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Christmas Special! A RenAissance
- The Rome Call for AI Ethics with
Father Paolo Benanti

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[00:00:00] Yeah. One of my professor of social ethics say that every consumer is a voters. Every time that you buy something, it's a vote for someone that produce it. Oh, what a great way to think about it. You buy it, you're voting for that organization. Yeah, I like that.

Welcome to Christmas Realities, a conversation show exploring the practical and exciting alternate realities that can be unleashed through cloud driven transformation. I'm Dave Chamanager. I'm Santia Zaal and I'm Rob Snowmanahan and this week to provide some festive food for thought We're going to explore the world of AI but this time Through the world of ethics and through some of the biggest conversations that are going on in the subject in the world at the moment We're also going to have a look at some frameworks that some of the [00:01:00] leading minds in the world of AI and ethics are using to help frame up the problem.

But before that, Rob and I were in the office this week and I'd wandered off from my desk and I came back and Rob had gone. I looked around for him and I found him standing in the corner of the office. Decorating a Christmas tree, but he was very distracted and he had tinsel around his neck and he was just sort of staring to one side and I was like, Rob, what's confusing you this way?

Well, the reason the star didn't get to the top of the tree, David, is I'm getting a bit confused about super cloud. Now, what is that though? What is like, what is it? Uh, well, uh, apparently it's the next layer of abstraction. So you've got your hyperscalers. And what you do is you build an abstraction layer on top, so the hyperscalers still provide the compute, but this super cloud, your application and data can move anywhere to where it needs to, to do what it needs to do.

And as I think about it, I go, well, you basically got [00:02:00] cloud brokerage and you can do things to get the cheapest price and all that sort of stuff. But actually you've abstracted away from the underlying platform and you're missing maybe what that underlying platform can do for you. So there's that bit.

And then I thought about it for a while. I thought, But who needs it? Where's the use case? Right? Where is it? So there's probably some niche use cases where it makes sense, but actually for the standard user or the standard enterprise, I don't get it because each individual hyperscale has enough capacity anyway.

And then I thought to myself, am I just a Luddite? I'm not thinking forward to the world and missing some wider point. So fundamentally, hence why I had my tinsel problem. I can, I can see why you struggled with that, but I mean, to me, I think that the thing that I would, I'm confused about in this point is, is there a difference between like multi cloud environments that have got some form of abstraction layer?

And there are some out there like, you know, the likes of Anthos and stuff like that. And I'm sure there are a bunch of third party ones that yeah, allow some illusion of [00:03:00] portability or at least multi cloud control. And that's sort of how I mentally visualize. That type of thing instantiated in the current technology.

Is there a difference between that and super cloud? Yeah, because I mean, the concept of super cloud is you don't, you don't know where you compute is going to run today. It just runs where it needs to run, which means the value add from the hyperscale is actually goes into that abstraction and takes it away from them.

So they become commodity brokers. So you could almost trade compute on the open market. Yep. So it's cheaper over there today. I'll use that. But then when you think about



the actual complexity of engineering that into your system and building the application architecture to what end and what value, you know, cause are you going to put all that effort in to save 10 percent on a particular day or something like that?

I really do need to see more of the use cases properly understand who's going to use this. But there are loads of organizations out there building platforms to do it. So, you know, somebody's betting in, it's got a load of VCs behind it as well. So it could be the next big thing. [00:04:00] It feels like those halcyon days of early cloud to me where people were thinking there'd be brokerage across it.

I mean, maybe it's inevitable, but I think that I think the problem has to be solved. The problem you made, or rather the point you made, I've made plenty of problems. David, don't worry about that. That's true. Ask a question and walk away. That's what I heard. The point I was going to make though was more about.

The issue that you talked about at the beginning, which is once you've abstracted, you've abstracted away from the underlying goodness, like the underlying functional and the, and multi cloud, you know, the, the most important aspect of the multi cloud definition to me has always been functional architecture.

Use the right tool for the right job in the right place, you know, and then, and then you balance that with aspects of scale and being able to sort of, you know, get the, the right economies of scale across it at the same time. I don't think we're gonna resolve the whole supercloud thing today, Rob. I'm putting that on the table.

