**Issues in Information Systems**
Volume 25, Issue 3 pp. 200-217, 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.48009/3_iis_2024_116

# Artificial intelligence in the workplace: A philosophical approach to ethics and integrity

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## Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an evolving construct with the power to transform and dominate the way we live, work, and play. Business decision-makers constantly grapple with how to maximum corporate revenue and profits to achieve stakeholder satisfaction, while minimizing internal and external organizational risks. Corporate leaders understand their C-Suite roles and generally support the implementation of AI; but many do not consider how their AI decisions impact the organizational cyberculture and the well-being of their employees. This paper explores the ethical ramifications of AI upon the employees, the philosophies that underpin leaders' decision-making to incorporate AI within the overall cyberculture, and the primary concerns of employees regarding how algorithms of robotics, machine-learning, expert systems, and language-processing may impact their livelihoods. We approach this research challenge from the perspective of several philosophical theories of Social Contract, Utilitarianism, Deontology, and Phenomenology to better understand how each approach affects the informed decisions of leaders to determine if it is possible to ethically balance innovation while considering the welfare and future of their employees. Interpretation of the literature suggests there are key underlying philosophical themes and patterns relevant to achieving a healthy AI cyberculture responsibly and ethically. Findings indicate that successful implementation of workplace AI includes aligning strategic business objectives with open communication and employee training to increase AI acceptance and mitigate risk of layoffs and job loss. We theorize that a hybrid philosophical framework supporting a behavioral practice of trust and transparency between leadership and the workforce, can result in an ethical workplace solution that supports AI, a cyber-lebenswelt that successfully integrates technology into employees daily lived-world experiences .

**Keywords**: artificial intelligence, cyberculture, cyberethics, deontology, social contract theory, utilitarianism, phenomenology, cyber-lebenswelt, organizational workplace

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly integral to organizational technical operations, and its success depends upon a strong healthy resilient cyberculture. Cybercultures are social, technological, networked, global infoscapes (Skovira, 2010) created from entangled disruptive web-based human Information Systems (IS). Cybercultures explicitly and implicitly dictate how employees perform their daily duties, interact among their colleagues, and are considered sub-cultures of the greater overall organizational culture. They are based upon entangled information transmitted via spoken language, social media, emails,

texts, documents, cell phones, biometric software, media streaming, e-purchasing, e-business, e-government, e-libraries, e-learning platforms, etc.; and these interwoven and matrixed webs of social, institutional, and economic significance affect every aspect of employees' lives (Borkovich et al., 2023).

Traditionally, the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Department is responsible for communicating and teaching cyberculture behavior, practices, meanings, and security measures to the organizational members through their written disseminated policies, procedures, and routine training programs. Generally, these programs succeed in improving overall cyber-related behaviors, but the introduction of AI into the workplace typically ignores the element of human interconnectivity, an essential attribute of cyberculture. A healthy cyberculture promotes self-sustaining patterns of positive behavior and perceives how an organization addresses security measures. But an ineffective cyberculture can promote negative, unwitting, or apathetic cyber behavior eliciting human vulnerabilities, errors, and misconduct. We proffer that when corporate leaders introduce AI into the workplace, they are often oblivious to this lack of human interconnectivity, an essential quality that is necessary to maintain a healthy strong resilient cyberculture in the workplace. And when a healthy cyberculture decays due to fear of AI usurpation of jobs, salary reductions, layoffs, the workforce suffers and the business declines.

It can be daunting for employees when robotics, machine-learning, large language models, neural-networks, expert-systems, and other types of AI are introduced into the organization. Nevertheless, corporate leadership, coordinating through the Human Resources (HR) and ICT Departments, are ethically responsible for reassuring and placating employees, and for offering a path forward to maintain employment, increase knowledge and skill sets, and create new career paths and opportunities. Our interest in this topic centers upon how leadership introduces AI into the workforce in an ethical manner while maintaining integrity and respect for the employees. Therefore, it became essential to review the philosophical views of well-known theorists to better understand how and why leadership could be so cavalier and even callous with their implementation of AI while others are empathetic and supportive.

We approached this research challenge by conducting a literature review of AI technologies and leadership perspectives, in concert with several ethical theories promulgated by philosophers, academics, and other subject matter experts (SMEs). Following our voluminous review of ethical theories, we settled upon four normative theories of Utilitarianism, Deontology, Phenomenology, and Social Contract for our study. The objective was to better understand how each approach affects the informed decisions of leaders to determine if it is possible to ethically balance innovation while considering the welfare and future of their employees. Interpretation of the literature suggests there are key underlying philosophical themes and patterns relevant to achieving a healthy AI cyberculture responsibly and ethically. Findings indicate that successful implementation of workplace AI includes aligning strategic business objectives with open communication and employee training to increase AI acceptance and mitigate risk of layoffs and job loss. We theorize that an organization must create a cyberculture of lebenswelt, *a cyber-lebenswelt*, that integrates technology into employees lived-world experiences. We conclude by proposing a hybrid philosophical framework behind a behavioral practice of trust and transparency between leadership and the workforce, positing an ethical workplace solution that supports AI.

