21.11.25 08:28

CSCI 101
Connecting with Computer Science
Computerised Society I

Jetic Gū

Overview

- Focus: Social Implication
- Readings: R13, R14, R15 (Dr. Strangelove), R16
- Core Ideas:
    1. Computerised Society
    2. Accountability
    3. Discussion

Computerised Society

Summary

P1
Computerisation

Computerisation of Just About Everything

- Governments use computers to store information
- Banks use computers to store information
- Major Companies use Computers to store information

Review

Computerisation of Just About Everything

- Traffic control
- Surveillance
- Air Traffic Control
- Space Exploration
- Scientific Experiment
- Criminal Record and Legal Proceedings

Example

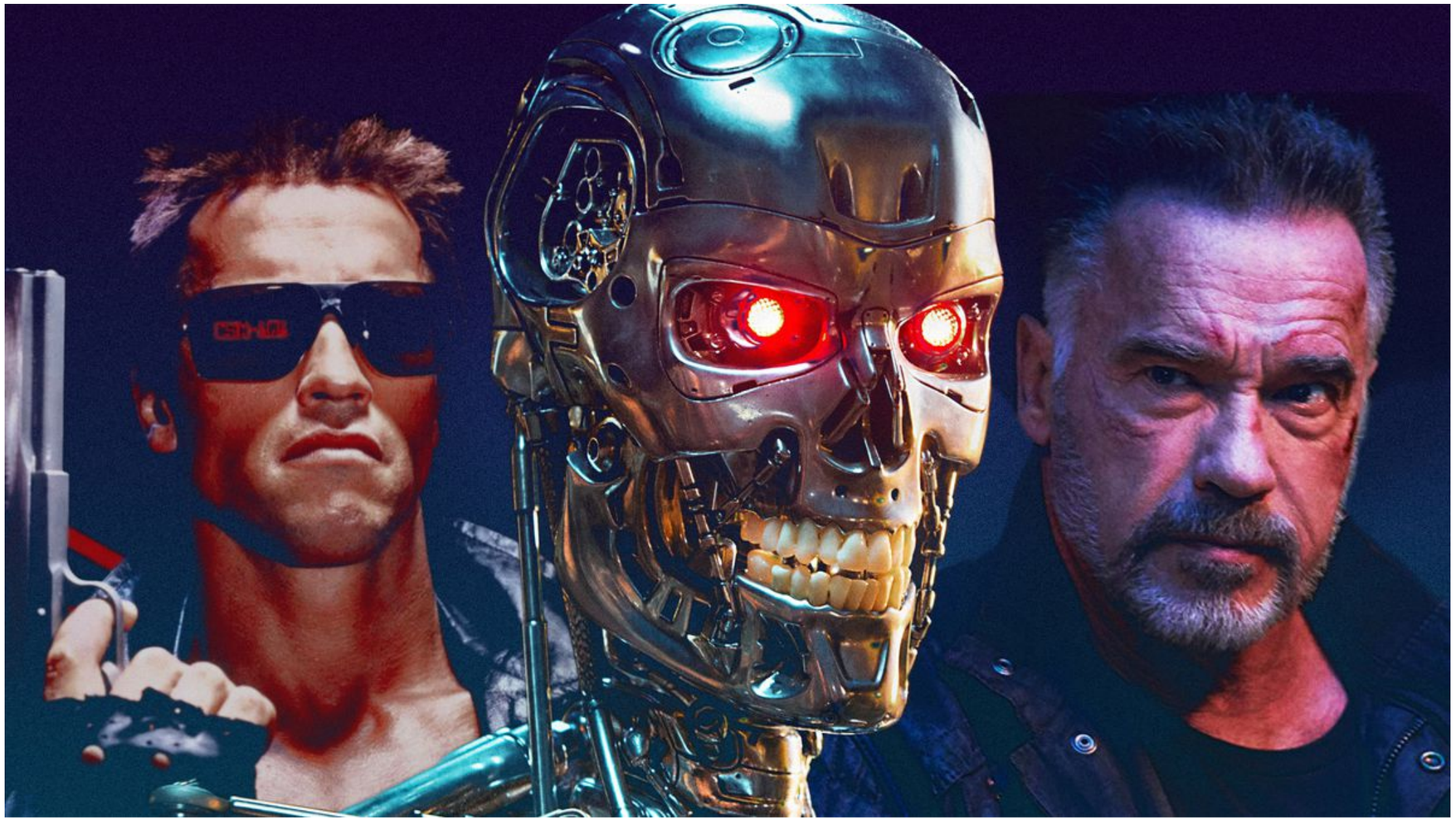
P1
Computerisation

Computerisation of Just About Everything

- Military
  - Command Infrastructure
  - Automated Defence Weapon
  - Weapon control systems
  - Nuclear Weapons
  - Drones

Example

Problems?