Uh, I think it'll be a, a five year thing. Uh, I think we're just starting the hype cycle on it now, so we'll see where it gets to. [00:05:00] Very good. Now onto today's main subject, and I am absolutely delighted to say that joining us this week. Is professor and father Paolo Benanti, professor of ethics and technology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, an advisor to the Vatican and on the advisory board to the general secretary of the United Nations.

Paolo, it is amazing to have you with us today. Why don't you just say a quick hello and tell everybody a little bit about yourself. Hello. It's my pleasure to be here with you, guest of the year. I'm Paolo Benanti. I'm a professor of ethics of technology at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy, and I'm used to be focused on AI and ethics.

Rome is such a fabulous city. I love it. Every time I go, there's so much there to see. It's like endless, endless history around every corner. Such a fabulous place to experience and see. Not to mention the food, Rob. Yeah, the food is [00:06:00] also, uh, very, very nice. I once dragged my boys in a 35 degree Celsius seat round all the Roman villas just above the Colosseum and made sure they knew about every Roman emperor that went through.

They weren't very pleased with me. Let's just say I wasn't popular dad that day. I got all excited. I bet they still talk about that afternoon. Yeah, in therapy. Yeah. Yeah, exactly. It's like, I'd never cried so much. It added to the dehydration, I suspect. It was, it was a sweltering day. Yes. Anyway, I enjoyed it.

So, you know, that's all, that's all it counts. I've paid for it, paid for it. So definitely going to do, definitely going to do all the emperors again. Um, brilliant. And where you've been traveling to recently, Paolo, anywhere notable? I was just back from New York city because I was at the United Nation Committee for AI ethics.

Oh, very cool. That must have been a fascinating meeting with all the different viewpoints. [00:07:00] A complex one. Complex one, that's a good way to describe it. Any useful conclusions drawn? No, it's, it's still too early. We are, it's too weak that we are working. We



will see in person on December 7th and 8th again.

We will see what happens. We are building the document and we will discuss the content of the document. Interesting stuff. And is that a timeframe that you can share? How far out are you looking before you think it'll get finalized? Uh, well, actually, we, we was asked to keep, uh, secrecy on that until, uh, an agreement is, uh, is given on the document.

Fully understand. No problem. And talking about Rome, I think one of your, uh amazing roles that you get to play is, is an advisory role in the Vatican. I wonder if you could just tell us a little bit about that. Like, how did you get involved and what does the day to day of such a thing look like? Well, actually, uh, Vatican City is also a little [00:08:00] state, probably one of the latest on the surface of the planet, but we have around, uh, 1 billion, uh, not citizen, but faithful, uh, globally.

And so this is the, the show, the complexity of what the business that are going on, because you are all the diplomacy. You have all the offices that touch all the different things from health to social justice, to education. There is a lot. Uh, of education, because a lot of the Catholic school around the world.

And so every different, uh, container, the name is the Castori are parts of the life of the Odyssey. And because AI artificial intelligence actually is a general purpose of technology. It's a technology that is not used to do something, but that we will change everything that we do like the electricity did before.

So actually every one of the side of the, of the life of the Odyssey is touched or pinged or questioned [00:09:00] by artificial intelligence. And so the different body from the top to the bottom are often asking some kind of confrontation about AI and ethics aspect of the AI. And so there are a lot of engagement, confrontation, discussion, uh, whispering things and things like that about, uh, AI ethics.

And this is what does it mean to be, uh, in some way, someone that cooperate also with the policy. It's a coming together, isn't it, of ancient thinking and thinking that's kind of helped shape society thus far to something new that is truly transformational in society? Well, uh, let me put in the church perspective, you know, because we pass different, uh, changing in society that was not so little.

Try to think the collapsing of the Roman Emperor. Try to think the middle age, try to think the renaissance, uh, try to think the modern age and all the war of the last [00:10:00] century. So the institution in itself is a little bit used to aging, changing people inside the institution a little bit less. And so I have to work on both sides.

Although what gives me hope is that humankind has tackled with great Challenges and there are a lot of worry about AI but there's a bit of hope there that says you know what we've managed to deal with big things before hopefully if we work together we can we can tackle this issue as well fingers crossed.

We hope so. And thus far if you can talk about it how is that advice sort of emerging as a go forward does it feel to you like you know you're obviously talking. As part of the UN group that you're working in, you're talking with many figures in the Vatican. What does it look like as a take forward for you?