## Literature Review

We conceptualized our Literature Review of published books, articles, studies, and reports by philosophers, ethicists, subject matter experts, business management academics, and scholars by exploring the business entanglements and disruptions caused by leadership when introducing AI into the workplace. We curated a universe of over 50 textbooks, 38 articles, and 3 AI business survey reports to constitute and support our

study by highlighting a range of influential academic opinions and scholarly findings in the ethical cyberculture arena. Rich descriptive and detailed literature provided this avenue for research through the review of digital and hard copy published data sources. Therefore, we begin our Literature Review with the constructs of AI, cyberculture, and the exploration of several ethical theories.

**Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) originated with many intellectual pioneers of computer science, mathematics, and philosophy over the past seventy-five plus years. Several of these key academicians, intellectuals, and technologists and their contributions are described below.

The construct of AI refers to a simulation of human intelligence processed by machines, primarily computer systems. These processes include learning, reasoning, and self-correction by acquiring information and using rules to approximate or define conclusions. AI encompasses a variety of technologies such as: machine learning (development of algorithms that allow computers to learn, make predictions and/or decisions based upon data); natural language processing (ability of a machine to understand, interpret, translate, and respond to human language (i.e. chatbots)); computer vision (ability of machine to interpret and make decisions based upon image and video recognition (i.e. object recognition and facial detection)); robotics (design and use robots to perform tasks, generally human tasks that are dangerous, dirty, dull, and repetitive); and expert systems (i.e. emulate decision-making ability using a knowledge base of human expertise to solve problems); among others (Manning, 2020).

Turing, by many considered the “father of AI,” introduced his Turing Machine in 1950 to determine if a machine could mimic human-like intelligence (Turing, 1950). McCarthy followed in 1956 by coining the term, “Artificial Intelligence” with his development of the seminal AI programming language (McCarthy, 1959; 1989). Minsky’s contributions were the founding of the MIT Lab, early developments in robotics, and his continuation of cognitive symbolic reasoning (Minsky, 1988; 1992; 2006). Proponents of cognitive psychology, Simon and Newell of Carnegie Mellon University advanced early studies of logic theory with AI programs that mimicked human problem-solving (1958; 1971). Inspired by Shannon (1948), Samuel advanced early machine-self-learning with his development of algorithms for playing checkers (1959). Fast-forwarding to 2023, modern AI pioneers include Hinton, LeCun, and Bengio who contributed to deep-machine-learning and large-language-models that explore layers of neural networks, leading to breakthroughs in image and speech recognition (St. Clair, 2023).

An interesting approach to AI and its impact on society and business is espoused by Pasquinelli. Pasquinelli argues that it is pure fantasy that AI may one day become fully autonomous (or sentient). He explains that computer algorithms have always imitated the form of social relations and the organization of labor in their structure and its purpose remains blind automation. Furthermore, he asserts that the "mystery" of AI is just the automation of labor at the highest degree, *not intelligence per se* (Pasquinelli, 2023, p. 2).

Nevertheless, AI continues to evolve with research in the areas of deep learning, big data, deep fakes, and cloud computing, among others, while continuing to raise leading ethical and societal questions. Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher (2022, p. 215) argue that “AI begs for an ethic of its own. AI needs its own Descartes or Kant to explain what is being created and what it will mean for humanity.” *And we agree.*

**Cyberculture**

For our working definition of cyberculture, we drew upon several literature sources. Schein (2016, p. 12) defined organizational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved

its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." Vicente (2020, p. 431) described cyberculture as a social, cultural, and technological phenomena that spans across many disciplines for the emerging and evolving forms of engagement with the Internet and its virtual environments. And with a nod to systems theory (Meadows, 2008), we synthesized the definitions above and developed our construct as: *A cyberculture is a set of digital, practices, customs, behaviors, language, and beliefs shared by a cyber community, comprised of people, processes, and technology, within an explicit and tacit infoscape, as the accepted way to do things.*

An organization is an infoscape or information landscape (Skovira, 2010) that consists of all formal and informal informing systems and informing objects we use in an organization. An organizational culture and its sub-cultures do not and cannot exist without informing systems. The organization is a metaframe of informing systems within one, multiple, and/or networked matrixed infoscapes, all of which help to define strategic business missions and goals, creating its own cyberculture. Cybercultures require informing systems and informing objects to develop a group's behavior, shared attitudes, practices, vocabulary, artifacts, routines, and goals.

The conceptual impact of cyberculture accompanies linking technology consumption with cultural, historical, and societal factors (Groysberg et al., 2018). We communicate our cultures and sub-cultures through socialization in the workplace and use our contextualized staged performance in any face (form) from which we want to be perceived by a specific audience. Self-presentation as conceptualized builds on Goffman's (1959) theories of identity and social performance. Within a cyberculture, social actors engage in complex negotiations, both analog and digital, to project a desired impression through consistently performing coherent and complementary behaviors (Borkovich et al., 2023).

Key aspects of cybercultures include online communities, organizational workforces, virtual identities, digital communication, educational e-learning platforms, and social media interactions (Rheingold, 2000; Castells, 2009; & Turkle, 2011). Kozinets (2019) posits that in the 21st century, cybertechnologies are framing, reflecting, shaping, connecting, and controlling us through the infoscapes created by the dissemination of entangled disruptive matrixed information within our cybercultures.

