

# 2023 Progress Report & 2024 Plans

December 2023

## Introduction

From the insights of this report, you can clearly see the transformative strides we've made this year. Due to your invaluable support, our team at the IEET has expanded impressively, further strengthened by our synergistic partnership and joint funding with the Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences at the University of Turin and the Applied Ethics Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

We believe in the power of transparency and share our achievements not just to keep you informed, but also to inspire you to join hands with us as we step into a pivotal 2024. The heartbeat of IEET lies in championing technoprogressive values, not just through groundbreaking research, but by forging alliances across sectors to turn theory into tangible results. Are you ready to be a part of IEET's visionary journey? The decision is in your hands!

Below, you'll discover our 2023 achievements and our ambitious roadmap for 2024.

## **Research Fellowships**

## 2023

In the coming decade, IEET is set on advancing and delving into technoprogressivism through scholarly research. To achieve this, we've crafted postdoctoral fellowship programs tailored to empower recent doctoral graduates in the exploration of technoprogressivism and its intertwined academic sectors. Generous donations in 2020 enabled us to fund the inaugural fellowship out of our three planned programs.

We initiated a collaboration with the Applied Ethics Center (AEC) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, providing a full-time Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship spanning 24 months (2021-2023) dedicated to the "Future of Work" domain. This opportunity was awarded to Alec Stubbs.

Furthermore, in 2023, we forged a new alliance with the University of Turin, culminating in the creation of a postdoc fellow position focusing on the ethics of bioenhancement. We're excited to introduce Cristiano Calî, our latest recruit, who will predominantly be immersed in the initial volumes of a groundbreaking series titled 'Politics of Human Enhancement', set to be published by De Gruyter.

## 2024

In 2024 we plan on hiring our third postdoctoral fellow in collaboration with the AEC, the AI and Cognition Fellow.

The AI and Cognition Fellow will be expected to teach between one and two courses per year, write academic articles for publication and present at relevant conferences in consultation with the AEC and IEET. Fellows will be expected to help raise awareness of these issues as a guest classroom lecturer, through writing popular essays, and being a press contact for interviews and podcasts. The Fellow will help organize lectures on these topics by emerging and established scholars. The Fellowship will be capped by a conference on AI and Human Cognition. The Fellow will work with the AEC and IEET to plan the conference and related publications.

The post-doctoral fellow will focus on philosophical questions related to integration of artificial intelligence with human cognition such as: the extended cognition approach including electronic devices; the interpenetration and coevolution of technology and the self; neurodevices' challenge to concepts of autonomy and personal identity; the challenge of neuromodulation to hedonic consequentialism and virtue ethics; the epistemological uncertainty of a future of immersive virtual reality; and the ethics of radical longevity and uploading.

## **Open Access Research**

Central to IEET's goal in the promotion of technoprogressive research is in the publication of peerreviewed papers in high impact journals. However, in order to promote transparency as well as stimulate the dissemination of this important knowledge, the IEET aims to publish their papers Open Access (OA).

#### Why is Open Access Important?

The majority of publishers, not the authors, own the rights to the articles that are published in their repertoire of journals. Anyone who wants to read the articles in these journals faces a paywall and must pay to access them. Universities and similar research institutions, as well as some libraries often negotiate subscriptions to these journals to help their affiliated researchers and students to have access. Despite this access, students, researchers, or any other individuals can reuse any part of that research without permission from the publisher, often at the cost of an additional fee. The burden of OA however lies at the feet of the individual researcher to cover the fee that the publisher would otherwise lose given its free distribution and their forfeiting of copyright. Open Access, then is an affirmation of true scientific progress and directly aligned with the enlightenment values central to technoprogressism, more specifically, in the free and ubiquitous dissemination of knowledge.

With your donations, the IEET can become a force multiplier in the promotion of technoprogressivism by providing its research to all interested parties free of charge, and encourage its dissemination and promotion across all domains.

