Hossenfelder is saying, but still I like more of course, she does a lot of the provocative speeches and abstinence statements also for the obvious purposes, but and she's extremely competent, but I think, I would say, if there is never an absolute answer, one might say, this is sad news for neuroscientists and physicists, whatever I say, that's job guarantee forever.

So I, what I want to take more of the approach of then let's make it scientific. And basically that's what we did. We tried to unite. The argument from a scientific standpoint with the philosophy and to put it up for discussion and then continue from there. And to me that is the foundations of science.

Not to have the answer, but to strive for progress for better [00:25:00] explanation. So I think, what we did was basically to take the most fundamental scientific approach. It's not complete, it's not, probably not everything correct but it's just. To me, that is the foundation of science. So I am neither in the corner of cool believing in the simulation, nor am I cornered that I want to dismiss anything that has put out there as unscientific, because that would basically say that there is an answer.

And I don't think there is, but that should not stop us from trying to find one. Yeah. And do you see, and did any of your work or the reading that you've done around this, suggest that this is anything more than just the updated version of the cosmic clockmaker? The history shows us that a lot of these things that we have looked at have been put into the box of explanations or better explanations.

What I like here is I think the matrix did a very good job to catch a lot of [00:26:00] the philosophical aspects of it. I am more interested in I don't want to ponder that simulation every day and the cosmic clock. I'm more interested in what does it, apply for me as a human being how do I live a life?

What is life? Is it real? What is reality to me? How do I define it? How do I put a purpose into my life? So you say, okay, how can, talk about, is it real? Is it virtual? I detach myself from that and take the experience. And I say that, if you're in a simulation or even in a virtual world, Of course it's real, because what you experience is real.

So everything that you do experience is a part of what you have, and no one can take that away from you. I don't know if you're conscious, I don't know if anyone else is conscious, but

the only thing that I have is that experience of my own experience. And I like that notion from all these philosophical concepts and theories, I like to play with that.

That's basically where I stand on the topic. [00:27:00]

So Anders, from your perspective then... We've had a lot of conversation about constrained thinking can impact whether you believe simulation or not the theory. How do you think that plays forward into other aspects of the world we live in, business and technology? And do you think that, we could behave and think differently in the way we operate and maybe improve?

Yeah, that's a very good question. And I think that is a. big issue today. If you look at climate, if you look at the challenges that we have, first of all, I think the economy is the operating system of our society. So only if that is stable, then we can tackle education, social issues, and so on and so forth.

So we have to work on that and we need to build some kind of humane. Capitalism and it's an upgrade. But the challenge of the past decades were exactly this absolute thinking. We have optimized the art of being right, the zeros and ones, a binary way of thinking your opinion, my opinion, right? And we have lost the art of [00:28:00] being wrong, namely the progress part that the experience of your own experience that you have moved on, that the will to truth, that someone might have a better idea, the whole notion of progress.

The unconscious progress that we have had has come through innovation, optimizing more of the same, right? And what did we do? We started a climate crisis. We started to say we have to reduce, we have to build circular. So we upped the game of business by adding attributes. Social business. I have never seen an organization that I've written on their page.

We are the most anti social business in the world, right? We said, that would be a bold position. But that's the exact consciousness, right? I'm coming to that point. So we do impact investments. So do you have any organization or private equity or company saying we do no impact investments or we do destructive investments?

No. So we have added things that has become attributes of the good, right? Because we have a feeling of what we think is right. It has to [00:29:00] be sustainable. What the hell is that? What is sustainable? If you take eating avocado as a part of, saving a lot of animals, right?

In Norway, November, is it good? Is it sustainable to have avocados? Where did they come from? They come from very wet areas like Peru, Kenya, Spain, what have you not, right? And you take a thousand liters of water to grow avocado trees and they kill off all the ecosystem and all the animals and all the bacteria and all.

sources of life. So anyone that thinks that he's doing good for animals might be on the wrong path. And the challenge here on all of these topics is that we aim for the solution, the absolute solution, and not for progress. And when I say so, we do not describe the problem. We don't focus on the problems.

