

## Confronting Tomorrow's Problems Today

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As the pace of innovation and technology exponentially increases, they have come to touch our most intimate and human moments. It can feel as though we are no longer alone at the wheel, free to chart our own course through history. Jacques Ellul foresaw the possibility that our society might find itself in such a situation as early as 1964. He imagined a future where technology *itself* is the locus of power in society, when technology shaped or even dictated social order. While there are frightening parallels to be drawn between Ellul's fictional future and our present, it is impossible not to marvel at what we have achieved. Now, 95% of premature babies born survive into adulthood (Crump, 2020), and it takes mere weeks for the genome of a novel pathogen to be sequenced and an mRNA vaccine synthesised (Stuart, 2021). We can detect illnesses and can treat conditions such as AIDS or Type 1 diabetes (once thought to be a death sentence) so well that patients are able to live full happy lives.

We may rightly rejoice in the benefits technological achievement has afforded us – the ubiquitous access to knowledge, remedies for many ailments, and a smorgasbord of novel experiences. Yet, we must confront the repercussions of our rapid technological advancement, and question what it means to live in a society that values technologies above almost anything else. And ask where implementation of novel technology might lead us. It is important that we take time to fully consider the ethical issues, potential pitfalls, and consequences of embracing the burgeoning 'techno-future'.

The first issue of the student-staff interdisciplinary journal Humans 2.0 thus opens with two student articles that consider complexities that surround technology. Amelia Safai explores the ethics of gamete usage and allocation in the context of therapeutic cloning, while Henry Frazer looks into the ethically murky status of the iBlastoids and considers whether the regulation on human embryo experimentation should also apply to these engineered cells.

This issue also explores the unavoidable techno-future by creatively reflecting on the lively discussions at the first Humans 2.0 conference that launched this journal, with questions such as:

*Given our interfacing and interlacing with computer systems, do we know when boundaries between these two forms of integration are crossed? What is the difference between the two, and what does this mean?*

*How do we maintain our humanity when interacting with computer systems and AI specifically?*

*How might humans, transhuman, and posthuman interact and understand each other?*

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The featured conference review written by alumnus Annabella Lewis encapsulates the events and themes of the conference, and offers a reflection on meaning, morality, and mortality in an age where technology might reshape the human experience multiple times during a lifetime. She eloquently recounts the hypothetical case presented at the conference and provides a contextual framework for the creative pieces in this issue.

One of the clearest windows into the future is provided by works of fiction and art, which inspire us to imagine what the future may hold. Ellul's work is the epitome of this, his novels engage readers with the conflicts, problems, and joys that resulted from his vision of a world reshaped by technology. Following in his footsteps, the creative pieces of this issue invite you to peer through this window. To interrogate your intuitions and beliefs, and ask what a moral response to novel technology might look like? We imagine what our emotional and practical responses to the advent of proto-immortality, hyper-human AI and our possible metamorphosis into *Humans 2.0* might be. These questions are hypothetical for now, however we may come to face them in the not-too-distant future.

As our techno-future draws closer, the *Humans 2.0 Journal* seeks to promote the writing and voices of students and staff toward enriching discourse that highlights multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary works. Through a diversity of perspectives, we endeavour to explore the questions that technological advancement and a culture of constant innovation present humanity. The call is out to you, our readership, to help us tackle these topics. It is through your voices as authors and contributors that questions can be raised, wrestled with, and even possibly resolved.

And finally, join us at the next Humans 2.0 Conference where we will further explore technology and what it could mean for us and future humans!

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