Generally, academics and other subject matter experts argue that culture is systemically difficult to change. However, through evolution of time, technology, leadership, business units, products and services, employees, customers, geography, economics, etc., organizational culture may slowly change when a clear mission, shared values and practices, and a united behavior is communicated to all stakeholders. The aggregate research of various subject matter experts supports the need for empathy, trust, awareness, communication, transparency, and collaboration in the digital environment. *We refer to this phenomenon as a positive healthy cyberculture.*

These cybercultures of interactive group participants and observers also involve ethical standards and norms governing group behavior in digital environments. Issues have arisen, such as privacy, security, protection of intellectual property, the digital divide of economics, as well as AI threats to employment and job security, are now central to discussions about workplace Cyberethics, leadership, trust, and fairness to all.

**Cyberethics**

Spinello (2021) argues that Cyberethics are subject to the same ethical imperatives in cyberspace as individuals are subjected to in a physical environment. He purports that ethical norms, such as truthfulness, following the laws of civil society, and abiding by the social pressures of community living and working

are all forces at work that limit our behavior. We are subject to the "code" of cyberspace behavior, even when "laws" have not yet been enacted to regulate our behavior. Alternatively, Foot (2021) points to "ethical relativism," an extension of "cultural relativism" (Boas, 1928) and "normative relativism" (Frankena, 1963), and infers that cyber norms, customs, practices, and language differ within online communities and social-cultural groups that follow their own "codes" of cyberspace, not necessarily what others may consider a universal code of Cyberethics. Others believe that cyberspace is the *wild wild west* and NO norms, values, morals, and ethics apply, least of all, the Golden Rule (Coeckelbergh, 2020).

**Philosophical Theories of Ethics**

This section introduces four principles of Utilitarianism, Deontology, Social Contract, and Phenomenology. From a business leadership perspective, these philosophies were selected as ethical theories that directly relate to commonly accepted workplace norms, practices, attitudes, and beliefs espoused by present-day decision-makers in leadership positions.

**Utilitarianism.** Utilitarianism, originally attributed to Bentham (1789) and later expanded upon by Mill (1859; 1863) is a consequentialist ethical theory that evaluates the morality of actions based upon their consequences, without favoring any particular group or individual. It posits that the best action is the one that maximizes the overall happiness or benefits the greatest number of people. The principle of utility forms the foundation of Utilitarianism indicating that if actions are morally right they will produce the greatest amount of utility for the greatest number of individuals affected. Conversely, actions are considered morally wrong if they produce more suffering and diminish overall happiness for the majority (Reeves, 2008). Utilitarianism is a widely influential ethical theory, informing discussions and debates in areas such as public policy, economics, social justice, business, and environmental ethics.

**Deontology.** Deontology, conceptualized by Kant (1781), is also known as the Categorical Imperative. Kant considered the Categorical Imperative as the universal principle of morality, stating that individuals should only act according to principles that are universally applied without contradiction. Unlike consequentialist theories, such as Utilitarianism, Deontology ethics argues that certain actions are inherently right or wrong, regardless of their consequences. Morality is derived from rules, duties, principles, and moral obligations that are considered universally binding and applicable to all (Wood, 1991). Deontology is characterized by a rules-based approach to morality and the rules determine the rightness or wrongness of the action. Rules are generally derived from religious, moral, ethical, educational, bureaucracies, law, medicine, business, and social-cultural teachings, and are consistently applied to all regardless of the circumstances.

**Social Contract.** Social Contract Theory is a philosophical construct that explores relationships between individuals, groups, Governments, and/or commercial organizations. Attributed to Hobbes (1651), Social Contract Theory is described as the agreement between the parties to live and work together under certain rules by forming a social contract for the mutual benefit and protection of all. Often a sovereign or head-of-state authority is named or selected to maintain law and order and this individual may be granted absolute power to maintain the peace (Boucher et al., 1994). Rousseau (1762) agreed in principle but asserted that individuals had the right to voluntarily oppose inequities or injustices when the social contract did not serve the common good.

Alternatively, Locke (1689) argued that individuals enter a Social Contract to protect their rights to life, liberty, and property; and if the Government or organization fails to fulfill its obligations or violates the rights of its citizens or members, individuals have the right to revolt and establish a new Government or organization. Predictably, Kant (1785) offered that individuals have a duty to abide by the universal rules

and laws of the Social Contract, provided it maintained respect for an individual's autonomy. Although these theorists offered differing opinions and interpretations of the Social Contract, each laid the groundwork for the roles and relationships of Government, organizations, groups, and individuals within a social-culture environment.

**Phenomenology.** Phenonmenology was developed in the 20th century by Husserl (1936) and furthered by his student, Heidegger (1954) to study and describe real events experienced by individuals. They asserted that human existence is fundamentally situational and contextual and must be studied from the viewpoint of the individual experiencing the phenomenon. Sartre (1943) opined that Phenomenology influenced Existentialism, since existence precedes essence. And Schutz (1967) directly related Phenomenology to Sociology as his research demonstrated that social interactions were integral to a shared lifeworld of consciousness and subjective experiences (Hammersley, 2019). These theorists argued the philosophical approach of researching and understanding first-person lived experiences of phenomena, implicating its significant influence on various fields, including psychology, sociology, and the cognitive sciences. Both Husserl and Schutz referenced the German term, *Lebenswelt*, in their writings. *Lebenswelt* translates to life-world in English and refers directly to the lived-experiences of individuals within their social, cultural, and environmental contexts. It provides a framework for exploring the rich complexity of human life and experience, beyond generalized theoretical abstractions. We further expand upon the construct of *Lebenswelt* in our Discussion by applying it to the AI cyberspace environment as *"cyber-lebenswelt."*

## Methodology

We conceptualized our Literature Review of published books, articles, studies, and reports by philosophers, ethicists, subject matter experts, business management academics, and scholars by exploring the business entanglements and disruptions caused by leadership when introducing AI into the workplace. We curated a universe of over 50 textbooks, 38 academic articles, and 3 AI business survey reports (Pew, Rand, Forbes) to constitute and support our study by highlighting a range of influential academic opinions and scholarly findings in the cyberculture arena. Rich descriptive and detailed literature provided this avenue for research through the review of digital and hard copy published data sources.