Think

Problems?

Think

P1
Computerisation

Problems?

Science and Public Policy, volume 21, number 4, August 1994, pages 233-248, Beech Tree Publishing, 10 Watford Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2EP, England.

Computer safety

Computer-related accidental death: an empirical exploration

Donald MacKenzie

Despite widespread interest in computer system failures, there have been few systematic, empirical studies of computer-related accidents. 'Risks' reports in the Association for Computing Machinery's Software Engineering Notes provide a

JUST HOW SAFE, or how dangerous, are the computer systems on which lives depend? How many lives have been lost through failures of such systems? What are the causes of such accidents?

Although there is a large literature on computer

Technical

1. MacKenzie, 1994. *Computer-Related Accidental Death: An Empirical Exploration*

P1
Computerisation

Computer Caused Deaths

- Physical Cause
- Software Cause
- Human Computer Interaction Prc
  - Medical
  - Military
  - Air
  - Robot Related
  - Automated Plants

Robot-related

1978-87	10	Japan	Workers struck during repair, maintenance, installation or adjustment of robots	Workers entered envelope of powered-up robots; in some cases, deficiencies in training and absence of fences	
1984	1	USA	Heart failure after being pinned by robot	Worker entered envelope of powered-up robot	

Involving other automated plant

1979	1	USA	Worker struck by automated vehicle in computerised storage facility	Absence of audible warning; inadequate training; production pressure	
1983-88	13	France	Accidents to operators/ installers/repairers of automated plant	Insufficient individual detail given in source	
1988	1	UK	Maintenance electrician killed by unexpected movement of automatic hoist	Disconnection of proximity switch, sent signal to controller; machine not isolated	
1989	1	UK	Setter/operator killed by palletiser	Machine cycled when boxes interrupting photoelectric beam removed; transfer table not isolated	

1. MacKenzie, 1994. *Computer-Related Accidental Death: An Empirical Exploration*

P1
Computerisation

Autonomous Driving

- Autopilot fails all the time
  - Even when it is trying to parallel park🤷‍♂️

Technical

P1
Computerisation

Increased Automation That Affects You

- Autonomous Customer Services
- Ghost job listings[1]
- AI-based Human Resource Management[2]
    - 93% of Fortune 500 companies use AI tools to make hiring, promotion, etc. decisions
- Car makers record your driving data and sell them to insurance companies (without your consent)[3]

1. https://www.cnbc.com/2024/08/22/ghost-jobs-why-fake-job-listings-are-on-the-rise.html
2. https://www.forbes.com/sites/keithferrazzi/2025/03/27/the-ai-recruitment-takeover-redefining-hiring-in-the-digital-age/
3. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/11/technology/carmakers-driver-tracking-insurance.html

Example

P1
Computerisation

So what are we talking about today?

- We know computers have infiltrated our everyday lives
- We know computers are controlling very dangerous/life-critical machines and equipments out there
- We know companies are using computers to collect massive amounts of data on us
- We know companies are using computers to make decisions that can change our lives
- How on Earth may we be safe???

Concept

Accountability

and Blame, and Responsibility

Summary

P2
Accountability

Blame, Responsibility, Accountability

- **Blame**
- **Responsibility**
- **Accountability**

Concept

P2
Accountability

Blame, Responsibility, Accountability

- When bad things happen
  - **Blame**
    - Who did wrong
  - **Responsibility**
    - Who gets the punishment
  - **Accountability**
    - Who gets to clean up the mess

Concept

P2
Accountability

When a computer fails, what next?

- Who takes the blame?
  - User? Software Company? Operator? Government?
- Who should be responsible?
  - User? Software Company? Operator? Government?
- Who should be made accountable?
  - User? Software Company? Operator? Government?

Concept

P2
Accountability

How do we establish?