Does it look like a set of principles? Does it look like governance? Does it look like law? Is it a combination of those factors? [00:11:00] Well, actually, I can give you my personal perspective in so different table. Uh, my perspective is the perspective of someone that is simple, uh, questioning technologies, uh, being, uh, ethical or having an ethical approach to



technology means questioning technology about how every single, uh, singular technological artifact is actually a displacement of power and a sort and a form of orbit there in society.

And so my job, it's a really wonderful one because I make, I can make all the questions that I want and I have no duty to give any answer. And so I ping on, I knew you were going to say that. The architect's role is to constantly question everything and then walk off. Yeah. Yeah, something like that, but it's a very important thing though, that you bring up is asking the right question at the right time.

Forces people to think potentially a different [00:12:00] way and that can change the course and the direction that they take. So there is a skill in that way. You position the question. It's very, very important role to constantly check the why. And have we thought it through? Because lots of people like to rush through to a conclusion job done off.

We go, let's go build it. And actually the unintended consequences of Can can be quite bad if you don't ask the right questions at the right time. Yeah, actually from Socrates Questioning could be really really dangerous, you know Socrates was used to go around and questioning Athens with a lot of things and they forced him to commit suicide So questioning could be for good and I'll People to change or can simple face all the resistance to any kind of change.

And that could have a negative, uh, a negative effect. But, uh, questioning is also a matter of having a sort of habit, having a sort of attitude to questioning ourself in our life. And this is also the spiritual side, [00:13:00] if you allow me to express in that way, of being an ethicist. Uh, you cannot be, you know, like an engineer that simple make a calculation for a structure you have also to be used to question to yourself if you are aligned to assert a set of value, what you are doing, what is the meaning, what is the purpose, and then you can have an easy way to question also technology.

Well, let's actually use that as a bridge into the other half of your role, which is a professor and thinking about ethics from an academic perspective as part of your day job also. So why don't you actually frame ethics for us, you know, we'll come back to AI in a second, but frame ethics for us in terms of how it impacts our day to day lives.

Well, actually, every one of us, every, every morning when wake up. Simple facing situation in which there is not an unforceable instinct that drive us in what we do this [00:14:00] morning. Every one of us probably has to choose between coffee and tea or cappuccino or something else. Well, that kind of choices is connected to a property that we have as a human beings that is called freedom, but also the consequence of our choices.

are something that we feel responsible for. So between freedom and responsibility, ethics is the space in the middle of these two parentheses. Ethics is everything that start with freedom and end with a responsibility. And then how do you see that if you, if you use your, just your simple example, which is like everyone makes a choice on a morning between coffee and orange juice.

How does within such a simple Choice does the ethics sit within that simple choice well actually ethics is in every choices sometimes we can make choices and aware sometimes we have some kind of trouble in choosing something and this is where we [00:15:00] call dilemma. An ethical dilemma is a situation in which is involved freedom and responsibility.

But that situation looks to us really difficult to be untied and to be solved. But ethics is everywhere. Of course, we are focused and we are used to be focused on the most difficult situation, like, for example, the classical trolley problem. I have a trolley, the trolley can hit five people working on a railroad.



If I pull the, uh, leverage, then I can move the trolley to another, uh, track, but one man will die. What I should do. Okay. Because we are talking about human life, then we can feel so difficult to answer, but the same attitude to answer here. And in the example of coffee on tea, both are connected to ethics.

And I think particularly the chain of responsibility in even in a very basic decision can run a long way, for example, in, you know, are you buying coffee from, you know, a country that's [00:16:00] treating its citizens? Well, it's not a war zone. How much of that should play into our daily lives, even when we're making that sort of decision?

Because obviously that's it's marketed as a lot these days that, you know, you should choose ethical chocolate and ethical coffee and, you know, many other things. How does that chain of responsibility play into this for you? Well, actually, this is where not only ethics is my necessity to choice, but where also come the ethics that means a scientific reflection on what is involved in choices.

And this is a really huge difference because when you talk ethics as a discipline, you are not talking to my decision, your decision, or someone else's decision. You are talking about a huge reflection on which kind of decision could be called correct. Which one could be called incorrect, which one could be called good, and which one could be called bad.