#### **Open Access Articles Published in 2023**

- Human Enhancement and Reproductive Ethics on Generation Ships
- From Subjectivity to Objectivity: Bernard Lonergan's Philosophy as a Grounding for Value Sensitive Design
- From speculation to reality: enhancing anticipatory ethics for emerging technologies (ATE) in practice
- Miglioramento e Potenziamento degli Operatori Sanitari Attraverso la Progettazione
- Modifying the environment or human nature? What is the right choice for space travel and Mars colonisation?
- Emotions and Automation in a High-Tech Workplace: A Commentary

## Working to Ensure that Humanity Survives and Thrives in the 21st Century

The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies is a nonprofit think tank which promotes ideas about how technological progress can increase freedom, happiness, and human flourishing in democratic societies. We believe that technological progress can be a catalyst for positive human development so long as we ensure that technologies are safe and equitably distributed. We call this a "technoprogressive" orientation.

#### WHAT WE DO

The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies was formed to study and debate vital questions such as:

#### **MISSION**

The IEET's mission is to be a center for voices arguing for a responsible, constructive, ethical approach to the most powerful emerging technologies. We believe that technological progress can be a catalyst for positive human development as long as we ensure that technologies are safe and equitably distributed. We call this a "technoprogressive" orientation.

- Which technologies, especially new ones, are likely to have the greatest impact on human beings and human societies in the 21st century?
- What ethical issues do those technologies and their applications raise for humans, our civilization, and our world?
- How much can we extrapolate from the past and how much accelerating change should we anticipate?
- What sort of policy positions can be recommended to promote the best possible outcomes for individuals and societies?

We aim to showcase technoprogressive ideas about how technological progress can increase freedom, happiness, and human flourishing in democratic societies. Focusing on emerging technologies that have the potential to positively transform social conditions and the quality of human lives—especially "human enhancement technologies" — the IEET seeks to cultivate academic, professional, and popular understanding of their implications, both positive and negative, and to encourage responsible public policies for their safe and equitable use.

#### **HISTORY**

The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies was founded in 2004 by philosopher Nick Bostrom and bioethicist James J. Hughes, and is incorporated as a nonprofit organization in the United States. The IEET's Board of Directors currently come from Canada, the UK, and the United States. By promoting and publicizing the work of thinkers who examine the social implications of scientific and technological progress, we seek to contribute to the understanding of the impact of emerging technologies on individuals and societies. We also aim to shape public policies that distribute the benefits and reduce the risks of technological advancement.

#### **IEET's PURPOSE**

The liberal democratic revolution, centuries old and still growing strong, has at its core the idea that people are happiest when they have rational control over their lives. Reason, science, and technology provide one kind of control, slowly freeing us from ignorance, toil, pain, and disease. Democracy provides control through civil liberties and electoral participation.

Technology and democracy complement one another, ensuring that safe technology is generally accessible and democratically accountable. The convergence of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and cognitive science in the coming decades will give us unimaginable technological mastery of nature and ourselves. That mastery requires progressive democratization. The prospect of rapid change in the human condition understandably worries many people. Now a loose coalition of groups has emerged to human enhancement—from forbid genetic therapies and psychopharmaceuticals to prosthetic nanomedical robotics. This organs and "bioconservative" coalition is diverse, including some bioethicists, religious conservatives, disability rights, and environmental activists, and leftist critics of biotechnology.

The IEET believes this debate desperately needs voices that avoid these extremes, voices that argue for the potential benefits of new technologies while proposing realistic policies to mitigate their risks within a strong democratic framework.

#### **Defending Rights While Taking Risks Seriously**

Responding to the polarization of the debate technophobes between and anti-regulatory technophiles, an emerging global network of thinkers technoprogressive defending are individuals' rights to use human enhancement technologies, while taking seriously the need to regulate their safety and social consequences. Technoprogressives address questions such as peoples' right to use—and not use—cognitive enhancement technologies in an increasingly competitive society.

Our purpose, therefore, is to stimulate and support constructive study of ethical issues connected with these powerful emerging technologies.

#### **The Debate Over Emerging Technologies**

In the next fifty years, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, and cognitive science will allow human beings to transcend the limitations of the human body. Healthy lifespans will extend well beyond a century. Our senses and cognition will be enhanced. We will have greater control over our emotions and memory. Our bodies and brains will be surrounded by and merged with computer power. We will use these technologies to redesign ourselves and our children in ways that push the boundaries of "humanness." How much clinical testing will be necessary to ensure the safety of genetic enhancements? How can we regulate psychoactive drugs in a way that respects cognitive liberty? When should parents be permitted to genetically enhance their children? How can we avoid exacerbating inequality as human enhancement technologies spread? Which enhancement therapies should be provided through the market and which as a right of citizenship through universal health plans?

