

Freedom, rights and duties of humans and robots

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Nowadays the society lives in strict conjunction with robots, in every moment of the day; it is impossible to go back and it would be unthinkable to do without it. It could be difficult to understand how the relationship of humans and robots will evolve. For sure we have to understand how to live and deal with them.

By 'freedom' (of something) we mean the right (or the state of being able) to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you [1]. We consider this as a right for every human in the world, because we think it's important for everyone to express herself or himself without constraints. Anyway, we also consider some ideas, concepts or actions as unacceptable and we could sue or start some legal actions against people expressing some controversial ideas or doing some illegal acts. This is possible and reasonable because, excluding particular cases in which a person doesn't have the ability to understand what he or she is saying or doing, humans have consciousness and critical thinking and we are able to understand which ideas or actions could harm other humans or freedom of others. The only thing that let the humans be able to distinguish between legitimate sentences or actions and illegitimate ones is the critical thinking. We consider a 'robot' as "a machine that can perform a complicated series of tasks automatically" [2]. We know very well the robots in many and various shapes, as smartphones, laptop, wearable smart devices (ear phones, smartwatches ...) and electronic home appliances (dishwashers, refrigerators, lamps ...). Robots are composed mainly by two parts: hardware and software. The hardware is the physical part, while the software is the set of algorithms controlling the behaviour of the robot. In the definition we mention the word 'automatically', in fact an algorithm is a list of statements and conditions written by humans that control every single actions performed by the robot. In this scenario it's impossible to talk about the freedom of a robot, because a robot doesn't have the right (or the state of being able) to do or say what it wants without anyone stopping it. Moreover, a robot doesn't have a critical thinking, because it can't think, it doesn't even have a clear representation of the reality; for a robot there are only two status: working or not working. Said this, it's also clear that a robot can't distinguish by itself between legitimate sentences or actions and illegitimate ones, but everything is up to designers, developers, manufacturers and users. So it doesn't make sense at all to punish or sue a robot, it would be the same as starting a legal action against an animal or an inanimate being. It's also difficult in the case of a legal action for an illicit to understand who

is the (human) guilty part, since the software and hardware are quite complex nowadays and there could be more than one causes underlying the analyzed fact, e.g. the user didn't update the software, a faulty component, badly usage ... From the point of view of the manufacturer/programmer, the machine is deterministic as long as it remains under its own sphere of "supervision". When it comes out, it will undergo an unpredictable evolution. We talked about freedom and rights, but what about duties? On 25 May 2018 the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) entered into force on the European territory. The principal aims of this set of laws are 1) Protect the privacy of the users, 2) Raise the level of companies' security and 3) creating unified and consistent legislation across the EU. One main concept in the GDPR is the Pseudonymization, a data management and de-identification procedure by which personally identifiable information fields within a data record are replaced by one or more artificial identifiers, or pseudonyms [3]. Another important concept is 'security by design', the companies must take into account data security and protection in every step of the data flow, from the user to the company data center and vice versa. Another important part of the GDPR states that every information collected by the company should be taken with the unique goal of statistical analysis and so only the minimum part of the informations should be collected; moreover the user has to be informed on how and which data will be collected. These are the duties of the companies, and for the users? When the user buys a product or, more specifically, enter in a social network, the company writes some rules that the user has to follow without any compromise.

References

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