REGULATING THE CORPORATION AND NOVEL BEINGS

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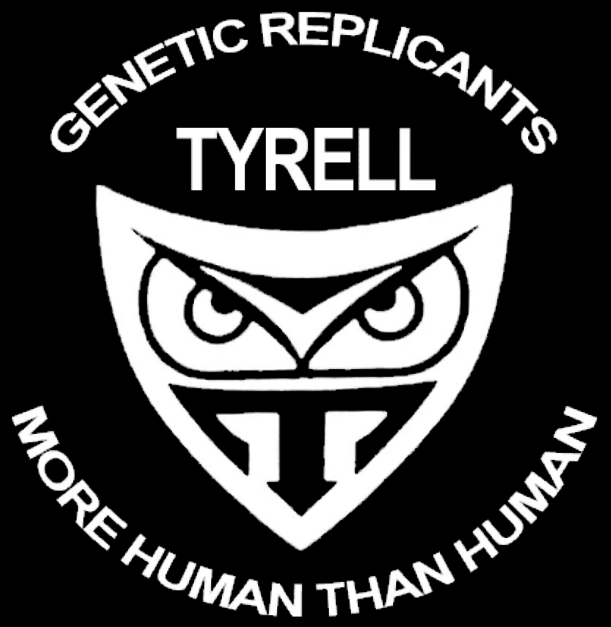
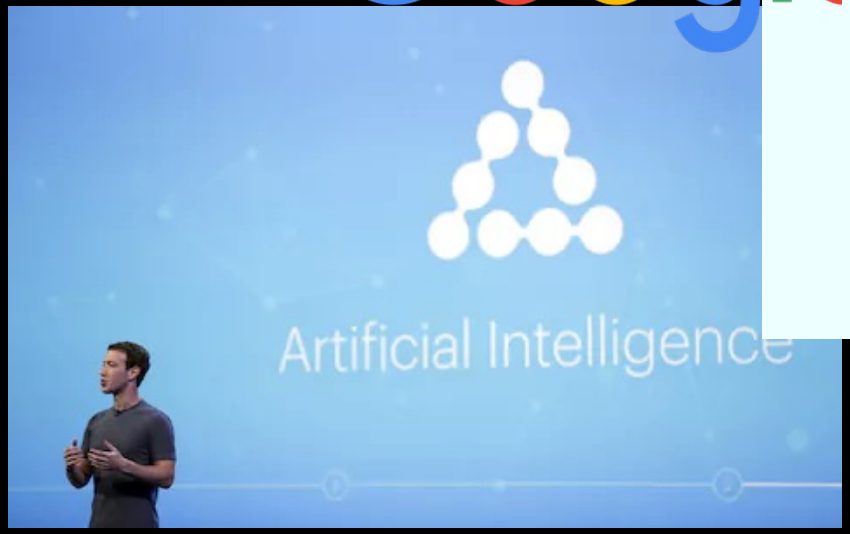
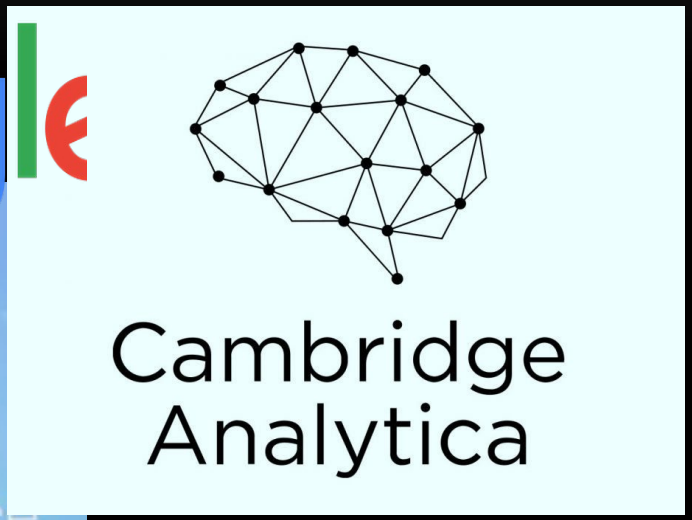


REGULATING CORPORATIONS

- It is important to ask, on a societal level, whether we permit corporations developing significant moral technology to continue to self-regulate



