

The Transhumanist Declaration

(1) Humanity will be radically changed by technology in the future. We foresee the feasibility of redesigning the human condition, including such parameters as the inevitability of aging, limitations on human and artificial intellects, unchosen psychology, suffering, and our confinement to the planet earth.

(2) Systematic research should be put into understanding these coming developments and their long-term consequences.

(3) Transhumanists think that by being generally open and embracing of new technology we have a better chance of turning it to our advantage than if we try to ban or prohibit it.

(4) Transhumanists advocate the moral right for those who so wish to use technology to extend their mental and physical (including reproductive) capacities and to improve their control over their own lives. We seek personal growth beyond our current biological limitations.

(5) In planning for the future, it is mandatory to take into account the prospect of dramatic progress in technological capabilities. It would be tragic if the potential benefits failed to materialize because of technophobia and unnecessary prohibitions. On the other hand, it would also be tragic if intelligent life went extinct because of some disaster or war involving advanced technologies.

(6) We need to create forums where people can rationally debate what needs to be done, and a social order where responsible decisions can be implemented.

(7) Transhumanism advocates the well-being of all sentience (whether in artificial intellects, humans, posthumans, or non-human animals) and encompasses many principles of modern humanism. Transhumanism does not support any particular party, politician or political platform.



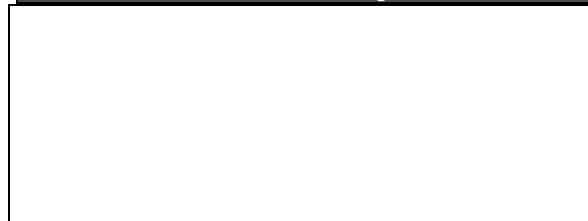
World Transhumanist Association

The WTA was founded in 1998 by philosophers Nick Bostrom Ph.D. and David Pearce. The goal of the World Transhumanist Association is to support discussion and public awareness of emerging technologies; to defend the right of individuals in free and democratic societies to adopt technologies that expand human capacities; and to anticipate and propose solutions for the potential consequences of emerging technologies.

The WTA is growing quickly, and we invite you to join us in this important work. Our 3,000 members worldwide participate in our dozens of discussion lists or join one of our many local WTA chapters, which can be found in countries and languages all over the world. The WTA speakers bureau can provide someone to represent the Transhumanist perspective to the media or to your group. Also, take a look at our e-magazine *Transhumanity*.

You can register as a **basic, supporting or sustaining** member at transhumanism.org. Basic membership is free with registration and includes a 10% discount on participation in WTA events. Dues for supporting membership are \$50US a year for employed people in the developed countries, and \$20US a year for the unemployed, retired, students, and people in developing countries. Sustaining membership is \$250 a year. Supporting and sustaining memberships include voting privileges in WTA elections and decision-making, as well as 20% discounts on WTA events.

Transhumanism in your area



Artificial Intelligence and Transhumanism

*Defending our right to
use reason and
technology
to be better than well*

<http://www.transhumanism.org>

Artificial Intelligence

The term Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as intelligence exhibited by systems that are engineered by humans. AI systems share a common foundation of computer engineering. The word "Artificial" in AI signifies the use of engineering tools and techniques developed by humans as opposed to biological processes working on organic matter.

AI is present wherever there are machines that require some amount of autonomous control. Most types of machines in use today, everything from microwave ovens to airplanes, rely upon software/hardware instructions to operate correctly. These instructions help a machine to decide upon which action, out of all actions available to it, it should execute at which point in time. Simple decision-making involves limited AI while decisions that are more complex require more general AI. The more complex the machine is in terms of operational components and purpose, the more general must be its AI. For example, microwave ovens typically have little or no AI whereas modern airplanes are filled with fancy gadgetry that does things on its own via advanced AI programming. Airplane pilots no longer have to fly their planes manually in the same way that one must drive a car. A significant portion of any modern commercial flight is handled smoothly, efficiently and precisely by onboard computers. As the technology available to human society progresses at ever increasing rates, humans themselves are required to worry less about routine tasks that can be taken care of by machines. Simpler and/or less important work is delegated to machines wherever possible while people themselves focus on more important and more satisfying work.

However, limitations are posed by the level of our current AI technology. Not all jobs are possible for machines. Jobs that require abilities such as object-recognition, complex action path and plan generation, etc. are difficult with technology we have available today. These are areas where significant work still must be done. The relatively young field of AI attempts to make more tasks possible for machines so that humans themselves have the benefit of spending their time doing more useful or more satisfying things.

Artificial General Intelligence

Technically speaking, a robot may be successfully programmed to carry out any task that may be specified as a distinct series of basic actions. Thus, we can have robots for all specific practical pur-

poses. However, having one robot for each specialized task would become very expensive and it would be hard to manage a multitude of robots. The need for general intelligence arises when one tries to have one robot carry out a wide range of activities. For this the robot has to execute actions based on real-time circumstances that it perceives through its sensory inputs. Discriminating appropriately between different sets of inputs (the different combinations of which are practically unlimited in the real world) requires a strong sense of pattern. Since it is not possible for the human programmer to specify the robot's actions for *all* possible combinations of inputs, the robot must be capable of associating context to input patterns. This capability is what has proved to be the one of the most difficult to instill into an AI system. Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is the term given to intelligence that is capable of generalized learning and action generation. Research in this area usually focuses on sensory data mining, efficient knowledge representation, image recognition, etc.

Useful and Fun AI

The following are a few AI applications that are enjoyable and/or useful:

Aibo – Sony's cute little puppy robot. Aibo learns to interact with its playmates.

Asimo – Honda's humanoid robot that can walk and move similar to humans.

Roomba – Roomba Discovery Floorvac is an autonomous mobile vacuum cleaner that works and then recharges and then works again ...

Alice – Artificial Linguistic Internet Computer Entity. A general chatterbot that is capable of very engaging typed conversations. Won the Loebner prize in 2000, 2001 and 2004.

Ramona – A chatterbot similar to Alice but that restricts itself to specific information (This is neither a comprehensive list nor does it imply anything about the relative importance of these applications)

The Future of Machine Intelligence

Trends in AI technology suggest that we will soon have amazing robots to work with. Robots will help us with work ranging from household tasks such as housecleaning, as the Roomba robot already does, to complex work such as flying airplanes. It is clear that Artificial Intelligence is going to make society much easier and more fun to live in.

Official WTA Statement on Artificial Intelligence

"The WTA supports the development of more capable artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity. Any AI system that is powerful enough to pose a potential risk must be designed with adequate safeguards. Should future forms of artificial intelligence become sentient, they would be entitled to moral consideration. Nobody should be discriminated against on the basis of their morphology or the substrate of their implementation. Any person brought into existence, whether through "natural" or "artificial" means, has the right to a life worth living. Like biological parents, creators of AI-persons have a responsibility for their progeny's welfare and might in some cases be held accountable for their actions. As the prospect of general machine intelligence draws closer, more thought needs to be devoted to working out the legal, ethical, social, and security implications, e.g. to determine under what conditions artificial intellects or copies of existing persons should be given property rights or voting rights, and whether new public policies will be needed to ameliorate structural unemployment. The development of advanced AI could be the most important event in history, and it should be approached carefully, with clear thinking and serious moral engagement."

(Adopted March 1, 2005)

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