The methodology of QL Literature Review, *directly targeted to business, leadership, workplace, and workforce research*, is fully supported as a creative inquiry through the works of, *but not limited to*, Stogdill (1948), Ponterotto (2005), Montuori (2005), Chenail, Cooper, & Desir, (2010), Creswell (2013), Tan (2015), Pajo (2018), Roetzel (2018), Snyder (2019), Harris (2019), and Savin-Baden & Major (2023).

The intent of this research was to extend the current quantitative (QN) approach of AI leadership surveys and questionnaires to include a qualitative (QL) approach to inquiry by digging deeper into the topic of AI in the organizational cyberculture, the ethics of implementation, the decision-making of leadership, and the impact on the workforce. Our purpose was to collect and review the data, interpret and discuss the findings, and theorize a path forward for a results-oriented business or workplace community whose AI decision-support system and strategic objectives rely upon relevant information to help executives and management solve AI implementation issues while maintaining positive employee relationships.

We wanted to learn how leaders ethically approach AI implementation and why some workforces result in healthy positive cybercultures, and others fail in fear and despair after the introduction of AI. Our research construct is simplified in the Research Question (RQ) below.

**RQ**: *How does leadership ethically implement AI into an organizational cyberculture resulting in a positive accepting workforce?*

Results from an extensive Literature Review resulted in a new perspective of how and why the organizational workforce feels threatened, fearful, and even enraged, at leadership's generally unilateral decision to integrate AI into the workplace with little or no advance communication to, or preparation of, the employees. Our Discussion follows with an interpretation of this AI phenomenon in the workplace, our introduction of a Cyberethics Theory, and our strategic recommendations to leadership toward employees' future acceptance of AI.

## Interpretive Discussion

Our review of the literature revealed that as AI continues to be integrated into the 21st century workforce, many employees are distressed, troubled, threatened, fearful, and even enraged at the prospect of replacement and job loss; while an overly confident Leadership is chastised, disparaged, and denigrated by employees for lack of transparent communication and truthfulness regarding their futures. Few organizations, such as CISCO and Salesforce, have presented an honest and ethical AI integration plan for their workforces resulting in positive forward-looking cybercultures (Fortune, 2023). Through the lens of several well-known normative philosophies, this section interprets how leadership incorporates ethics into their technology integration *(wittingly and unwittingly)*, resulting in successful or unsuccessful employee acceptance of AI into their daily lives. In this section, we weave the contributions of prior subject matter experts into our present-day literature findings to explore and discuss practical applications to integrate AI ethics and integrity into the workplace. We then close by offering our recommendations for a positive Cyberethics Program that will ease AI integration into a workforce.

### Key Survey Findings by Rand, Pew, and Forbes

While business leadership realizes benefits in using AI, they also have concerns. Rand (2023) identified that there are no occupations in the United States completely unexposed to general AI technology patents to simulate human intelligence (to some degree). However, optimistically, Rand proposed that most labor-driven jobs will not completely disappear but will morph into new future jobs (Sytsma & Sousa, 2023). Pew (2023) reported that overall, 58% of American employees say they feel more concerned than excited about the increased use of AI in the workplace; and 53% of Americans say AI is doing more to hurt than help people maintain control over these technologies (Tyson et al., 2023).

By far, the Forbes 2024 Survey elicited the most interesting responses regarding business leadership perspectives of AI integration. Their positive responses included a welcoming of ChatGPT into the business (97%) and a positive indication that 64% of business owners believe AI will improve customer relationships. Their concerns revolved around how AI may hurt website traffic from search engines resulting in decreased visibility, and increased Internet misinformation about their organizations. 40% expressed concerns regarding an internal over-dependence on technology, and 35% of entrepreneurs were worried about the technical abilities required to use AI efficiently. Only 33% of business owners were significantly concerned about a potential reduction in workforce; alternatively, 77% of employees expressed apprehension regarding human job loss (Haan, 2024).

Not surprisingly, none of the surveys addressed the many ethical considerations of AI integration into the workforce, the role of leadership, and the implications to human capital that may ensue. Generally, an increase in exposure to AI technology has a mixed relationship between employers and employees. Jobs that are routine-intensive typically have an increase in AI exposure and are associated with recent limited

or declining growth, and job loss. Certain labor-intensive careers could face additional challenges within the next few years. Many occupations, especially those requiring educational investment after high school, are likely to be affected; but as Rand reported, many of these jobs will likely morph into other careers that employers need, as more-routine repetitive cognitive tasks are passed on to AI.