And when, uh, there is a philosophical [00:17:00] system that we call consequentialism that say that the only criteria are the effect of the, of my, of my action. Well, uh, a pure. Consequential aesthetics actually is not workable. In fact, it's a matter of chain of responsibility. The classical example, imagine that you're on a boat on a lake, and there is a man that is simple droning inside the lake.

Uh, should you help him? Well, uh, the effort is to survive, to save his life. And the answer is yes. What if that man was Hitler? Well, if you allow him to draw, you are saving 6 million people. Difficult choices. What if he's the mother of Hitler? What is if the grandmother of Hitler? So where the, the, the chain of responsibility ends, uh, if you, if you simple reasoning.

In terms of chain of responsibility, you can have no practical way to choices. [00:18:00] Usually we are used to say in a philosophical perspective that ethics make you responsible only on the effect that you can be capable to understand. That's a very good point. So if I can comprehend the consequences of my actions, then you're, it's your responsibility to act in what we would say ethically.

But if you don't know what's beyond that, what we're basically saying is you can't, you can't expect a human to be able to cope with that situation because the, the degrees of consequence can go so far that it just becomes out of control. Yeah. And try to think a lot of discussion about some controversial, like smoke.

When the company really understand that smoke can kill or when the oil company producer can understand that the pollution can kill a lot of people and so responsibility is a serious matter, not less serious than freedom. So it's that point about when an organization or an individual became aware. [00:19:00] that what they were doing might have ethical implications.

That's what we're basically saying is that, that you, that's when you act, but you can't really, well, could you hold them to account prior to the knowledge that comes out? I suppose there's then a very complicated conversation about when could you have known and did you try to find out? And it goes back to your first point, which is, were you asking the questions at the right time and investigating?



So there's another layer of complexity in there as well. Yeah, I just simply would like to add another layer to your point, you know, because ethics is so long. And because it's so long, we have, uh, we have a lot of reasoning on that for some kind of action, you have to be aware before you can do it. Think to driving a car, the license is a medical standpoint that say that you have to be aware that if you go too fast, you can kill yourself and other people.

So it's not just a matter of being aware after sometimes you have to, to being aware before. And then you can do something in that direction. Well, let's use [00:20:00] those points to move into the world of artificial intelligence then and how some of this stuff plays into artificial intelligence. Because this is a jumping off point.

It seems to me that we as a society don't really understand this technology and the consequences of this technology at all well yet. So to use your chain of responsibility, thinking it's quite easy to excuse behavior that might look. Reprehensible in 20 years time or actually might look completely innocuous in 20 years time.

So how do you approach such a fundamental issue as a I with the amount of ambiguity that surrounds it at the moment? Well, let me let me point out two direction. Direction number one is well, you know, when I talk about a I talk about a machine that can achieve from me the ends and then the machine can choose the means to achieve that kind of hands.

And one of the core points on [00:21:00] every ethical reflection is that the hands is not justifying the means. And so the first and unavoidable ethical point with AI is that if you have a machine that is using some means, you have to be aware that you are the one that is responsible over what rounded means for that hands.

Just to give you an example, uh, uh, uh, being really provocative. I asked to a really sophisticated medicine AI system. I will not say any brand now. Uh, what was the best solution to cancel cancer from the face of the earth? I know very well that the machine is a mathematical one that would like to bring the function to zero.

And so the first answer was kill all the human beings. Of course, you will have no cancer, but that means it's not good for that kind of ants. And so this is the first point.[00:22:00]

It's really radical, you know, it's a really radical solution. You go to zero really fast. Well, the second point is. A lot of the major news, the major features that we are getting with artificial intelligence are connected to a series of algorithms that actually are not explainable. So we cannot really understand before and later why the algorithm chose that solution proposing us that kind of answer.

And that makes it really problematic to decide in which field we can apply it. Of course. If we would like to have an autonomous car, probably we would, we, we would like to have something that is able to explain or be explainable about the decision that the car is doing. If we are using image recognition simple to select some kind of beams in a food procession production unit, uh, it's not so important, you [00:23:00] know, because at least you will have 10% of this card.

That could be, could have an ethical effect, but it's not the same ethical effect of have 10 percent of people that is walking on the street diet. And so it's also something really contextual, an ethical approach to contextual. Yeah. So the, how you want to use it frames up the scale of the sort of the ethical dilemma that sits at the heart of what you want to do with it.

