



## **Conscientious Use of AI**

[MyEthics.net](http://MyEthics.net) Newsletter 2-11, May 21, 2026. [Archive](#).

[Subscribe](#)



### Upcoming Events

With [David Gleason](#)

#### **Community Roundtable Meetings:**

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 8:30-10AM at [Bob's Chocolate Cafe](#), 1 Main St., Franconstown, NH 03043

- ***The Conscientious Use of AI***, May 27
- ***The Ethics of Collaboration***, June 10 & 24
- ***Doing Well by Doing Good***, July 8 & 22

***Artificial Intelligence: What it Means for You***, Wed, May 27, 7pm,  
Franconstown Town Hall

***All are Open to the Public***

Good morning, I hope your Friday turns into a great weekend!

The last newsletter and Roundtable explored the categorical differences between conscious life and technology — why AI is a tool of human intention, without any mind, agency, or responsibility on its own.

This week, we dive deeper into how AI serves its makers' purposes, and what that means for us as users, workers, and communities: what does conscientious AI look like?

*What do you think of AI's impact? How do you understand its opportunities and risks?*

Please link your thoughts,

—David

## Summary:

Only 18% of Gen Z America is hopeful about AI, and they are making themselves heard.

“Delivering a commencement address at the University of Arizona, [former Google Chief Executive Eric] Schmidt told students the ‘technological transformation’ wrought by artificial intelligence will be ‘larger, faster and more consequential than what came before’...[he] was met with a chorus of boos.

“In one poll after another in recent weeks, respondents have overwhelmingly voiced concerns about AI, a challenge to claims by industry executives that their technology would gain popularity by improving people’s lives.”

—WSJ, *The American Rebellion Against AI Is Gaining Steam*, by Amrith Ramkumar 5/18/26

## This Public Scorn is Increasing Due To:

1. The perception of AI leaders as manipulative, self-serving, and threatening (e.g., Musk v OpenAI).
2. Portrayals of scary AI/robots in sci fi combined with today’s real-life loss of agency.
3. Environmental impacts, like fast-tracked data centers noisily jacking local electric rates.
4. Theft of intellectual property (IP), enshittification, and the loss of creative jobs
5. Dumbed down users, impaired critical thinking skills.
6. Erosion of the perceived value of learning.
7. Big, scary corporations which will extract profit once everyone is hooked.
8. Apps harvesting and selling user data.
9. Displaced workers.
10. Fraud, deepfakes, loss of privacy, and psychological manipulation.

Instead, what if global human well-being could be AI's primary objective? Just think of what we could accomplish together!

This issue is about the discrepancy between opportunities to improve the quality of life on one hand, and to concentrate wealth and power on the other.

## AI's Potential to Help Us

Here are just a few of the benefits we could realize if the political will and public funds existed:

1. **Health:** Accelerate drug discovery, spot disease, and streamline remote services.
2. **Mental health:** Always-available support; earlier crisis detection and intervention.
3. **Education:** Adaptive tutors at each learner's level on any subject, anytime, and in any language.
4. **Opportunity:** Provide universal access to formerly expensive expertise.
5. **Knowledge across borders:** Translation and search can transcend international borders.
6. **Climate and energy:** Smarter grids and generation cut waste and emissions.
7. **Food security:** Precision agriculture raises yields while using less water, fertilizer, and land.
8. **Disaster response:** Earlier warnings and faster logistics save lives.
9. **Public trust:** AI can spot fraud, improve services, and facilitate public dialog.

For example, with the right incentives, AI could increase access to scarce or expensive resources like doctors, tutors, clean energy infrastructure, and institutions.

## Who Pays?

By contrast, AI development so far has been almost exclusively devoted to long term return on investment.

When an app is free, you are the product. AI intensifies this model by personalizing content, maximizing engagement, and shaping behavior in ways users rarely perceive or consent to.

By contrast, paid systems like a law firm's AI, provide data security and privacy *as a primary service*.

Over time, free platforms stop serving users and start extracting value through ads, paywalls, and engineered engagement. “Enshittification” occurs when a once-useful service becomes cluttered with distractions, such as search results crowded out by flashing advertisements.