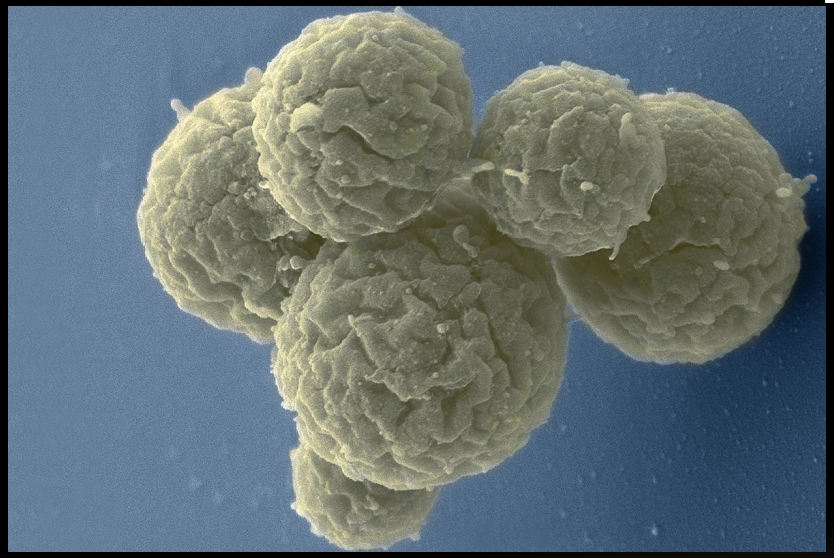


TECHNOLOGIES

Artificial Intelligence

- Deep Learning systems

Google DeepMind



Synthetic Biology

- Protocell synthetic biology
- Could be understood as creating life

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

- Going above and beyond what is legally required
- Adopting policies that reflect responsibility and accountability for societal good
- Being a “Good Citizen”
- Relies on self-imposed initiatives and codes of conduct
- “Social gaze” operates as a soft form of regulation

Innocent:

‘Here at innocent, we want to leave things better than we find them.’

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Factors for engagement with CSR:

- **Size (multi-national)**
- **Industry (Oil, Gas, Textile)**
- **Customer facing**
- **Crisis with reputation**

- **Do these factors also justify special attention and interference?**

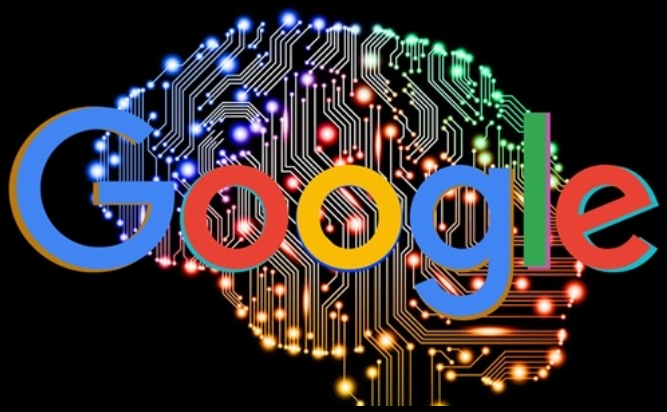
LIMITATIONS TO CSR

- Differing perspectives on morality
- Language used in CSR statements
- Marketing in disguise (‘greenwashing’)
- Varying interests
- Social and political contexts
- Exploitative practices

Most importantly, CSR, needs to build upon a basis of minimum regulatory standards.

SELF-REGULATION

- AI at Google: Our Principles (2018)
  - 'socially beneficial'
  - 'accountable to people'
  - 'uphold high standards of scientific excellence'



Challenges:

- Prioritisation
- Conflicts
- Vague
- Corporations driving the agenda? – should they be in a position to 'mark their own homework'? (Quote from Edward Lucas, Digital Culture, Media and Sport Committee, *Disinformation and 'fake news'* (Interim Report, HC 363, 2018) para 62)

WHO SHOULD DRIVE THE AGENDA?

Industry setting ethical standards:

Google: ‘will proceed where we believe that the overall likely benefits substantially exceed the foreseeable risks and downsides’

Conclusion?: Minimum standards for responsible behavior and a procedure for accountability (ideally on a global scale)