Yeah, because there's lots of simple applications that you just go, yeah, get on with it. Off you go. And then it's the, the effect of, there's always that one about if the machine makes a



decision that disadvantages a human and it was based on bad data that was collected from somewhere that was a mistake, there's a, there's a whole complexity of ethical discussion that goes on about.

Where, where was that? Was it the data collector that's responsible or was it the system that applied the algorithm? You know, and there's all these things about the cause and effect associated with the chain of such like, but it's affecting an individual at the end of it who may be disadvantaged off the [00:24:00] back of that, that sequence and no individual any way through might have perceived what was going to happen.

But the end result is that person has been disadvantaged, isn't it? How do we cope with that type of thing? It's complicated. Yeah. And this is something that is confusing us, you know, because informatics, IT actually already give us some sort of automation, but the traditional automation that come with IT and electronics is a system in which the programmer should think in every occasion what the machine should do.

In a chain that is if this, then that, and you have to think about all the if and you will have all the that. Well, when you start to simple train a machine means that you don't give all the if, you give a set. Of if, and then you drop a machine that run in the real world and you can have an occasion that was not inside the training pool and how the machine will react in that occasion, then you have not a deterministic [00:25:00] answer, but a statistical one and which kind of action.

Could be acceptable with only a statistical tolerance in the effect. The other aspect of AI that at the moment I think is troubling, at least it troubles me, is the tension between the commercial aspect of AI and what looks something like an arms race at the moment to get to. Certain uses of AI that look great from an efficiency point of view, or maybe a value add point of view, but I'm not so sure that we understand the consequences of them versus the ensuring that the technology is trustworthy, ensuring it's safe to use and ensuring that it adheres within.

You know, societal norms and societal boundaries. You know, recently there was the exodus of people from open AI and the, and the, the open rebellion of the people in open AI about the sacking of the chief executive there. And it seemed to, it seems to [00:26:00] me that at the heart of that was, was, was that discussion, a wish by some people in the organization to move fast, move faster for commercial advantage.

And I wish for other people in the organization to actually maybe go a bit slower, be a bit more thoughtful. I wonder what your observations on that tension are, because that, to me, seems to be like a microcosm of, of part of the bigger problem here. Well, actually, let me start from the idea that probably we don't know very well what happened inside because I can argue also that if the boss can be fired, the boss and the founder can be fired so easily, and I was a worker, then I can think that I could be the next in the list.

And so the reaction could be connected also to that. But, uh, when you say ethics, you are not saying, uh, a mathematical calculus with one solution. You are talking about human sensibility, human perspective, and there is no ethics without an ethical discussion. And so what we saw in OpenAI, [00:27:00] if it is an ethical discussion, That is really good, because that means that the company is not aligned just to the profit, but the people that are committing themselves in that company express a culture in which they make to themselves a series of questions about what kind of freedom and what kind of responsibility they have on the product that they will, would like to release.

I think it goes back to that, that global point. Which is there's lots of pressures and people



fear falling behind and that creates an impetus and a pressure to drive forward and push past the questioning and the ethical discussion and everything else because there's this, this, this arms race that's going on with AI that seems to want to compel humankind to go as fast as they can because they don't want to be beaten.

And I think there's a balance that is striking that balance we struggle with and sometimes it falls far too one way and maybe sometimes we paralyze ourselves with the discussion and lose out on a load of. Benefit as well to the individual. So it's, it's that you see that balance playing out constantly all [00:28:00] the time and the, the system that drives the global network doesn't help because it's always applying pressure on behind us, isn't it?

This sort of like, you're always having to push back against it to say, hang on a minute, let's check them back and balance what we're actually doing here. Let's move on to how it's useful to frame this. So I think, Paolo, you've got a three level framework within which you can think about how ethics can be applied, or at least the impact of certain things.

Do you want to share that with us? Yeah, of course. When you talk about ethics, you talk to multiple uh, agent, effect on complex system. If we talk about economics, There is the single user that simple make or buy something. And there is also the economics intend as the general system. And so in a parallel way, when we talk about AI analytics, we have to talk about the producer of AI, the biggest services that come from server.

