TEDx Talk Script

**\*\*\* Means go to next slide**

Slides 1&2:

“I’m Sharon, I’m Sarah …….. and together we are known as TECHBYTES”

Quote on the first slide,\*\*\* “This is a quote taken from the controversial article ‘Why The Future Doesn’t Need Us’. It was written by a man named Bill Joy in the year 2000.

After thoroughly studying Joy’s article we decided that we agreed with his prediction of a dystopian future. \*

Sarah INTRO

Bill Joy is an American computer scientist and one of the co-founders of Sun Microsystems. This was the company that created Java amongst other technologies

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As we said before, Joys views are mostly dystopian. He has been commonly referred to as “neo-Luddite” although he denied this himself.

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His opinions have possibly surfaced from being around technology for so long and watching it develop as quickly as it has. He worked in Sun Microsystems for around 25 years.

He wrote in his article, “Perhaps it is always hard to see the bigger impact while you are in a vortex of change”

Joy discussed the views a various specialists throughout his article, one of these specialists being Hans Moravec

SHARON

Slide 5: “àAmong the specialists mentioned in the article was a man called” ….\*\*\* Read slide 5

Moravec believed that robots would rapidly displace and replace humans in almost everything.

However, he was optimistically hopeful: \*\*\*read slide 6

By governments enforcing taxes on the producers of these robots they will be able to distribute this money evenly between everyone. This is a fairly optimistic viewpoint and one of societal determinism, where governments and societies control the shaping of the future and technology. However, a simple examination of reality tells us the opposite!

\*\*\*Slide 8: We also see an interesting trend in income inequality where the richest in control are getting even richer than the rest of us. The idea that we can simply ‘tax’ the producer once they control all the means of production is simply techno-utopian optimism! It’s an attempt to simply use old solutions to new problems. Joy himself didn’t subscribe to these views but instead advised greater caution and deliberation.

Read slide 9

\*\*\*\* slide 10

SARAH

Ray Kurzweil

Joy also writes about a meeting with Ray Kurzweil. He suggested that robotic technologies were actually a lot closer to reality than he once thought.

Kurzweil had a utopian view of our future with technological advances allowing us to fuse with robots and become immortal. He said he would happily have a body of silicone if it meant he could live for 200 years longer. However Joy did not agree with Kurzweil’s views.

Unabomber \*\*\* slide 11

As a counterpoint to this idea of utopian progress of technology, Joy presents an extract from a book of a man named Theodore Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber.

Kaczynski had a highly dystopian view of the future.

He posed two possible scenarios that could arise . The first where machines would be so advanced that they could think and make their own decisions without human oversight. He predicted that robots would be able to do everything better than humans and thus human efforts would become redundant.

In the second scenario, all of the advanced technology would be controlled by a ‘tiny elite’ who would have power over everyone else. In other words, knowledge would become power.

Joy himself believes that the Unabomber was an extreme Luddite and was a bit too dystopian, after all, the man was a terrorist. However Joy also says in his article that Kaczynski made an interesting argument. As a group we agreed with Joy’s view that it is necessary to take a broader look at the impact of technology on our world and the dangers we may face rather than simply believe in a utopian future.

\*\*\*\*\*slide 12

Slide 13: At the core of this discussion lies a simple question: **Will the meaning of humanity be redefined?** When we first think of a robot, first thing that comes to mind is a block of metal that is operated remotely by a human, or controlled by a computer program. However, this line is increasingly becoming blurred. Here are pictures of more human-like intelligent machines. They can walk and talk just like us. But what if we take this one step further. What if I told you that currently scientists are working on a way to grow a human brain in vitro and placing it in a robot! Will this mean that robots will have the same rights as humans?

Slide 15: Some may argue that this may be a safer way to have more control over these robots but the truth is Read Slide 15 People are not assessing the risks of this technology rather they are opting for the faster and more convenient option of developing AI. If we fail to foresee the risks of this development, we may indeed suffer the consequences.

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*SARAH****:***

So what we conclude with is both a viewpoint and a question. The question being ‘Just because we can do something, should we do it?’ The reality is that these rapid technological advancements may instead be adding fuel to fire rather than simply leading us to a perfect utopia. The thought that Joy meant for reader to take away from his article was that technology has as many disadvantages as it has advantages.

At the same time, we can’t stop improving technology just because of our fear of the unknown. There’s a strong deterministic argument made by some that technology will simply drive itself forwards regardless. This would be due to market forces and innovation. Unlike what Moravec and like minded people suggested, it’s near impossible to control those.

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For a final word we suggest you consider Murphy’s law - that is “Anything that can go wrong, will.”