- Blame
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Example: Tesla Autopilot[1]
  - Hundreds of Cases[2]
  - Extremely expensive and lengthy trials

1. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-09-17/tesla-settles-lawsuits-fatal-crashes-involving-autopilot/105784748
2. https://www.tesladeaths.com/

Concept

P2
Accountability

Blame?

- Case 0: driver was not using autopilot when he drove over a pedestrian, killing the pedestrian instantly.
- Case 1: driver was not using autopilot when he drove over a pedestrian, killing the pedestrian. But the driver's vision was blocked by another illegally parked Tesla.
- Case 2: driver was found sleeping in a Tesla car with Autopilot turned on, the car was going for 160kmph when stopped by RCMP.
- Case 3: driver was found playing video games when Tesla car in Autopilot mode crashed into the exit barrier and was killed by impact.
- Case 4: during Tesla's autonomous car trial, a pedestrian woman was missed by the software and killed, while the Human participant was distracted.

Concept

P2
Accountability

Responsibility? Accountability?

- Case 0: driver was not using autopilot when he drove over a pedestrian, killing the pedestrian instantly.
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Concept

P2
Accountability

It is easy to blame, but extremely hard to remove the problem

- Software goes wrong
  - Blame the operator
  - Blame the developer
  - Blame the company
  - Blame the computer
  - Blame the society
  - Blame parents for giving birth to you

Concept

Problem?

- Some say, that
  Hardware/Software flaws are not intentional

- Discovering flaws can take extremely long period of time

  - Vaccines typically 5 years to develop

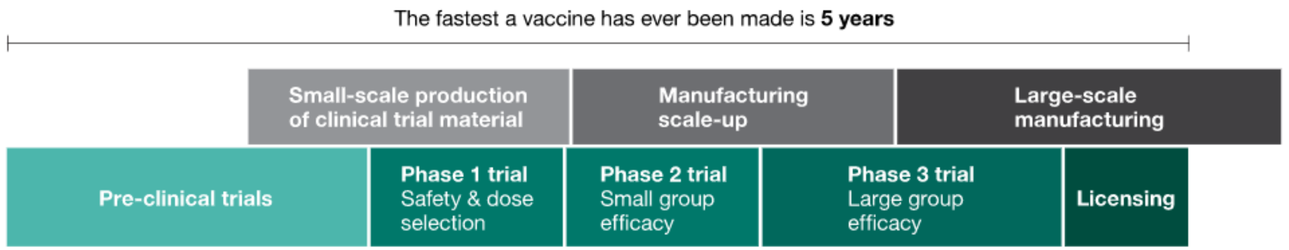
P2
Accountability

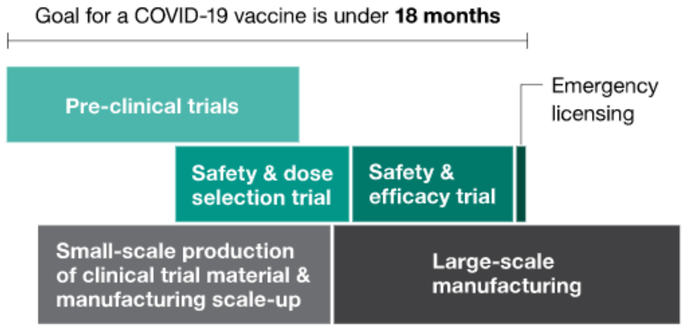
Problem?

- Hardware/So
- Discovering f
  - Vaccines ty

How soon will a vaccine be ready?

All vaccines go through a rigorous process to make sure they're safe and effective.





Governments will need to expedite their usual drug approval processes in order to deliver the vaccine to over 7 billion people quickly.

Source: NEJM (2020)

Concept

P2
Accountability

Problem?