Conscientious use begins by asking simple questions: Who profits from my time, trust, and attention? Where is this algorithm taking me?

## The Social Costs

Technology doesn’t impact people evenly. Here are some current disparities:

- **AI is displacing workers faster than new opportunities appear.** Disruption hits rural communities, nondegree workers, and creative fields hardest.
- **AI’s biggest advantages often go to people already ahead.** Premium tools in medicine, education, law, and finance widen inequality.
- **AI infrastructure consumes vast electricity and water.** Environmental costs fall unevenly, often burdening communities located near data centers.
- **AI devalues creative labor by imitating artists without compensation.** That threatens livelihoods, intellectual property, and culture’s relationship to commerce.

For example, rural, nontechnical communities could really use good AI, yet they face the weakest services, least access, and highest barriers: poor broadband, limited training, and few incentives for companies to serve unprofitable markets.

## Hubris and the Lessons We Keep Forgetting

Every era of technological transformation produces its own version of the same myth: “this time, we have finally built something that transcends human limitations.” Last month’s newsletter traced this impulse from Prometheus to Frankenstein to AI.

The capabilities are indeed mind-blowing, but it’s a huge leap from “AI can solve hard problems” to “AI should make autonomous decisions.” And when the Pentagon recently wanted to use Anthropic’s software for autonomous kill decisions, making the leap from utility to hubris, they violated Anthropic’s code of ethics.

The danger is not that AI is powerful. The danger is that AI is powerful **and** people are using it for questionable and nefarious purposes.

Moreover, it's usually impossible to trace responsibility for AI behavior back to individual people. Anonymity, little oversight, and few public audit trails mean relative immunity for corporate system purveyors and bad actors alike. They are using facebook's position declaiming responsibility for harms to teenagers.

Machines can't be held accountable, humans can, and that distinction matters now more than ever. The Titanic sank because of accumulated ethical lapses over time. We risk the same right now not because of the tech itself, which is ethically inert, but because people are making inevitable mistakes with a thousand times the impact.

## Strategies for Conscientious Use of AI

Here are a few practical things to try:

- Use AI conscientiously by learning who it serves and what it optimizes.
- Protect your attention from tools designed to extract engagement rather than amplify your effectiveness.
- Mind your privacy and resist systems like facebook that derive revenue from surveillance.
- Finally, support public policies that spread AI's benefits widely through regulation, data rights, and governance focused on public welfare instead of private profit.

## In Sum

The question is not *whether* AI will reshape our lives — that horse has left the barn. All of us are now caught up in an AI storm of other people's making. It's no wonder that AI is being vilified.

The Luddites of the 1880s are known for resisting industrial progress, but their actual demand was that the new technologies not immiserate working people for the enrichment of mill owners.

The factories themselves weren't the problem. Those sabotaging protesters decried instead the displacement, disenfranchisement, and abuse of workers.

What then do we, as conscious, living beings, want and expect from AI and its purveyors? This technology, like all its predecessors, is an amplifier, for better or worse. It does as it's trained and told. Responsibility for its consequences, as always, is ours.

[Read More](#)

- [A Day in the Life of an Ensh\\*tificator](#), YouTube video from the Norwegian Consumer Council, March, 2026 (hilarious!)
- [Is social media addictive? The science reveals what's at stake](#) by Jackie Flynn Mogensen, Scientific American, 3/24/26
- [How Americans View AI and Its Impact on People and Society](#) by Brian Kennedy et al, Pew Research Center, 9/17/25
- [How I Choose Which Cloudflare Employees to Replace With AI](#) by Matthew Prince, CEO of Cloudflare, WSJ, 5/20/26
- [Scammers, supercharged by AI, are coming for your password](#) by Beth Teitell, Boston Globe, 4/8/26.
- [The Future We Feared Is Already Here](#) by Ezra Klein, NY Times, 3/8/6

[Subscribe](#) to this newsletter



**MyEthics.net**

Copyright © 2026 by David H. Gleason

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }}.

You've received this email because you are are subscribed to our newsletter.

[Unsubscribe](#)