As yet there has been no institutional home for the consideration of these ethical challenges of emerging technologies free from both technophobic red herrings, such as anxieties about transgressing the boundaries of humanness and human reason, and from anti-regulatory dogmas that reject democratic public policy as an avenue to address future risks. The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies intends to fill that gap.

#### A Focus on Individuals and Societies

Personal enhancement—potentially transforming some humans into posthumans—is an obvious and necessary area of study for the IEET. But the recognition that all individuals exist within societies, and that personal choices may overlap the rights of others within those societies, makes the work of IEET scholars more complex and also more urgent.

As technoprogressives, we want to see all sentient beings protected in their rights for self-augmentation, enhancement, or modification, and we want everyone to have fair and equal access to such treatments. However, we believe those technologies must be tested for safety and efficacy, and made universally accessible. Their consequences for society will be profound, and need to be thoroughly considered.

Similarly, we affirm the possibility of a bountiful technological future. But we believe robust efforts are required to ensure that the path of technological development is safe, sustainable, and offers abundance for all.

We place great value on a healthy biosphere, realized through a combination of wise democratic action and the responsible deployment of powerful new technologies. We favor expanded, enlightened definitions of personhood, to take in all sentient beings, whether human in origin or not. We look forward to increased equality of opportunity, decreased suffering, and flourishing diversity in human and posthuman development.

We desire to live in a world where peace and security are considered a given everywhere around the globe. Thus, we encourage activism that reaches across ethnic, cultural, and geographic lines, especially when those initiatives involve transnational cooperation.

We strongly support the use of emerging technologies to extend human capacities for knowledge, understanding, communication, and wise decisionmaking.

Ultimately we want to see the enforcement of international law and human rights agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promising fundamental freedoms, health, welfare, and education for all. We also want to see an extension of international human rights to include the rights to bodily autonomy, reproductive choice, and cognitive liberty for all persons.

# **IEET Activites**

Over the last eighteen years, the IEET has built a network of the most visionary thinkers and activists working on the policy implications of emerging technologies.

**Fellows and Interns** – Since 2004 IEET Fellows have written hundreds of op-eds, journal articles and book chapters, and the IEET has promoted their work through the IEET website and publications. About ten interns have worked with our fifteen fellows, doing research, editing manuscripts and assisting with IEET projects.

**Media outreach** – Through social media and the provision of qualified spokespersons, the Institute disseminates key policy ideas that address emerging technologies. The IEET community is active on Twitter and Facebook and maintains a Youtube channel.

**Networking Scholars and Organizations** - We are building a database of scholars and networking with organizations working on our topics from similar points of view.

**Conferences, Speaker Tours, and Speakers Bureau** - The IEET has organized speaker series, conferences, and one-day seminars in Europe and North America to promote discussion of techoprogressive policy ideas.

# **IEET Publications**

### JEET

The IEET publishes the *Journal of Ethics and Emerging Technologies* (formerly the Journal of Evolution and Technology) on the IEET website. JEET is a scholarly peer-reviewed journal, published since 1998. JEET welcomes submissions on subject matters that many mainstream journals shun as too speculative, radical, or interdisciplinary relating to emerging technologies and the future. JEET's editor-in-chief is the philosopher Mark Walker.

Recent articles published by JEET include:

- Joost Mollen "<u>Moving out of the Human Vivarium Live-in Laboratories and the Right to Withdraw</u>"
- Nathan Wood "<u>Autonomous Weapons Systems and Force Short of War</u>"
- Maciej Zajac "<u>Beyond Deadlock: Low Hanging Fruit and Strict yet Achievable</u>
  <u>Options in AWS Regulation</u>"

A forthcoming special issue following the ETFOW 2023 conference will be published as the second issue (July-Dec 2023) of JEET.

### White Papers

The IEET publishes position papers that address the benefits and risks of emerging technologies from a technoprogressive point of view. The IEET and the AEC have completed two whitepapers in 2023:

- <u>The Democratic Metaverse: Building an Extended Reality Safe for Citizens,</u> <u>Workers and Consumers</u>
- <u>Emerging Technologies & Higher Education</u>

The IEET is working on two further white papers which will be released in 2024:

- Ethics of Automating Therapy: The Case of Chatbots
- Automating Senior Care Work

# **IEET Publications**

#### Books

Collectively IEET Fellows and staff have authored dozens of books on technoprogressive themes. The IEET has signed a contract with De Gruyter to produce a series on the *Politics of Human Enhancement*. The first volume, the *Biopolitics of Human Enhancement*, will be released in 2024.

