

Smart Home Ambient Intelligence: a new limit for our freedom?

ethical concerns about voice assistants

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Presentation Outline

Smart Home Ambient Intelligence: a new limit for our freedom?
ethical concerns about voice assistants

Introduction

Technological Mediation
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Case Study: Google Home - Google Assistant Actions

Technological mediations further limiting our freedom
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Introduction

Technological Mediation

*While fulfilling their function, technologies do much more: they **give shape to what we do** and how we experience the world. And in doing so they **contribute actively** to the ways we live our lives (Verbeek 2011)*

- ▶ Technologies are not **neutral intermediaries**
- ▶ Technologies play an **actively mediating role**
- ▶ Artifacts are **bearers of morality** (Latour 1992)
- ▶ Morality is a matter of **human-technology associations**
- ▶ Two perspectives of mediation:
 - ▶ Perception
 - ▶ **Action**: I will focus on **human freedom**

Definitions I

Ambient Intelligence

***Ambient Intelligence** is an approach that combines two major technologies: Ubiquitous Computing and Intelligent User Interfaces (Brey 2005)*

Voice Assistant

*A **voice assistant** is a digital assistant that uses voice recognition, natural language processing and speech synthesis to provide aid to users through phones and voice recognition applications (WhatIs 2017)*

Definitions II

Freedom

Two forms (Brey 2005, 2006):

- ▶ Negative Freedom:
 - ▶ act without obstruction or interference by others
 - ▶ absence of limits and external constraints

example:

- ▶ **Positive Freedom (Human Autonomy):** I will focus on this
 - ▶ mastery over your own life
 - ▶ think freely and make your own decisions

Case Study: Google Home - Google Assistant Actions



Google Assistant Actions

Script

Invitation/Inhibition structure

Behaviour Steering

Moral Laziness

Technocracy

Technological mediation?

Moral responsibility of designers

Possible Remedies

Possible Remedies

Conclusions

Conclusions

Bibliography I



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