Obviously, workforce development programs can adjust occupational training to ready workers focusing on areas that require human-specific talent, such as critical thinking and collaboration with AI and human partners. Rand, Pew, and Forbes offer a unique look at how technology has affected the U.S. workforce over the last 40+ years. Importantly, the Surveys provide insight into how developing AI capabilities could affect the workforce in the coming decades; but their reports do not address the importance of leadership ethics in truthfully disseminating this information to employees, their plans to prepare and train the workforce, and offer new opportunities for employment in the AI infospace. Therefore, the following narrative describes our interpretative theory of Cyberethics as an essential element within the current and future state of organizational cybercultures.

**Theory of Cyberethics in the Digital Workplace**

Cyberspace is socially constructed by linguistic relationships and transactions (Skovira, 2003). In the workplace, cyberspace creates a digital infospace for the workforce; and the workforce then creates its own cyberculture of explicit and tacit behaviors, language, practices, habits, routines, systems of meaning, artifacts, etc., known only to the *insiders*, the employees. This cyberculture balance of understanding is threatened when a new element, an *outsider*, is introduced into the infospace. Therefore, one may infer that the introduction of AI into the workplace engenders employees' fear of the unknown and presents a dangerous imbalance to the cyberculture ecosystem. Social responsibility, business practices, stakeholder obligations, and ethics are directly linked to corporate behavior. These leadership behaviors are dependent upon expectations of a moral worldview of the social contract (Skovira, 2003, p. 166).

In our narrative, we theorize that a positive or negative cyberculture is directly related to the overall success of the organization's Cyberethics. We further assert that employees' cyber behavior at every occupational level is also directly related to the Cyberethics espoused by the organization and its leaders, *or a lack thereof*. Formally adopted policies, procedures, well-defined governance, controls, and audits generally do not address the cyberculture that lies persistently in the background. A healthy cyberculture promotes self-sustaining patterns of positive behavior and perceives how an organization addresses a holistic ethics program. But an ineffective cyberculture can promote negative, unwitting, or apathetic cyber behavior eliciting human vulnerabilities, errors, misconduct, and a loss of confidence in the organization. Establishing a proactive cyberculture can be established and achieved when the corporate hierarchy from the top-down sets a standard of conduct, and influences the accountability, awareness, training, standards, communication model, and framework for a healthy cyberculture committed to by all in the organization.

**Leadership, Philosophies, and Ethics**

We learned that convincing employees that the integration of AI into the workplace will inure to their benefit requires a comprehensive approach that addresses their concerns, provides transparent communication, and demonstrates the positive impacts of AI on both individuals and the entire organization. However, we also discovered that most C-Suite leadership and senior management are highly educated in business, finance, and technology, they rarely have the deep philosophic background required to address this ethical problem. Literature supports the need for organizational empathy, trust, communication, and collaboration to achieve a positive healthy cyberculture (McIntyre, 2007; Ruggiero,

2008). Therefore, we argue that leaders should consider a holistic approach of several philosophical theories, *a hybrid of sorts*, to address their employees' AI concerns through *Cyberethics*.

Our research indicates that most C-Suite leaders and senior managers predictably make decisions based upon the most benefit to the majority internal and external stakeholders, hence the Utilitarian ethics approach. These business decisions include not only technology acquisitions, as well as the implementation of AI, but also increased revenue recognition and stakeholder satisfaction; cloud providers, selection of healthcare insurance programs and salary structures for employees, purchase card companies, travel agencies, vendors and suppliers, vehicle purchases or rentals, locations of new facilities and closing of others, etc. Business leaders typically favor the consequences of greater good for the majority population. Figure 1. illustrates a popular Star Trek meme of Utilitarianism in the workplace.

**Figure 1. Utilitarianism. Per dying Spock to Capt. Kirk, "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one" (Star Trek Film, Wrath of Khan, 1982). Meme retrieved from e-public domain (Fair Use Doctrine).**


**Figure *2*. Deontology. Rule-based policy regardless of circumstances. Meme retrieved from the e-public domain (Fair Use Doctrine).**

Government and other bureaucracies generally pursue rules-based binary (right v. wrong) policies and procedures, based and codified in law (i.e. statutes, public laws, executive orders, regulations, ordnances, etc.), as decision-making results are applied to everyone, *equally*, typically without regard to unique situations or personal consequences. These leaders espouse the Deontological principle of ethics, applying the Categorical Imperative with equity, parity, and without prejudice to all members of the organization at every level. Figure 2. depicts a popular road-sign (poster) meme of Deontology in a social environment.

Organizations generally incorporate the Social Contract Theory by and between leaders and followers, in concert with Utilitarianism or Deontology. The Social Contract specifies that all parties agree to their mutual benefit how business and personal behavior will be conducted to achieve a common purpose or objective (i.e., how we do things around here). A Social Contract is the substance of social capital held by all stakeholders in the organization (Skovira, 2003). Figure 3. illustrates the Social Contract construct as an agreed to relationship not to harm each other, based upon trust and a common goal.


