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Currently, humanity relies more than ever on computers and machines. This dependency on rapidly increasing technology creates a need for clear boundaries. As time moves closer to the day that brings a completely self-aware computer, we must be ready for the repercussions. This era requires lines that define fair treatment for the next creations. We need to restrict use of Android AI to the civilian sector.

In addition to saving and protecting humans, we need to treat robots with trust. To rely on androids to save life and protect us from danger sends a very clear message. We trust robots. We trust them so much that we can count on their assistance to protect us from harm. On the flip side, if we use them to kill other humans, we send a very difference message. We communicate than robots are simply controllable mercenaries to exterminate our enemies. This viewpoint will lead us into trouble if robots do evolve. When robots get to the point where they can cast off the chains, at that instant we create a monster. A cybernetic demon with knowledge to kill humans with a hidden agenda since it has surpassed the humans who made it. However, if we trust and show compassion before robots evolve, there exists a slight possibility that they can reciprocate that empathy. This chance is worth the endeavor.

One could argue since we possess such capable technology, this obligates us to use it in all sectors of life. Take, for example, googles self-driving car. This machine decides how to operate itself based on certain software algorithms. The codes are so sophisticated they enable the car to navigate through real time traffic. Google, of course uses a human copilot with emergency controls as a failsafe. None the less, the point stands, humanity has the technology. So some might argue that we are obligated to put this AI to use across all aspects of life. There are very clear militant benefits of self-driving vehicles in combat operations. In fact one of the major developmental stepping stones of robotic cars is D.A.R.P.A a government funded project. The benefits of advanced AI are clear in all aspects of life.

Several ethical theories and common sense hold reasons to refute the dynamics of the previous paragraph. Of course, we can agree that almost all aspects of life would benefit from robotic assistance, military operations specifically would harm humanity more than help. Let’s safe we have a robot in a factory welding parts. This is a decent use of AI. We remove a human from harsh conditions and repetitive tasks, instead that human can maintain the machine rather than breathe fumes. If the machine breaks, the human can fix it. If the machines code malfunctions, we can implement certain fail safes such as mechanical restrictions and software debuggers. If worse comes to worse and non of the fail safes work, at least the robot is stationary and we will have some way to cut power. However, lets say we have a fully capable automated military vehicle. Equip with the latest and greatest supercharged engine, fully loaded chain machine gun and pin point navigation system. This metal death trap can have all the fail safes in the world, but if even for some reason they don’t work, we have a much larger potential for loss of life than with a stationary welding robot. A failure of artificial intelligence on a military scale results in a catastrophe, there is no way around this fact.

Militarization of AI proves dangerous since robots are still very young in development. We have already seen slip ups such as the Patriot Missile Failure. Basically, the US military made a missile launcher with a software enabled trajectory system. Back in the days of cannons and muskets, the artillery men would use trigonometry to calculate the angle to set the cannon in order to hit a target. This software trajectory system does the same thing in a more advanced way. This system relies on a timer from the minute it is turned on. The timer allows the system to predict where targets will be in the near future, based on current velocity and path of travel. With this prediction based on the targets movement, The Patriot can fire a missile to hit a moving target by compensating for where it will be in the future. The timer is key to this systems success. However, the engineers accidentally wrote malfunctioning software. This timer would truncate the time continuously. A good analogy would be reading a clock, and instead of accounting for the seconds, every time the seconds hit the 30 mark, you just rounded up to the next minute. After three or four iterations of rounding up, the new time would be off by a minute or so. The Patriot truncated time, on a much smaller scale ("Patriot Missile Defense: Software Problem Led to System Failure at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia "). This still means that the longer the machine was on, the more inaccurate the timer was. The Patriot Missile uses radar to detect harmful, enemy missiles and shoot them down. Thankfully, this software failure did not result in that Patriot Missile destroying innocence civilians or another tragic destination. The Patriot did fail to shoot down a hostile missile though. This hostile missile blew up a military base ("Patriot Failures"). Any type of unsuccessful military artificial intelligence results in loss of life.

One reason nay-sayers would disagree with restricting AI to the civilian sector would be the limits this puts on the advances of science. I would agree. Wars drive technology at a much faster rate than the private sector ever could. However, there is a very clear cost to growing technology in a ruthless environment.

In addition, we can develop AI with the intent of life saving rather than killing. Currently, we have made a lot of advances in the medical field with cybernetics. As they evolve, the technology integrates further and further. Over the past ten years, we’ve viewed the robot as a device we interact with via a keyboard. A binary input. More recently, they have become an extension of the senses. Taste, touch, sight, smell, sound and haptics. Of the 5, AI most commonly associates with sight and sound. As we advance android intelligence, the engineers start to include haptics as well. Haptics relates to a mix of several physical constants and already defined sensations. Haptics includes sense of force, touch and position of body joints (New Trends in Medical and Service Robots: Theory and Integrated Applications, Page 2). The new breakthrough allows for higher precision operations.

AI and the cyber age bring about situations where soldiers can take life away with the push of a button. Also the day draws near when self-aware computers could hand out ultimatums without human input. Humanity as a whole needs to restrict use of AI to the civilian sector for the greater good.