Then you have the deployer. There are the [00:29:00] middle figure that simple apply that kind of capability to a tailored solution. And then you have the user, and the user is me and you and everyone that is simple facing an AI application. Hmm. And so there are really different question, a really different freedom and responsibility for every one of these level, uh, uh, uh, producer for example, is someone that should be able to say that the dataset that are behind the system are not biased.

The deployer should be one that say that that function, that is a, a call or an API on a server. Fit well, the context in which the call is made. So, for example, if I have an image and recognition and I apply to, uh, producing, uh, uh, uh, uh, irony, producing a press, producing of pieces is really different. If I use the image and recognition to decide which patient will leave and which one we will, we will die at an emergency room [00:30:00] and then you have the user and the user.

For example, should have the freedom to know if the decision making process on him is made by an algorithm or by a human beings. If he's interacting with an automatic system or not. And so different level because it's a really complex things like our life. In this really complex things we have to give different perspective to be really ethical.

Mason And this is a little bit of a tangent, but it was in our earlier conversation, and I'm interested to know how it plays in in your mind, is the notion of globalization and whether, you know, when you're thinking about different perspectives on ethics, whether it seems obvious that society and societal norms in different parts of the globe will have different perspectives on what's ethical or not.

So when you've got a, something like AI, which is kind of instantly global. How do those two things come together in your mind? Because that sounds, that feels like another, that's a troubling dimension that I hadn't actually thought of previously when we've been working on this subject. Well, [00:31:00] uh, the first one that made this problem was MIT lab, because they make a survey and ask to United States people, Do you think that autonomous vehicle Should be regulated, almost 100 percent tell yes.



Should be regulated by the producer, 93, we don't trust them. Should be regulated by the government, 94, we don't trust them. Okay. Love it. You don't trust them, but they gotta regulate. It's like, that doesn't quite work. At this point, at this point, MIT Labs guys that are really smart, make, make an online survey.

So there was like, uh, the book when you have to study when you try to take your license drive with a lot of situation, no? And so, you are alone on the car and there are two people on the street. Should the car kill yourself or kill the two people on the street? And then flipping the question, you are with another one on the street and there is a car with one man inside who should be died.

I [00:32:00] suspect self preservation played out quite well in that question. But the most interesting thing is, was on the example in which they, they, they put two young people crossing the street, one elderly man on the car. And another example with the same situation, but the two younger kids was crossing with red light.

And so the real interesting things was that we don't have a shared common solution, but we can split solution according to culture. So Asian people are much more intended to preserve the young life. Western the elderly, and so the northern country of Europe, if you cross with the red, you are dead. Can you imagine a Mediterranean like me in which everyone does what you want in Rome and things like that.

And so this was a huge point because someone said, okay, there is not a common norm valid worldwide, [00:33:00] so cannot be any ethics. But, you know, this is a wrong focal point on ethics because ethics is just not norms. Ethics is also value, ethics is also virtues. So if I ask to everyone here in this room, do you prefer a just or unjust AI?

Well, this is a virtues. Everyone would like to say just. Then we can discuss how much is just, but just is universal. So we have to define different things when we talk about ethics. The most important thing to have an international agreement are not norms. are not values, but are principle. Principle is the tools that are used when you are in a dilemma.

So if you have a dilemma in which you can kill one or five, the principle is minimize the loss. And everyone is, can find an agreement on that. So when you move to a global scale, you have to change the perspective. In a com, [00:34:00] in a community that is characterized by some sort of common culture, You can find also norm values and other things, and that could be a company.

So a company, it's really easy that they can have a common culture. If you go to a worldwide, uh, global community of human beings, then principle are enough. And principle is a lot of things, because you can have a really effective design, for example, with a principle like minimize the loss. And in your mind, Is that where the dialogue is going?

You're involved in a number of some of the big world conversations on this, you know, is it heading in the right direction from that perspective? And are the right people involved in that conversation? Do you think? Well, uh, my experience tell me that everyone would like to have some discussion on ethics because the speed of transformation, like you said before, is so high.

And the effect could be so wide that we need some, you know, cardinal points to, to move [00:35:00] ourself. What is much more effective is this discussion on principle. We can also discuss some values. Values are the lower step than principle. We can agree on values. But then also values are some, some differences really, really, really deep.

Uh, probably the biggest difference between, uh, the Asian and China culture and the



Western culture is the value that we give to the human beings or the value that we give to the community. Because, uh, for Western people, especially after all the blood of the last century, with the World War II, human rights is something that is declined in a singular way.