**Figure 3. Social Contract. Parties agree to a mutually beneficial business relationship. Meme retrieved from e-public domain (Fair Use Doctrine).**

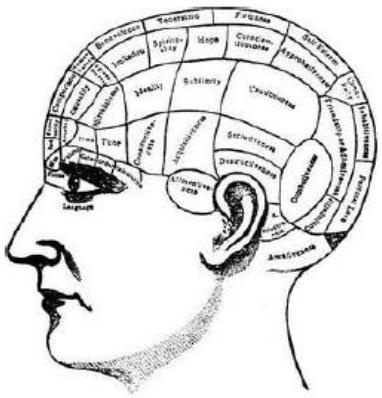

**Figure 4. Phenomenology. Uniquely Personal Lived-Experiences. Meme retrieved from e-public domain (Fair Use Doctrine).**

Phenomenology is the deep understanding of the lived-experiences of leaders and followers, including all employees in the workforce. This approach explores and describes the unique experiences of the employer and employee from their individual perspectives, not a generalized experience based upon majority feedback. Figure 4. demonstrates the Phenomenological experience as one that can only be felt, endured, and expressed by the individual, and the essence of that personal experience is like that of no other.

Skovira (2003) advanced Phenomenology into cyberspace by conceptualizing the German term, Lebenswelt (life-world) in the electronic form. *eLebenswelt* was framed to incorporate lived-experiences on the Internet, in concert with the societal responsibilities and obligations of a Social Contract within the infospaces of the World Wide Web. From a holistic viewpoint, *eLebenswelt* addresses the ethical challenges arising from the intersection of technology and human life-worlds; and it emphasizes principles such as respect for human dignity, autonomy, justice, and ethics in the digital environment. For the purposes of this organizational study, we renamed *eLebenswelt* as Cyber-Lebenswelt, depicted in Figure 5.

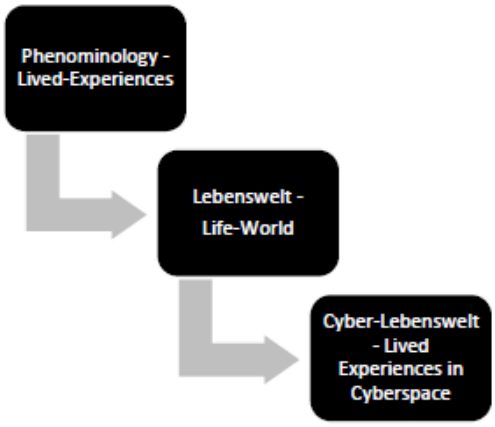


**Figure 5. Cyber-Lebenswelt. Philosophical evolution from Phenomenology thru Lebenswelt into Cyber-Lebenswelt (digital life-world experiences).**

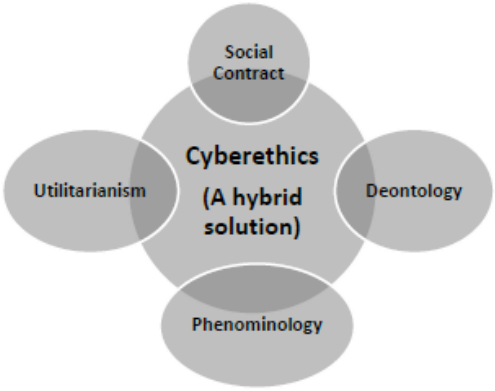


**Figure 6. Cyberethics Program. Incorporates the Essence of multiple philosophies toward an ethical AI environment comprised of humans and machines.**

To summarize, not all ethical philosophies will meet the needs of an organization, so a hybrid of all or some elements should be incorporated into a workable Cyberethics Program. Rules (Deontology) are important to maintain order, but a majority viewpoint (Utilitarianism) is also important. Each day the employee

uniquely experiences the events of a work environment (Phenomenology), so an in-depth understanding of change and future impact must also be considered. All parties must work collaboratively under a certain *agreed-to* framework (Social Contract) for the mutual benefit and protection of all. Senior management must sponsor a Cyberethics Program and lead by example with optimism and integrity. Figure 6 depicts a hybrid philosophical solution to a workplace Cyberethics Program. Next we will discuss a pragmatic approach to a successful Cyberethics Program.

**Practical Business Applications**

Building upon the Cyberethics theory, we propose that Leadership, with the assistance of the ICT and HR Departments, implement several business strategies designed to encourage AI acceptance by the workforce. But first, it is important to address the negative aspects of AI that may result in perceived harm to employees, *implying the absence of a relevant Social Contract between the parties*.

Overall, the negative effects of AI integration on corporate culture highlight the importance of addressing concerns related to job displacement, skills development, bias mitigation, privacy protection, ethical decision-making, culture shock, and organizational change management to ensure a smooth and successful transition to an AI-driven workplace. Table 1. illustrates how AI implementation can negatively impact employees' psyches, prior to incorporating a phenomenological approach to elicit the true lived-experiences and feelings of the employees, following with a plan to mitigate their apprehensions.