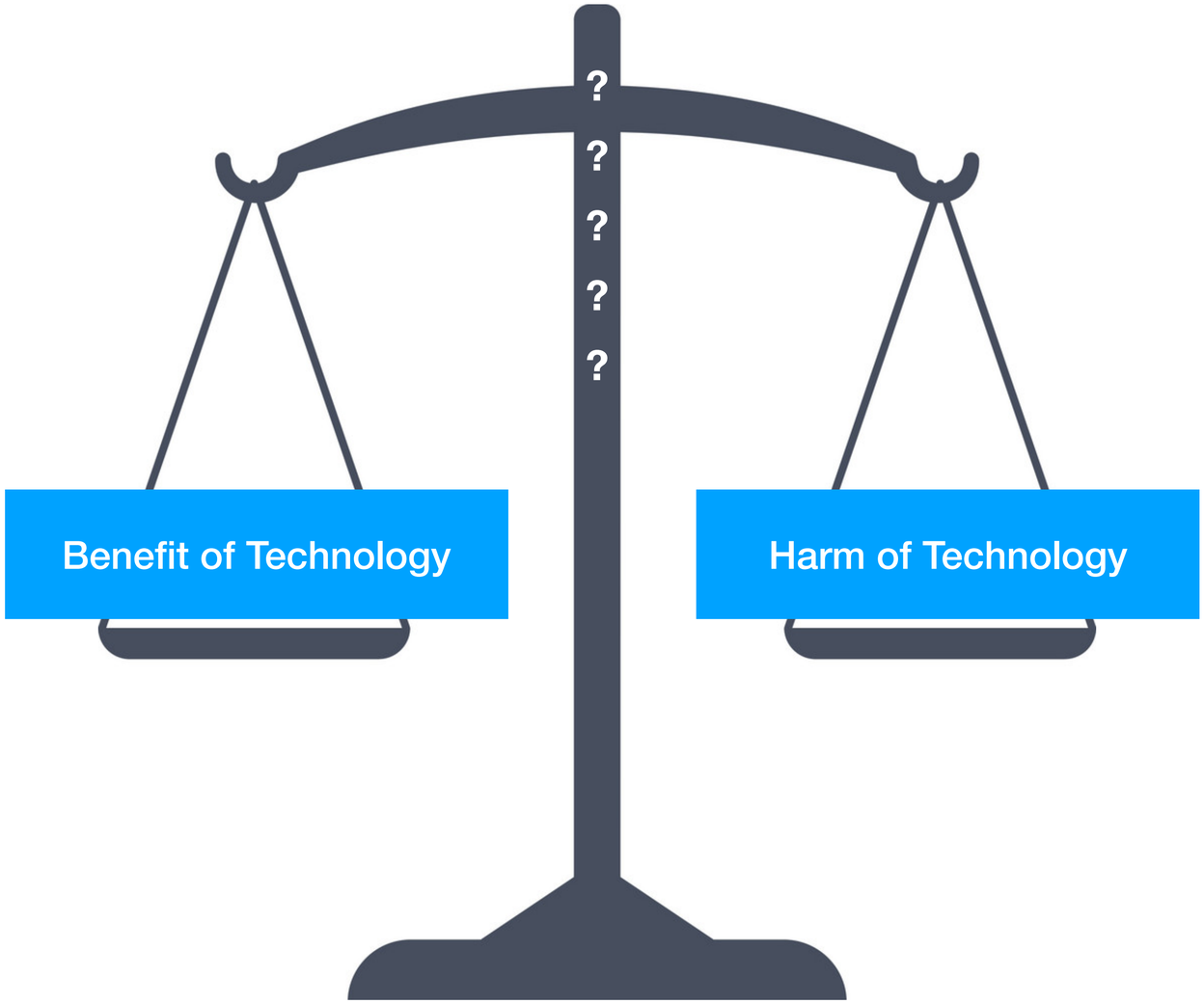
- Claim: computers make much less mistakes than human[1]
  - Therefore it is illogical to blame the computers
- Claim: Hardware/Software bugs are not intentional
  - What about rushed and ill-tested products?[2]
- Even if the above claims are accepted, discovering flaws can take extremely long period of time
  - Example: vaccines typically 5 years to develop
- Who can solve the problem?
  - Does eliminating the technology solve the problem?

1. https://www.tesla.com/en_ca/blog/bigger-picture-autopilot-safety
2. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-30/boeing-737-max-production-defects-ignored-aviation-regulator/103400468

Concept

P2
Accountability

Problem?



Concept

P2
Accountability

Discuss!

- Autonomous Vehicles
- Nuclear weapons
- Genetically modified food
- Cloning technology
- Military Drones, Licensed to Kill
- Artificial Intelligence

Discuss

P2
Accountability

Discuss!

- What do you think, is the responsibility of Computer People?
  - Computers enables anyone to create, and spread their creations
- What should you develop?
- What should you not?

Discuss