Ethics and Emerging Technologies

How to Live Well with Emotional AI and Empathetic Technologies

F. ANDRES[1], V. BAKIR[2], B. BLAND[3], A. LAFFER[4], P. LI[5], D. MIRANDA[6], A. MCSTAY[2], L. URQUHART[7]

[1]NII, [2]Bangor University, [3]Independent/IEEE, [4]University of Winchester, [5]University of Sussex, [6]University of Stirling, [7]University of Edinburgh

Our Research

EMOTIONAL AI LAB

Exploring social, cultural, ethical and legal impacts of AI technologies that interact with human emotion, moods, and affective states.

Projects:

- Emotional AI in Cities: Cross Cultural Lessons from UK and Japan on Designing for An Ethical Life
- Automating Empathy - Globalising International Standards (AEGIS)

What we know

- Emotional AI is becoming increasingly normalised
- Citizens are more negative than positive about its use
- Ethical debate on governance of AI technologies are largely dominated by US/European norms.
- UK can learn from Japan's openness to interaction with technological systems, but must avoid simplistic binaries

Background

Emotional AI in Cities

A three-year project that explored whether societies in UK and Japan can with live well with Emotional AI technologies.

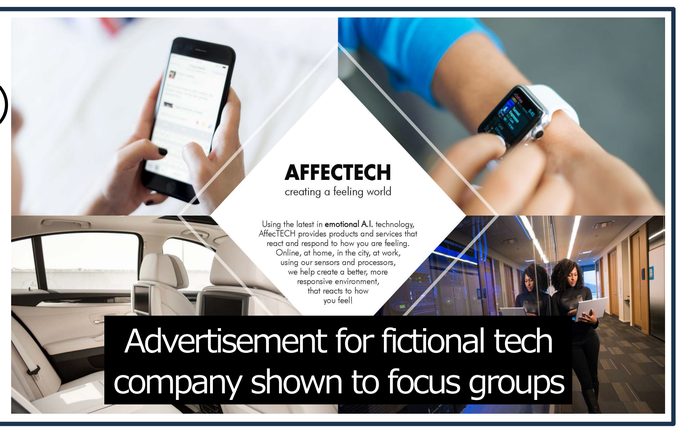
We sought to better understand the technologies, promises and limitations, and their use across diverse sectors. We were interested in the question of whether good can come from technologies that claim to detect and interact with human emotion.

- **What is Emotional AI?** Technologies that use affective computing and artificial intelligence techniques to sense, learn about and interact with human emotional life.
- **What is General Purpose AI?** Versatile AI-systems that are not limited to specific tasks
- **What is emulated empathy?** The attempt to copy, mimic or simulate the appearance of empathy.
- **Empathic partners:** personal AI; co-pilots; assistants that emulate empathy. **See this example by HUME.ai**:

Research: Emotional Artificial Intelligence in Cities

Methods

- Citizen Focus Groups (n=46) using Design Fictions
- National Demographically representative Surveys (n=2068)
- Expert Interviews (n=39)
- Legal/Regulatory Analysis



Advertisement for fictional tech company shown to focus groups

Findings

- **Age has the greatest impact on acceptance of EAI in UK & Japan. Generally, older adults are more concerned**.
- Limited support for Emotional AI in the UK.
- **Benefits:** convenience; companionship; fun; security;, safety; personalisation; relevance.
- **Concerns:** dystopian surveillance; invasion of privacy; technological bias; lack of transparency; potential for influence; impact on human behaviour and relationships; anxieties around automation.

Select Recommendations

1. We must always **put the human first** when considering how we engage and connect with Emotional AI.
2. We should **rebalance ethical debates** on the governance of AI technologies to include the normative context of other regions.
3. Additional **caution is necessary in security contexts** due to risks and issues related to human rights.
4. Better governance and **urgent regulatory action is required** particularly where profiling might lead to manipulation.
5. Use of **emotional AI should be genuinely useful** and relevant with clear parameters for use and data collection.
6. Services using Emotional AI should **respect people's privacy, autonomy, mental integrity and dignity**.
7. The **use of emotional AI at all should be questioned** given citizen's responses and negative aspects of the technology.
8. **To live well with Emotional AI requires sensitivity to demographic differences**, such as age, ethnicity, and gender.

Next steps: Technical Standards

PROJECT AEGIS

- **What is an ethical technical standard?**
  A documented set of guidelines and benchmarks that a developer can follow to create, use, and dispose of technologies in ethical ways.
- **A standard is an example of "soft law"**
  They are non-binding instruments and principles that lack enforceability; "law without power"

Ongoing work on ethical standards for technologies that automate empathy, in collaboration with IEEE and diverse Japanese stakeholders.

- Output: P7014.1 IEEE Recommended Practice for Ethical Considerations in the use of emulated empathy in General-Purpose AI systems.
- Aims: increasing the diversity of views contributing to standards; embedding insights into new standards; prototyping ways to operationalise standards.

URL : www.automatingempathy.ai
Email : mcstay@bangor.ac.uk