**Table 1: AI Negative Influences upon an Unsuspecting Workforce - Untenable Social Contract**

| Negative Influences toward AI Acceptance | Negative Employee Reactions to AI Implementation | Employee Concerns & Fears |
|---|---|---|
| Job Displacement | New Job & New Boss Anxiety | Loss of Employment; What is the Plan? |
| Lack of Hiring/Promotions | Employer Bias & Discrimination | Less Work for Fewer Employees |
| Algorithms Select New Hires | AI Bias & Discrimination | Fewer Opportunities for New Jobs |
| Higher Tech Ed Required | No interest in Higher Ed; or Lack of funding (College) | Loss of Employment without proper training; Layoffs ensue |
| New Skills Required | Re-Training Anxiety | Will not pass Tech Training; Can't learn |
| Re-Training Schedule & Expenses | Will training be on-site or off-site, during or after workhours? | Will company pay for training or reimburse employees to take training? |
| Lack of Human Input or Surveillance over Machines | Loss of Human Interaction; Elimination of Foremen/Supervisors | Employee no longer has place in the company; No opportunity to advance |
| Technology Over-Reliance | Human Operators Not Needed; Will a machine be my new boss? | Company will need only skeletal workforce |
| Surveillance Concerns | Lack of Workplace Privacy | Company AI Apps spy on employees' digital devices |
| Management Autonomous Decision-Making | No opportunities for employees to provide feedback & opinions | May need to form a Union to preserve or obtain rights |
| Communications - Rare & Electronic | Lack of advance notification & preparation for transition to AI | Information is sketchy and hard to understand; Need meetings with bosses |
| Group & Individual Meetings | No one will speak to us face-to-face to explain what will happen and when | The only time we get a face-to-face mtg. is when we are fired |
| Absent Respect - Absent | Perceived lack of respect on both sides | They don't respect us and vice versa |
| Organization Culture Clash | Employees Resistance to Change | Need HR/ICT assistance to adapt to AI |
| Ethical Dilemmas | Management has NO ethics and our livelihood is being destroyed | No feedback solicited from employees; Do they know how we feel? |

By addressing all or most of these negative AI perceptions, corporate leadership can take proactive measures to mitigate potential detrimental impacts of AI integration within the corporate cyberspace. For

example, routine training and communications are essential. Meetings, newsletters, intranet memes, posters, incentives, rewards, social-gatherings, etc. will also deliver positive messaging to employees. Frequent posting of new job opportunities and encouragement for future individual growth from management are essential. Where and how to access internal training and business reimbursement for full or partial external training expenses are appropriate, too. When employees feel respected, valued, appreciated, and worthy of new opportunities and training, they will return positive feelings to management in kind. Table 2. Illustrates a positive approach to employee AI acceptance from a respectful, truthful, and transparent management, including senior Leadership, and the HR and ICT Departments.

**Table 2: AI Positive Influences upon a Prepared Workforce - Proactive Social Contract**

| Positive Influences toward AI Acceptance | Mitigation of Employee Concerns & Fears of AI | Positive Employee Reactions to AI Implementation |
|---|---|---|
| AI Policies & Procedures | Publish Clear, Cogent, & Concise Guidelines | Easy to read and understand |
| AI Training & Education | On-site Workshops, Seminars during Workday; Online Courses/Certificates | Appreciate training is offered during workday |
| AI Efficiencies | Streamline Processes, Add Efficiencies to Routine Employee Requirements | Awareness that AI will assist with Time Sheets, Expense & Other Repts. |
| Communication | Truthful, Transparent, & Often | Welcome routine information & news |
| Employee Participation | All-hands employee mtgs.; additional mtgs. with dept. representatives | Concerns can be addressed with mgmt. |
| Open-Door Policy | Encourage employees to voice concerns with mgmt., HR, ICT | Value opportunities to voice concerns in one-on-one mtgs. |
| Employee Reimbursement | Off-site AI Training will be reimbursed in whole or in part | Interest in AI higher-ed or tech training will be reimbursed |
| Empowerment | Invite employees to participate in decision-making re: AI implementation, deployment, Change Management | Opportunities to offer input, ideas, suggestions to enhance, improve AI; Empowered to Embrace Change |
| Privacy | Ensure understanding of employees' rights & responsibility re: AI data collection & Use of Co. Equipmt. | Employees understand how their data is collected, used, & protected; & how to use company equipmt. responsibly |
| Oversight / Accountability | Establish mechanisms to monitor AI implementation properly & ethically | Address AI and/or Ethical Violations promptly |
| Recognitions | Reward employee AI contributions | Award certificates, plaques, gift-cards, monetary incentives |
| Performance Evaluations | Reward AI creativity, acceptance, ethics | Annual Reviews recognize AI efforts |
| Ethics Policies & Procedures | Publish Clear, Cogent, & Concise Guidelines | Easy to read and understand |
| Ethics Training | Provide to ALL employees; Benefit AI implementation/understanding | Advance ethics skills to navigate AI workplace dilemmas to seek solutions |

We assert that Corporate Leadership can and should take proactive measures to ensure that AI will be introduced positively into the workplace, so the workforce is open to change and excited about new opportunities AI may provide. Our goal is to foster a healthy cyberculture that values ethical considerations, employee well-being, transparent communication, and collaborative innovation.

> *Obviously, we understand and admit that not every workplace will benefit from our Cyberethics plan, and we equally recognize that we have not covered and addressed all the Black Swans (Taleb, 2007) that exist; but perhaps some ideas may be gleaned from our strategy to support an organization's future or current AI implementation.*

### Cyberculture Plans for Leadership Strategy, Trust, & Employee Empowerment

Organizational structure and digital systems typically follow its cyberculture. But many cyberculture models do not consider the ethics implications directly related to privacy, bias, accountability, and fairness to employees when a critical techno change enters the infospace. Culture (in this case, *cyberculture*) is more complex than simple, more unique than common, and more evolving than static (Collette, et al., 2009). For example, companies that prioritize collaboration and communication can design and leverage incentive systems that include shared team and company goals along with rewards that recognize collective effort.

