humanitech
Powered by Australian Red Cross

Humanitech Summit 2022 Insights Report

Melbourne, Australia

19 May 2022

Humanitech

Table of Contents

About us 4

Context 5

Insights 6

A braver new world: anchoring human dignity in the design and governance of frontier technologies 6

Strengthening Australia's approach to frontier technologies: addressing the risks, sharing the benefits 7

Designing technological tools and systems with trust at the core 9

Re-imagining tech design: shifting norms and expanding methods in service of humanity 10

From ancient knowledges to frontiers of technology: Indigenous approaches to design and governance 11

From the ground up: community-led innovation 12

What it takes (and what's at stake): scaling up tech for social impact 14

Rising to the challenges, chasing the possibilities 15

Contact 17

Humanitech Summit 2022

Access Humanitech Summit recordings here.
Alternatively, visit: http://www.humanitech.com/summit

30+ speakers

1 day
19 May 2022

Guiding theme: human dignity at the core of tech design and governance

170+ people

Held at State Library Victoria

2 keynotes | 4 lightning talks | 3 panels | 2 fireside chats

About us

Humanitech is an initiative of Australian Red Cross dedicated to harnessing the power of technology for good.

We believe technology can drive positive change that is sustainable and scalable. We focus on leveraging the opportunities it presents to benefit humanity while addressing its risks to society.

To grow this movement, we are building a community between leaders, start-ups, institutions, and advocates to ensure technology is a force for good.

We thank our founding partner, Telstra Foundation, for their generous support.

Context

Humanitech Summit is Australia's flagship annual event at the intersection of frontier technologies, social innovation, and humanitarian action.

In its second year, Humanitech convened leading thinkers, makers and doers exploring 'humanity first' approaches to data and technology through insightful presentations, fireside chats, panel discussions, and interactive exercises exploring the burning issues at the juncture of technology and humanity.

The 2022 Summit brought together industry, academia, government, and for purpose sector to discuss how can we design, use, and regulate frontier technologies with dignity, safety, and trust at the core.

The speakers shared diverse perspectives but were united by a common purpose – to realise the transformational opportunities of our time and to ensure the benefits of these technologies are shared equitably, and their harms addressed.

"Frontier technologies can unlock our collective imagination, helping us address some of the most significant challenges facing humanity, enabling us to chase the possibilities for all." Amanda Robinson, Director, Humanitech

Insights

A braver new world: anchoring human dignity in the design and governance of frontier technologies

Keynote speaker:

Edward Santow, Industry Professor – Responsible Technology, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)

In his opening keynote at the 2022 Summit, Edward Santow put forward a simple yet powerful proposition: “New technology should give us what we want and need, not what we fear”.

Edward highlighted why technologies - such as facial recognition, machine learning, and artificial intelligence - bring considerable new risks and their potential to create or exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

“[Misuses of] Facial recognition technologies have been shown to disproportionately affect people of darker skin, women, people with physical disability, young people, and older people.” Edward Santow

Drawing on the Human Rights and Technology project he led in his former role as the Human Rights Commissioner, Edward shared a proposed roadmap to address these risks, based on embedding human rights and our collective values into development, use, and regulation of technology. Central to the roadmap is a four-

part test to ensure these tools and systems are ‘fair, accurate, fit-for-purpose and accountable.’

“We need to make some choices to take us from the dystopian kind of trajectory [future] and towards one where we put humanity at the centre.” Edward Santow

Strengthening Australia’s approach to frontier technologies: addressing the risks, sharing the benefits

Speakers:

Julian Thomas, Director, ADM+S Centre
Ellen Broad, 3A Institute, ANU
Christy Ditchburn, Sustainability Principal, Telstra
Scott Farrell, Partner, King & Wood Mallesons
Lizzie O’Shea, Lawyer, writer & digital rights advocate
Lorenn Ruster, Responsible Tech Collaborator, Centre for Public Impact (Moderator)

Building on the themes highlighted in the opening keynote, the first panel of the day canvassed big questions relating to human rights and dignity. It explored the opportunities and the risks emerging from a time of societal transition as it is influenced by frontier technologies.