You, me, us, we have human rights, and no one can touch me. For other cultures, the community as a whole is the place of the value. This is value. You can find universal value, like life, but you can find also really big difference. And norm is still more complex and cultural [00:36:00] oriented. Think what's happening now in a culture like United States.

After the pandemic, in some country, in some, in some states like California, you cannot be arrested if you are a thief of small things. This is a huge change in a norm that before was really strict. And so we, if you would like to build a global ethics, we cannot start from the norm. We start to, for the principle, try to agree on the major number of values and then allow people to develop norms.

But the respect principle and value and maybe just to bring our conversation today to a little bit of a close. How does the Rome call for ethics? First of all, first of all, I guess, for those who haven't heard of it, what is it? And what's the big contribution that you're seeking to make through it? Well, actually, the wrong call for a ethics is a document.

Signed for the first time on February 28th, 2020, just one day before the big lockdown for COVID 19. And that, that call [00:37:00] was a collection of six principles, six ethical principles, that allow different entities to stitch together and to start to produce an ethical culture for AI. Uh, in the original signature of 2020, uh, we have Microsoft, we have IBM, we have the Catholic Church, and we have the FAO, the Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations, and then we have a member of the government, Italian government, the Ministry for Innovation.

In January, 2023, we have to here suppose because, you know, pandemic was so strong. We have the signator of the high rabbi of Jerusalem and the foreign, the Muslim foreign for peace that make of that document, the first document in which the three monotheistic Mediterranean religious agreed together. And in the next July we bring that document to Hiroshima.

where the Eastern religion, we signed the principle. Meanwhile, [00:38:00] more than 150 universities signed it and agreed to produce an ethical class. Uh, in their engineering courses and we have other company and we have other, other subject. So what is wrong call for AI ethics? It's like a tide. It's like a wave, an ethical wave, an ethical tide.

The simple ask to people to be aware of what's going on, like we are doing in this podcast and to act consequentially. I wouldn't, if you wouldn't mind just setting out the six principles that are contained in the document. Yeah, the run call has three areas and is ethics, education and rights with six principles.

The first one is transparency. AI system must be understandable to all. And this is a really good principle on the user side. Should be inclusive. The system must not discriminate against anyone because every human being. This has equal dignity, and this is on producer side, then they, the system has to be accountability.

There must be always someone who take responsibility for what [00:39:00] the machine does. And this is on the employer side. The machine should be impartial. The principle is impartiality. AI system must not follow or create biases. Reliability, AI must be reliable, and then the sixth principle is security and privacy.

This system must be secure and respect the privacy of users. So those six principles now are



really worldwide, and no one is making any objection to this.

Sjoukje, what have you been looking at this week? So each week I do some research on related ideas and transformation and tech. And this week I thought we should take a look at the importance of ethical AI to shape a responsible future. So AI is changing how things are curated for people, making experiences more personalized in many [00:40:00] areas of their life.

As AI gets better at creating content, it's important to think about the ethical issues that come with these changes. So organizations need to both understand the challenges and the risks around AI and take these fully into account when designing and deploying applications. So I have a question to you.

What are the key challenges for companies in ensuring fairness and avoiding? Biases in AI generated content. I mean, for me, the world needs to go through a very good process of education to raise awareness of what's going on. To have conversations like this about potential impact, the consequences, your actions.

I always love that conversation, the retrospective that they did where scientists created the algorithm, ran it over. Data created positive feedback loops to give you the information that you wanted and then they stood back and realized they created bubbles and people got stuck in them and didn't see outside their world and so that driving education to [00:41:00] raise awareness so that people think about it before they start the journey as opposed to starting the journey and then standing back and going, Oh, if I'd only known before for me is absolutely.

Key and we're right on the edge of AI becoming something big and a big social impact. So now is the time to make sure that for any organization that's looking to use it, that their staff are properly understanding of what the impact can be of bad data, biased data, not thinking for the future and thinking about how this might affect the end user.

I agree with that. And I think at the moment as we're going through this, the process of actually trying to understand this in practical and day to day terms, all of what Rob just said, I think needs some aspects of scaffolding in organizations. Certainly it's education programs, but I think lots of organizations.