Harkening back to the AI theories of Simon, Newell, Shannon, and other subject matter experts and the excitement and optimism they generated within their research teams and sponsors, it has not gone unnoticed that more of this excitement and optimism is exactly what is needed in today's AI workplace. Leaders are not merely decision-makers constantly obsessed with the bottom line. They must be visionaries, adventurers, and augers with the ability to communicate good things to come.

**Strategy and Leadership.** It is hard to overestimate the importance of aligning cyberculture and leadership. The character and behavior of a CEO and top executives have a profound effect on the organization. Conversely, organizational culture serves to either constrain or enhance the performance of leaders, as cultural fit is as important as capabilities and experience. And for its full benefit to be realized, a cyberculture must support the strategic goals and plans of the business.

**Trust.** Trust is all about people and the effective way to enhance trust is to acknowledge that it will always be a work-in-progress. Typically, the most effective way to build trust is to listen, learn, and lead with empathy. For example, we propose that when users tell ICT that AI protocols are difficult to follow, they aren't lectured or ignored. ICT should seek to understand and find adaptable solutions. Encourage users to speak up about mistakes, and reward proactive behavior. Trust within an organization multiplies when it is generously and wisely given, and when people feel heard (Parenty & Domet, 2021). Employees need to trust that there are ethical systems in place to support them,

**Employee Empowerment through Education.** Unfortunately, some aspects of AI implementation have earned a bad reputation, as well-meaning ICT teams implemented technical solutions that placed barriers between employees and the information they need to do their jobs. People will always find a way to work-around security measures that don't align with business needs. If end-users see AI as something that gets in the way, organizations will always face unnecessary risks. Effective AI comes from having tools and solutions that are easy to implement and follow, such as user awareness and training programs. When employees practice a strong cyberculture that includes AI, they are empowered to make good decisions.

Organizations need strong education programs and ICT and HR Departments should look at leadership to support them in ways that organically mesh the culture of continuous learning within an organization. Knowledge creates a work environment full of empowered people who feel invested in the company's success, which is a trust-based posture that can't be monetized. Although Nvidia, Microsoft, Alphabet, and Booz Allen are known as the AI giants, it is Salesforce and CISCO that present examples of organizations that have created conscious intentional cybercultures. They are purpose driven, list professional growth as a value, are profitable, donate 1% of employee's time to causes, and consistently make Fortune's Best Places to Work list (Fortune, 2022). These corporations recognize their employees for outstanding service, and proudly display and post their well-earned awards on the Internet and in their offices.

We recognize that AI can reshape the corporate culture of an established workplace; however, it also requires careful consideration of ethical implications, skill development, and change management to ensure

a positive impact on the entire workforce. Once the cyberculture is clearly defined and understood, the next key step is to identify and eliminate gaps between that vision and the employee experience. Organizations that have a true purpose, value learning, care about employees, and create fun at work, will achieve good results. Ultimately ethics is everybody's business and companies need to make Cyberethics part of every job description to ensure the longevity of a positive healthy cyberculture.

## Conclusion

Our literature curation provided only a sample of the current AI cyberculture research performed. As we studied and analyzed the work products, we were able to establish cyberculture patterns, trends, and anomalies of complex human behaviors and practices, originating in both psychology and pragmatism. As we consider the future work that this review may elicit, it is important to realize that human experiences in an AI environment are enhanced by a social-cultural-techno environment, as well as physical tangible informing objects, including system flows of explicit and tacit information, both analog and digital.

The question before us remains, what is the role of Cyberethics in a cyberculture, and in particular, the role of Cyberethics as reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of organizational employees? We intend to expand our study to combine and compare other types of research methods with our current findings to better understand the ethical and philosophical implications of AI in the 21st century workplace. Our work began with a literature review exploration; but our research will continue as we apply and test our Cyberethics Theory through future ethnographic fieldwork and case studies applied directly to human practical experiences.

Cyberculture and Cyberethics are more than awareness; they are social sciences and social phenomena (Blum, 2020, p. 96). To paraphrase Schein (2016), if you don't manage business culture, it manages you. Every day, the world confronts us with new and unprecedented levels of machine development and adoption; therefore, technology will continue to advance at infinite lightning-speed. It follows that the human dimension is a significant source of cyber vulnerability; therefore, we proffer that creating a cyberculture by which a pattern of shared basic assumptions that support AI implementation, business strategy, communication, empathy, and trust as a daily behavioral practice is a major step toward a positive solution. So, it is our mutual responsibility to create positive organizational cybercultures that include achievable Cyberethics Programs, a philosophical-pragmatic *Cyber-Lebenswelt* of sorts, that always values human ethical considerations while promoting the responsible use of AI technologies.

We submit that AI is a clean slate, a *tabula rasa* (likened to a human at birth) with no preconceived ideas, notions, feelings, conscience, or intelligence, until the human connection injects the knowledge into the machine, software, etc. by entering the code, writing the algorithm, and/or inserting the data. Our over-reliance upon, and fascination with AI masks defies the *Deus ex machina* scenario, albeit we know we can shut down the machine at any time to restore equilibrium. We have the power to control AI; *therefore, we have the ability to operationalize it ethically and responsibly with integrity.*

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