

Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Privacy, Manipulation, and Responsibility

Summary of Chapters 7

February 23, 2026

Privacy and Data Protection

- **Data Collection:** AI and machine learning rely on big data, often involving personal information.
- **Surveillance:** AI enables surveillance in streets, workplaces, and via personal smartphones.
- **Transparency Issues:** Users often don't know data is being gathered or repurposed by third parties.
- **Ethical Use:** Requires respecting the right to know, access, and object to data processing.

Manipulation and Exploitation

- **Digital Labor:** Users perform "free digital labor" by producing data for AI companies.
- **Behavioral Control:** AI manipulates what we buy, the news we follow, and our opinions.
- **Hidden Labor:** AI relies on a hidden workforce of miners, e-waste handlers, and data labelers.
- **Cognitive Impact:** Delegation to AI may "infantilize" users, reducing independent thinking.

- **Beyond the Autonomous Adult:** Ethics must account for children and the elderly.
- **Internet of Toys:** AI-powered dolls can collect parent/child data without understanding or consent.
- **Targeted Manipulation:** Vulnerable groups are at higher risk of manipulation through voice and language interfaces.

- **Political Manipulation:** Bots and data analysis are used to influence voting and campaigns.
- **Totalitarianism:** AI can lead to hidden forms of domination and "smartphone cattle" milking.
- **Fake News:** AI-generated false information erodes trust and the social fabric.
- **Relationships:** Digital "companions" may create an illusion of friendship that unsettles real-world bonds.

- **Physical Safety:** AI robots in factories or homes must balance efficiency with the risk of harming humans.
- **Security Vulnerabilities:** Hacked AI in self-driving cars or critical infrastructure poses lethal risks.
- **Military Risk:** Autonomous lethal weapons create an arms race and risks of being hacked.
- **Existential Risk:** Technological vulnerabilities become human existential vulnerabilities as dependency grows.

- **The Responsibility Gap:** Delegating agency to AI makes it difficult to attribute moral responsibility when things go wrong.
- **Aristotelian Conditions:**
 - *Control Condition:* The action must originate in the agent.
 - *Epistemic Condition:* The agent must know what they are doing.
- **Core Problem:** Avoiding power and agency without accompanying responsibility.