We focus on the output the end game. And there are always extrinsic things that happens, be it the pandemic or the terrible war in Ukraine. And then you start from a new points. And from that starting point, the only thing human beings have [00:30:00] is to strive for better future. Thank you. problems. A vaccine does not solve the problem of pandemic.

It just makes it better. And that is, if I take one example that could be very like to make it very clear, what I'm saying here is that we should stop flying because it's bad for the environment. In that we have the environment, which is everything, we cannot fix everything, right? And we have the notion of that stop flying is something that will happen.

So if you go to any airport around the world today, you will see a lot of people flying. And they're crazy. I don't know where they're flying, but they are flying. We have zoom calls, people zooming in from Bali or what have you, not from home offices all over the world. That's how we are. We are not.

perfect beings and we are onboarding the next billion passengers. And now is the question, what is the solution to this? Is it stop flying? Is that a realistic path to be on? The problem is not flying. The problem is the technology with which we travel in [00:31:00] air. Okay. So if the solution is to change that technology, what do we need?

We need an economy. We need investments. We need innovations. If you tear down all the. profits from all the airlines, they're certainly not going to invest in it because they don't have any money. What will happen is they will have worse, better planes coming in, we'll take the old planes and take them to Africa or Asia, whatever the new airlines have found, and we're going to make the problem much worse in the long term.

So the whole notion of how to fix it is wrong because we think there is a fix. Maybe even flying more in the short term would be better because they would have a lot of money and we could invest, right? Or we could describe the actual problem. to a much more detailed notion, how to make money out of it, what it does.

Maybe we can even find an incentive for a Jeff Bezos or whoever to make a lot of money out of it and at the same time changing the technology. So what I think is that the whole notion of Having the good, the right finding a [00:32:00] purpose and finding, all the absolute of something that we cannot describe is the wrong narrative.

The narrative to be in is exactly that striving for better problems. And for that we need to think deeply and long on the problem because there is a high complexity. And that is completely counterintuitive to absolute data, optimizing the past, short tweets, compact formats, no intellectual deep dives.

And that's the problem of the world today, is that we have taught that a knowledge society, that we know something, that we have experts, that we have answers, is the right way forward. No, I think the society of understanding, a society striving for better explanations, is the right place to be in. And that is a complete different narrative.

So the business world of tomorrow, this building on the analogy of the operating system, is that we have apps and applications on the operating system. [00:33:00] Let's describe the bad ones and make them better. nurture the good ones, but let's focus on the bad ones. How can we make those less bad? And that is a challenge that we can take up in all aspects of life.

We cannot make ourselves happy, but we can make ourselves less unhappy by being very specific on one or two problems that we can do something about. And that this narrative is turning the current world order, I believe, or how we approach things upside down, be it in academics, be it in politics, be it in economy.

And we have those absolutes and we are very much caught in those self evident truths. And I think that is one of the biggest part is not the infection of a pandemic, but that our minds are infected. We think we have to know how, what to think, but we need to learn how to think. But do you then think that the society and the economy that we created allows us to solve these problems differently?

I think that is perhaps a very [00:34:00] good question, but I think allows us, yes, because we are to some extent individuals that can make an impact. I think we can influence at least our own reality. But I think your question, if I understand it correctly, goes back to what I strongly

believe is a better problem and that's to emphasize how to change education, starting from children, kindergarten, all the way up to leadership and executive development.

What we are learning today is facts, roles, expertism and we don't learn how to learn. The. The capacity, how to learn is the foundation for that particular progress. I call that practical philosophy. And I think that in the educational system I can take four examples of things that I think is a quick fix on how to change education, to take it back to how education can and should be both on an executive and leadership development programs, as well as for kids.