In a frank discussion, the panellists explored what Australia needs to do to create a robust regulatory system that drives innovation and empowers individuals, while addressing individual and social risks presented by new technological tools and systems.

When new technologies are introduced to society, they can have significant adverse impacts on people and communities – who are commonly not consulted or involved in their design or deployment. As Julian Thomas outlined, frontier

technologies can introduce risks to people's welfare and human rights, as well as broader social risks. Ellen Broad added that setting up the right type of societal infrastructure – rules clearly outlining responsibilities and risks – around technological development and use was critical for responsible innovation.

Christie illustrated the point by sharing an example of how Telstra used its AI and ethics data governance forum to ask tough ethical questions, when it was considering the use of chatbots to assist customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lizzie O'Shea advocated for an 'enforceable right' to say no to the use of new technologies if they don't meet community standards. Scott Farrell, who led a world-leading regulatory initiative on Consumer Data Right, highlighted that governments can use digital tools to empower citizens by providing them with choice, convenience, and confidence that the system is trustworthy.

While their views on the best approaches to regulating technology ran the gamut from protecting (universal) rights to enabling (individual) choice, the panellists highlighted the need to build strong ecosystems of rules and standards to ensure beneficial outcomes for all.

Designing technological tools and systems with trust at the core

Speakers:

John Phillips, Co-founder, Sezoo
Kelsie Nabben, Researcher, RMIT University
Rahul Soans, Manager, Trust Alliance (Moderator)

This fireside chat explored different – and diverging – models and frameworks for thinking about trust in technology.

Kelsie Nabben, a researcher at RMIT University, used the example of blockchain to explore the idea of social co-operation without trust. In decentralised ledger systems, like blockchain, you do not need to know or trust any of the third parties in your digital exchange, as the technology itself enables trust-less-ness.

Conversely, John Phillips, co-founder of a digital trust consultancy Sezoo, proposed a trust model based on requiring technologists to be licenced, as doctors and lawyers are, to ensure they abide by ethical rules.

With a healthy scepticism towards finding the ‘perfect’ model, the panellists broadly agreed that a level of mistrust – towards digital tools, systems, platforms – is useful for critical thinking and keeping the powerful to account.

Re-imagining tech design: shifting norms and expanding methods in service of humanity

Speakers:

Sarah Pink, Professor of Design and Emerging Technologies, Monash University
Bridgette Engeler, Senior Lecturer, Swinburne School of Business, Law and Entrepreneurship
Chris Vanstone, Chief Innovation Officer, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation
Andy Nolan, Director, Emerging Technologies,Thoughtworks
Amal Varghese, Advocacy & Research Manager, Humanitech (Moderator)

At Humanitech, our goal is to leverage technology in ways that safeguard the dignity of all people, while promoting safety and building trust with each other and institutions.

We invited four ground-breaking thinkers and creators to share their perspectives in a series of lightning talks, expanding the boundaries of research and design towards approaches that centre dignity, safety, and trust.

Sarah Pink spoke of the need to be optimistic and to think from ‘the ground up’ about how to re-orient tech design, so that it involves people in their daily lives. This includes consideration of their values, priorities, and ethics, and for a **society to be driven by humanity, not engineering**.

Andy Nolan urged us to develop a **sustainable ecological future** that balances the needs of humans and those of our biosphere. Practically, this means thinking about the environmental costs associated with technologies we’re developing and ‘putting sustainability in all of our decision-making processes’ to make sure that we're enacting our values.

Bridgette Engeler challenged us to ‘be a better ancestor’ and to be mindful of voices or futures who are not yet heard. **Putting a futures lens on design of technology** can help us imagine the long-term consequences – and to chase the possibilities.