IEET Managing Director, Steven Umbrello, has signed a contract with Polity for the publication of his book *Technology Ethics: Responsible Innovation and Design Strategies,* which was financed by the IEET and has a slated release date for Fall 2024.

# **IEET Programs**

The IEET is currently focused on two broad areas of emerging technologies, human enhancement and artificial intelligence. These programs are supported by your gifts, and by a generous bequest from the Otten Trust.

### **Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work**

From 2022 to 2024, in collaboration with the Applied Ethics Center (AEC) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, we will be focusing on the impacts of AI and automation on the future of work. Alec Stubbs, the first IEET/AEC Postdoctoral Fellow on the Future of Work, has been the cornerstone of this project. Alec's focus is broadly on automation, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy, with a particular focus on democratizing digital platform work. Alec's most recent publication is "Digital participatory democracy: A normative framework for the democratic governance of the digital commons" in the Journal of Social Philosophy.

### Human Enhancement

Our program on human enhancement will be centered under the direction of IEET Managing Director Dr. Umbrello at the University of Turin and anchored by the first IEET/UniTo postdoctoral fellow, Cristiano Calì. As with the Boston-based program on the future of work, the Turin-based program will include talks, meetings, and special issues of JEET on the theme of human enhancement ethics and policy. The IEET has also organized a thematic volume on the politics of human enhancement to be published by de Gruyter.

# Awards

The IEET offers an annual ongoing dissertation award for the best inprogress doctoral dissertation that aligns with the mission of the IEET.

### **Aimen Taimur**

The Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies (IEET) is proud to announce that the winner of its annual ongoing dissertation award for 2023 is Aimen Taimur, a doctoral candidate from Tilburg University. Taimur's thesis, titled 'The Technoprogressivist Legal Cogitation of Cognitive Freedom: Situating Human Rights Protection Against Manipulation of Free Thought by Artificial Intelligence,' is a groundbreaking work that aligns perfectly with the mission of the IEET. In her thesis, Taimur explores the legal and ethical implications of artificial intelligence on human cognition and free thought, proposing a techno-progressivist framework to safeguard human rights in the face of rapidly advancing AI technologies. Her work is a significant contribution to the field and exemplifies the innovative and critical

thinking that the IEET seeks to promote.

# **IEET Events**

Thanks to the Otten Trust, the IEET is pleased to announce that it has relaunched its initiatives to host world-class events for scholars and the public alike.

### **2023 Events**

### **2023 Emerging Technologies and the Future of Work Conference**

UMass Boston, 3-4 November 2023

ETFOW 2023 was a pioneering event that brought together professionals from diverse fields to discuss the intersection of emerging technologies and the future of work. Attendees had the opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and participate in thought-provoking discussions on the impact of these technologies on industries, the workforce, and society. The conference was successful in fostering

interdisciplinary collaboration and provided a platform for unconventional perspectives on this rapidly evolving field.

### <u>Conference New pathways for a sustainable future: Science and Ethics for a</u> <u>renewed society</u>

University of Turin, 20 November 2023

The conference explored the relationship between democracy and technological advances. In particular, faced with the challenges of climate change and disruption of ecosystem balances on the planet, the conference brought together experts from various fields to investigate whether technologies available today in the industrial and food sectors are able to contribute to safeguarding future generations and the advancement of democracy.

# **IEET Finances**

In 2020 the IEET began to receive a bequest from the Otten Trust, established by the late Klaus Otten. The bequest was restricted to the support of programs investigating the ethical and policy implications of artificial intelligence and human enhancement. Thus far the IEET has received roughly \$434,000 of roughly 1.1 million dollars. In the last two years we also received \$800 in small donations. In the coming years, as our new program of work matures, we look forard to substantially expanding our fund-raising program.

### How to Contribute to the IEET's Work

IEET is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

Donate to the IEET: https://www.paypal.com/donate/hosted\_button\_id=XL3T2GH96NSYQ



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### **Executive Director**

James Hughes Ph.D. 56 Daleville School Rd. Willington CT 06279 USA Phone: 860-428-1837 director@ieet.org