Number one. Train analytical thinking tackling [00:35:00] ambiguities, paradoxes, learn how to see both sides, not jump onto the answer, but strive for an understanding that analytical thinking can be trained from early on. We are born in this world with an empty storage and we start to navigate, we explore, then we go to school and we learn to categorize.

Links left zeros, ones, and changing that is important. The number two is I see a lot of insecure people. They're anxious about the future. I think self trust is the foundation of trusting other people. So training people to have trust in themselves, I think is very important, starting with an early age.

We take trust and put it into data. Yes, we need more KPIs, more transparency, but that is measuring the past. That is the obvious, but we confuse that with trust. If we say that transparency of data leads to trust, then we have made trust obsolete. There is no trust. So we start with distrust. until it's validated.

And I think that is basically the second [00:36:00] part that self trust training, that is, is a foundation. Number three is basically having that capacity to work in teams, to work together, to reach the flow stage where you have something, you can build something bigger than the sum of its part.

Collaboration and co creation. That is something that also can be trained at early age. Because if we get together in the physical space and we have different viewpoints and we have that trust as a foundation, then we have friction and out of friction comes progress. But if we block it into divided worlds of absolutes, we will not have progress.

You will have a fight. And that is what we see in today's politics. In, in, in the world today in politics, we have 50. 1%, 100% pro something and 49. 9 percent against something. So that's an absolute division. It has nothing to do with the democratic understanding at all. So that symbolizes that. And number four is I think it's important to train your voice.

Basically the old rhetoric, etos patos logos, [00:37:00] having a. ethical foundation credibility having that logical argument how to learn how to argue in a structured way where it's plausible. And then also training the pathos, how you can influence people and take them on your journey to inspire them, to help.

You and to join you build that new story because everything we have in business in the world today are built on stories, right? It only exists in our minds and we build economies. I think that is very important. Coming back to your question and I, and if I get you right, I think we are able to do something.

And I think one of the things that can lead us to more people being able to getting into that state is basically working on the educational models. I think one of the points for me was to that question is we've become aware of the issue of the constructs that we've created around us about the absolutes and you're this therefore you must be that and it's disabled dialogue and conversation.

I think as a society, we're becoming [00:38:00] more aware of that. So hopefully we've taken

the first few steps towards getting back to the world that you describe in the types of ways we need to think and behave differently. I think definitely we're talking about it more, which means we, we've acknowledged the problem at least.

I agree. That's the first step. And invest in long term solutions. Also a bit different than how we are doing it right now, right? Yeah. I think the realistic path here, I talk about it in German called Enkel Feek which is prosperity for posterity. So we want to live a good life. We are human beings.

We have reached a level of at least in the Western part of the world where we will never limit ourself enough. I don't think that's a realistic path. So we need to think long term and short term. So we need to have a decent life now and we want to serve future generations. So infinity is abstract, but if you write down one thing that you would work on that makes for a good life now and for your grandchildren, then you have more of a [00:39:00] concrete specific way to tackle infinity and those long term solutions can be built out of that.

And the other part is. I think turning back to your point is that the understanding of technological progress. If I may the whole energy crisis that we have is not the root cause, is not the war on Ukraine. The root cause is the lack of capability to invest and build the obvious companies that started to work.

to work solar and wind 20 years ago. They're highly profitable, some of them right now, but we didn't do enough. The money was there, but we were old and we were late. We were laying back and relaxing in our old world of technology and we didn't explore the new. So if you look back at how it was in the UK or even in Germany, particularly in the post second world war era.

There were hacker mentality, the belief in, in the art of doing business, creating better problems, innovation, exploration. And then the last, [00:40:00] decades we have been optimizing that. And we have the sun, we have only a distribution problem. And all of a sudden now with the outbreak of the war, everyone gets into action mode.

Everyone is forced to tackle and take on these issues. And then all of a sudden it goes really. fast. We progress every day now on various types of energy forms. And if we look back in 10 years, we will say, how could we at all survive with those stone age tools that we were using back then? And that understanding is at the foundation of long term thinking, because you need to invest now in order to change something in 20, 30 years from now.