Uh, you know, I was included of putting governance groups around this to act as escalation points to act as catalysts for conversations. And I think even though we don't have all the [00:42:00] answers yet, hopefully some form of governing structure is evolving around it and that organizations. Uh, making a point of considering the ethical issues with the deployment of AI, you know, like there are many of the, you know, I've, I say many might even be all of the big producers at the moment have been talking about the ethical responsibility they have and what's in my head, Paolo, as, as I'm thinking Schalke's question through is your, is your three levels, you know, so producer, so yeah, Developer and user.

I wonder if I wonder if that framework applies itself very directly to sort of the corporate adoption of a I actually, I think that we can answer all this question with one more principle that is transparency, because if we have transparency, one producer should be transparent on the on which kind of data.

Um, lack of data could be used inside the [00:43:00] training system. The deployer will be transparent on which kind of, uh, feature are embedded or not embedded. And the user has the view on all the process and can decide if it could be an exception for him and asking for a human review, for example. And transparency, I think, is the principle.



That could fix all the question that you are talking about and having that principle as a cultural features in company that would like to simple jump on the circus or having that in a user experience could be a really transformative principle in what we see now, because if you push transparency and everybody sees what's happened and you've got the visibility, then everybody can choose and see and judge.

And then it incentivize people to make sure they get it right. The lack of transparency might drive a different way of working. So I think that is absolutely [00:44:00] key that if you put that in every step, then somebody else can see it, check it, balance it and call it out. Do we see a tension though in commercial competitiveness?

And the race to achieve, like, in inverted commas, the best, whatever that might look like. Do you think that's in tension with transparency? Well, I think, in one side, we have a lack of culture. So, we are, in some way, we are used to have a computer system that simply gives an answer. And we don't ask why we got that kind of answer.

And this is one side. So we have a lack of transparency for that. And then, uh, there is a, uh, an understanding of transparency, a wrong understanding of transparency that is simple against the copyright. So or some kind of rights on the product. But actually, this kind of transparency is something that is in some way, uh, intended when we start to talk about international standard because an [00:45:00] international standard ISO rule is simple, a transparency applied.

To engineered system. So I know which kind of metal is behind. I know the feature. I know the limitation and I can apply in a safe way. So we need to transform the principle transparency in a standardization normal norms that allow us to play the transparency in every situation. And do you think we're moving fast enough on that?

Or do you think that, you know, we'll be subject to the robot overlords before we get around to publishing the first ISO on it? Well, uh, you know, I, I cannot deny that there are not only ethical values. There are also commercial values behind that. And so the tension is here, you know? Yeah, for sure. There's plenty of examples in the world where the system can't move fast enough, and I think climate change is a good example as well, where you see the world trying to know it's the right thing to have a conversation, but all the nuances that exist in different nation states [00:46:00] come to bear, and they find it very difficult to agree.

And I think, you know, Humankind does struggle on a global level to try and deal with these things. So, uh, time will tell. And as ever, I welcome our robot overlords and hope they're benevolent. I still think you're probably too deep to get your way out of it now, Rob, but I admire you keep trying. Maybe they'll listen to the podcast and go, Oh, he's all right.

Yeah. They probably won't bother listening to it. They'll just use the transcript. Very true. Look on that note, Paolo, thank you so much for spending some time with us this afternoon and guiding us through an extremely complex set of problems and giving us some frameworks with which to think about them afresh.

It's been a real pleasure. Thank you very much. Now we end every episode of this show by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next. And that could be, you've got an amazing Christmas holiday coming up or it could be something that's happening in your professional life. So, uh, Paolo, what are you excited about doing next?[00:47:00]

Well, I will, I would like to say something that is really mixed, you know, as a Franciscan, we are really well known because we have the first traditional, uh, Nativity representation in the history. So my Christmas, the idea is to go in Greccio where the first nativity happen and



having a retirement moment in one isolated room when I can read a good book of AI and ethics to come back a little bit more Christmas like.

Beautiful. Well, we wish you well with that. Thank you. A huge thanks to our guests this week. Paolo, thank you so much for being on the show. Thanks also to our sound and editing wizards, Ben and Louis, our jingling producer, Marcel, 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. Wish all of our listeners a very happy [00:48:00] Christmas. And happy holidays. See you in another reality next year.

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