

Tuesday, October 31

10:45 - 12:00 Technology for the Good

## Title : ARE WE LOOKING FOR A “NEW NORMAL”?

### Abstract

*Within the general framework of “Technology for the good” this contribution provides an overview on the “new normal” or “near future society” starting from the most significant events that characterised the evolution and pervasiveness of cyber technology. It looks at cyber technology from the humanities side, considering the mid- and long-term impact on society. We are reshaping our “world” based on cyber-tech, government, procedures, documents, production, supply chains, general services and more they all are based and rely on cyber technology and platforms. Platforms are mainly private, and the key ones are concentrated in few countries creating a kind of oligarchy.*

*The impact on security and privacy due to the acceleration of the digital transition during the pandemic and the decision makers wills to go digital sometimes forgetting some wise principles. The goal is to digitise as much as possible reaching a cyber-based society relaying on “digital”, this pillar is quite fragile and subject to attacks or suitable for top-down discrimination. AI and ML pose relevant ethical issues, not forgetting their potential general impact on society and economy. Additional potential drawbacks concerning loneliness due to lives spent in cyber-bubbles, cyber-mediation of human relations, citizens experience the world thanks to a cyber device mediated approach, the pandemic busted these effects, the “new reality” is the one delivered by devices, mainstream influence on opinion dynamics and nudging, these are some of the additional aspects considered. Here it comes the potential role of the Metaverse. Accordingly with the actual perspective the Metaverse will progressively create a clone of our environment, but it will not be limited to this goal, creativity will extend this universe without limits apart from imagination. The Metaverse today offers a simplified representation of the “reality” as conceived by programmers. There is an increasing interest in promoting the metaverse as a kind of “new frontier” a territory potentially rich of opportunities for the forerunners. Key players are putting their flags on this territory in a kind of gold rush.*

*Cyber-loneliness, one of the foreseeable risks is a kind of addiction to this “parallel life” training users to shift from real to Meta-life blurring the border between them, this may happen as much as the number of services and duties will be transferred on the other side of the Alice’s mirror. Metaverse can propose a new normal that once accepted in the Meta-life might be accepted in the real life. The same of course is valid for information and opinion dynamics, especially if perceived as real and trustable.*

*Leveraging on laziness and relaxation citizens spend less time outside home, they have shopping online, they buy food and drinks directly delivered on their table, “meet” friends on Zoom or WhatsApp, interact with the “outer environment” though the mediation of social media and video clips. The challenges for the upcoming years are the ways to sustain the human’s role and the inviolable right to freedom and personal privacy in an era of unlimited information gathering. Once again, the need to find a proper balance between humanities and technologies is omnipresent.*

*This is not a complete overview on the key aspects and trends that appeared in recent times, off course taking into consideration each single technology and trend there are not specific concerns and technology seems simply to ease our daily life but getting much more in depth of each single innovation or putting together all the visible “tiles” of the “new normal” mosaic we can be*

*concerned, it is all gold what it glitters? In addition, a limited number of companies concentrated in a few areas of the world control the network and key platforms, may we call it oligarchy?*

*Within the general framework of "Technology for the good" "It is all gold what it glitters" proposes an insight on potential impacts and drawbacks due to the ongoing digital transformation. This paper analyses some of the key facts and events that characterised the recent past and contributed to identify the digital transition as the natural evolution of our society. It looks to cyber technology from the humanities side, considering the mid- and long-term impact on society. We are reshaping our "world" based on cyber technology, government, procedures, documents, production, supply chains, general services and more they all are based and rely on cyber technology and platforms. Platforms are mainly private, and the key ones are concentrated in few countries creating a kind of oligarchy. The "control buttons" of our daily life are often outside the control of our nation state. The double nature of "cyber", many times it contributes to improve resilience but, because of its pervasive attitude, it can be the target for attacks and generate the "perfect storm". In the "analogue" world we had different pipelines and "channels" to perform, thanks to different tools and means, our activities, in the cyber world the whole "system" depends on a single "bottleneck": cyber technology. This single pillar represents a significant risk both in case of malfunction or hackers' attack and in case of top-down decision to switch off. A plan B in such a situation, if not present, will require long time to be implemented. Social media, global content providers are "training" young generations offering a "unified global" approach this will impact future generations and their cultural identity. The recent pandemic boosted the digital transition, an increasing number of "digitally divided" citizens forced to "go digital" generated a significant impact on cybersecurity. We are surrounded by "critical infrastructures" managed by cyber components that, in case of attacks, may create mayor or minor impact on our daily life. On the social side we are wrapped in our personal cyber-sphere in a kind of symbiotic relation. Citizens experience the world thanks to a cyber device mediated approach; the "new reality" is the one delivered by devices. The cyber-loneliness, one of the foreseeable risks is a kind of addiction to this "parallel life" training users to shift from Real- to Meta-life blurring the border between them. The "new normal", is really this what we aim to?*