Sjoukje, what's trending this week? So each week I will do some research on what's trending in tech and pick something that I find interesting to share with you. And this week's trend is about the EU. They threw a gala launch party for its 387, [00:41:00] 000 euro metaverse platform. And only six people showed up at the event.

So the European Commission's foreign aid department hosted a launch party on a virtual beach in the metaverse. And this party was specifically held to educate young people about the EU and draw them into a space where they could learn more about what the EU actually does. And according to reports, Just six people made a digital appearance at the event.

So what do we think is going on there? Is this the fact that they were ahead of the curve on say, metaverse adoption? Or do we just think that it was wrong headed in the sense of old folks trying to do something cool for the kids? And the kids, of course, seeing straight through that as they are frustratingly good at doing.

Or is it something else? What do we think? Anders, what's your perspective? And I know you've been doing some thinking about the metaverse generally, right?[00:42:00] I think

it boils down to metaverse or universe or whatever verse, it boils down to what is the incentive? What is the incentive for a change in behavior?

When I. read statements about the education we've done in the metaverse. Then I say, what is incentive? So how do you incentivize people to do a educational structure in the metaverse? You optimize the story that you tell. What does that mean? You make history that was most of the time was really boring.

You make it more sexy and you add attributes that sell stuff and if you're going to add selling points to all the things that you put into the metaverse creating a little bit slightly optimized Mark Zuckerberg that is handsome and has slightly better values if that is the tension of If that is a notion of the metaverse, which it is, it's just trying to figure out how to optimize things that we have done incorrectly or bad in, in, in the real world, then I don't think it's something [00:43:00] that has a value at all.

Will it become valuable? Of course there will be business models built on it, but does it tackle some of the things? Will it feel real? Yes. But is it a, is it the right thing to do? I think we. can approach such a creation of such a metaverse with a very simple thing. What is the incentive? What is the better problem that we can describe in society today that we are going to solve with that?

If that is thing, I'm all metaverse. If we can find ways to do that, if it's all about how can we make. a shitload of money by optimizing something that is crappy outside or make it like more virtual or unreal. Then I think it's, of course it's going to move money, but it's not going to help us, you can sit in a metaverse and the planet, closes out.

And because the energy is consumed to run it. So there is, so I don't know. I'm very, I haven't been doing a lot of metaversing myself and I think there are a lot of things in the whatever words, real words, whatever this is that we can take on. And as long [00:44:00] as we don't find things that are better problems for society I still know it's going to happen artworks and stuff like that, but, and in real estate and what have you not, but I don't see it as a valuable contribution to, to, to the challenge that we have today.

So Sjaal, why did they design this platform? What were they actually trying to do with it? Anything as noble as that? Yeah, there was an official statement around that. To increase awareness of what the EU does on the world stage among 18 to 45 year olds who are primarily found on TikTok and Instagram.

who are neutral about the EU and not typically exposed to such information. So it was a pamphlet, basically, a pamphlet about the EU. A really complicated pamphlet that's really hard to read and engage with. Yeah, somehow they've taken the concept of a short infomercial and turned it into something incredibly hard to engage with.

Yeah, in my opinion, I think the best [00:45:00] approach would have been to to meet them at their platform of choice instead of creating a separate platform and draw them into it. It feels a little bit like somebody said, we've got to use the metaverse. Now let's find a problem we're going to solve with it as opposed to we've got an engagement problem and we need to go meet them on the platform where they engage.

Yeah. And there were a lot of Not very positive opinions, so I did try the platform myself as well. Oh, did you? Tell us about it. Yeah. What happened? It was well designed. It looks good. Graphics look good, although I would have used a bit more realistic avatars. Those were really strange. What were they? What did they look like?

