

# Technology Is Not Neutral: An Exploration of the Biases and Power Dynamics Embedded in Technology Design

Technology is often seen as a neutral tool that can be used for good or for evil. However, the reality is that technology is not neutral. It is shaped by the biases and power dynamics of the people who design and build it. This can have a profound impact on the way that technology is used, and on the people who are affected by it.



## Technology Is Not Neutral: A Short Guide to Technology Ethics (Perspectives) by Stephanie Hare

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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One of the most well-known examples of bias in technology design is the gender bias in facial recognition software. This software is often less accurate at recognizing women and people of color than it is at recognizing white men. This is because the data sets used to train the software are often biased towards white men. As a result, the software is more likely to misidentify women and people of color, which can have serious consequences.

Another example of bias in technology design is the racial bias in predictive policing software. This software is used by law enforcement to predict where crime is likely to occur. However, the data sets used to train the software are often biased towards black people. As a result, the software is more likely to predict that crime will occur in black neighborhoods, even when there is no evidence to support this prediction. This can lead to increased policing in black neighborhoods, which can have a negative impact on the community.

In addition to bias, power dynamics can also be embedded in technology design. For example, many technologies are designed to be used by people with certain types of power and privilege. This can make it difficult for people who do not have these types of power and privilege to use the technology effectively. For example, many social media platforms are designed to be used by people who are already connected to others. This can make it difficult for people who are new to the platform to build a network and participate in the community.

The biases and power dynamics embedded in technology design can have a profound impact on the way that technology is used, and on the people who are affected by it. It is important to be aware of these biases and power dynamics so that we can mitigate their effects and create more equitable and inclusive technology.

## **How to Mitigate Bias and Power Dynamics in Technology Design**

There are a number of things that can be done to mitigate bias and power dynamics in technology design. Here are a few tips:

- **Use diverse data sets.** When training machine learning algorithms, it is important to use data sets that are representative of the population that the algorithm will be used on. This will help to reduce the risk of bias.
- **Be aware of your own biases.** Everyone has biases, but it is important to be aware of them so that you can avoid letting them influence your design decisions.
- **Get feedback from users.** It is important to get feedback from users throughout the design process. This will help you to identify any biases or power dynamics that you may have overlooked.
- **Design for equity and inclusion.** When designing technology, it is important to keep equity and inclusion in mind. This means designing technology that is accessible and usable by people of all backgrounds.

By following these tips, you can help to create technology that is more equitable and inclusive.

Technology is a powerful tool that can be used for good or for evil. It is important to be aware of the biases and power dynamics that can be embedded in technology design. By mitigating these biases and power dynamics, we can create technology that is more equitable and inclusive.



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