Yeah. Some sort of, It was not even human different forms, where you could pick from. What

did you choose for your avatar? Yeah, the first one. Just used the first one. Really got into the [00:46:00] spirit of it there. Yeah. Yeah, so it was well designed, but... Controls were not working properly. I got lost a couple of times, got stuck on a rock a couple of times.

And I saw lots of people abusing the chat functionality as well. Adding links, HTML tags to it, try to run some scripting. So that's how they are using that. They're immediately trying to subvert it and break it. Yeah. Yeah. That's why they're using it for. Yeah. I think it goes with all human beings, if you want to build something like that, it has to be so beyond any experience.

The kids have all these crazy technological experiences. If you want to give something new to a young generation today. It doesn't have to be good design. It has to be so freaking amazing beyond anything that you have seen. If you look at the recent release of the open AIs, both the the virtual, the artistic path or the chat functions, that you have the last couple of weeks only. Those [00:47:00] are things where you are wowed. That their application will say this is so far beyond what I've ever seen before, and that. Goes viral, that draws attention, sucks people into it, creates a business model, and so on and so forth. So moving forward, anything that does not serve the human being or the planet does not have a relevance.

Once you have that, that baked into the core of any business and any activity, you have to have that as a core. You don't market it as some touch, you don't market sustainability, you don't market social, that's just the core. Then you have to have the whole brand look and feel the experience. Experience has to be amazing, and then you have to have an actual value proposition.

What is it? What kind of problem is can you pinpoint that problem that you are solving with this particular product? If you can get those three boxes checked, then you have a decent chance of setting up something, but. Listen to your arguments again. It's just, you don't match any of the three.

So it's doomed [00:48:00] to fail, right? Yeah. Thank you, Sjelke. I feel bad for them. They obviously did that in a well intended way, but I hope they've learned from it. And the next time they try something like this, it's maybe it maybe checks at least two of the three of Anders boxes. So moving on, Anders, we like to end the show each week by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next.

Could be anything from... Christmas is coming all the way through to the next big piece of work or thinking you're going to do. Yeah. Spending time with my family is obviously very important. Now in the holiday season, that's something that I will go to Norway and pick out the skis and have some cold experiences and go out and listen to the silence.

But I will also be doing a lot of writing. Singularity really

Into that question. And the second part is that we are planning a a launch of my quantum economy. The book that I wrote back in 2019, it'll be a trilogy where the second book is about un unleashing the potential of [00:49:00] technology and also by freeing up the men through the educational part.

So we go into the potentialities of technology, we're building a global platform at the quantum economy com. We're doing educational models. Initial courses on quantum theory and also quantum technology and around the educational part. And yeah, and then we're writing a new book around that topic.

And so those are the main things that, that I'm doing over the next weeks. Yeah just a few things then. I'm privileged. I'm privileged. I can get up every morning and learn. That's I

always see that as a huge privilege and I love to learn. I'm curious and I love to learn new things.

So I'm, I, it's not, it doesn't seem like work. It's just the time I don't spend with family, I spend, yeah, exactly. I spend exploring. Fantastic. Look, thanks so much for spending time with us this week and helping us through and providing some food for thought over the turkey and wine over the next couple of weeks.

It's been great to see you. Thank you so much. It was a pleasure. You really gave me a lot to think [00:50:00] about Anders. Thanks a lot. Thank you. Thanks to our producer Marcel, our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, and of course, to all of our listeners.

We're on LinkedIn and X, Dave Chapman, Rob Kernahan, and Sjoukje Zaal. Feel free to follow or connect with us and please get in touch if you have any comments or ideas for the show. And of course, if you haven't already done that, rate and subscribe to our podcast.

See you in another reality next week

So we're taking a break for Christmas and we'll be back with a great lineup of guests from mid January. Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.[00:51:00]

And somebody's left it in a toilet somewhere. Or, we, there's a 16 year old boy that visited the Europe the EU's metaverse and he decided to simulate a new universe and this is what we got. Yeah. So sad. Haha. Haha.

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