Chris Vanstone highlighted the need for a root and branch review of our research and development systems. Today’s research and design systems ‘perpetuate all of the inequalities that we already live with’ and are ‘very good at creating futures that people don’t want to have.’ The cycle of reform, fail and review must stop, Chris argued, and it is time to **put the social into our research and design approaches.**

From ancient knowledges to frontiers of technology: Indigenous approaches to design and governance

Speakers:

Megan Kelleher, Vice Chancellor's Indigenous Pre-Doctoral Fellow, RMIT University

Tyson Yunkaporta, Senior Research Fellow, Deakin Research

Julian Thomas, Director, ADM+S Centre (Moderator)

A fireside conversation with Tyson Yunkaporta and Megan Kelleher explored how we might integrate Indigenous wisdom and voices into the development and governance of frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain.

Tyson explained that Indigenous design is about place, relationships, connections, narrative, land, and country, and that they are related and indivisible with no border between them. Megan, drawing on her research on blockchain technologies and Indigenous governance, highlighted the need to think deeply

about technological design, its impact, and what it might do now and in the future. She emphasised that Indigenous wisdom encourages us to consider several generations into the future when bringing a new tool into the world.

Considering new technologies within Indigenous contexts and a history of colonisation raises important questions of ownership, control, incentives, participation, and choice – and whether genuine choice to participate exists at all.

Indigenous wisdom demands us to get comfortable with complexity - there are no shortcuts to deep and genuine engagement. Or, as Tyson so memorably described it: **“You can’t paint some dots on a FitBit and call it a digital walkabout.”**

From the ground up: community-led innovation

Speakers:

Emma Koster, Founder, Good Hood
Josh Hallwright, Humanitarian Lead & Blockchain Advisor, Oxfam Australia
Chrisanta Muli, CEO, One Girl
Pete Horsley, Founder, Remarkable
Ben Shaw, Head of Community Impact, Infoxchange (Moderator)

Communities have always been innovative, but we don't stop to listen because we are so quick to bring this solution in a space that we are not experts in.” Chrisanta Muli

This session brought together social innovators and leaders with deep experience of partnering with communities to tackle complex problems with the help of technology.

Over the course of the day, Summit participants were invited to share their ideas and questions about community-led innovation, which were then used to spark this panel discussion.

The panellists reflected on their experiences in shifting mindsets and practices towards centring community wisdom in their projects and initiatives.

Chrisanta Muli asserted that meaningful engagement with communities in projects that affect them starts by asking: **“What does innovation look like for you and your community?”**

Trust was identified as the pillar of community relationships that enables innovation to thrive. This was related to the importance of giving time for ideas to emerge and evolve. **“With community work,” Emma Koster said, “trust and time are the two most important things and the two things for which there are no shortcuts.”**

Chrisanta spoke of the need to listen to the community, so we don’t fall back to ‘solution mode’. This sentiment was echoed by Josh Hallwright, who said: **“That sort of ‘solution problem’ way of thinking… [that’s] dominant in a lot of tech circles doesn't always lead to the best community outcomes.”**

Importantly, Peter Horsley reminded us of the flow-on, societal benefits of innovating for the hard-to-reach communities: **“Interesting things happen when we actually start designing for people who are typically on the edges or left out completely.”**

What it takes (and what's at stake): scaling up tech for social impact

Speakers:

Katrina Donaghy, CEO and Co-Founder, Civic Ledger
Julian Elliott, Co-Founder & CEO, Covidence
Joe Glesta, Co-Founder & CEO, Climasens
Bruce Grady, Business Development & Partnerships Manager, FloodMapp
Erica Smith, Technologist-in-Residence, Humanitech (Moderator)

This panel brought together entrepreneurs that have paved the way in using emergent technological tools for social impact - from developing ecosystems for better management of public resources and helping turn research into trustworthy and actionable knowledge, to providing real-time flood information or climate intelligence to organisations and the wider public.

Reflecting on their experiences, the panel shared insights into the practical challenges of scaling up technology for good, including the inherent tension in the need to balance long-term social vision with achieving commercial outcomes. Julian Elliott described this complexity, which can translate into a disadvantage in the market when competing against for-profit firms, as the problem of having to serve two masters.

Tackling complex problems is costly - in terms of time and money - yet the dominant paradigm of technological innovation is one of scale and size at speed. Panellists noted that the Australian impact funding ecosystem is relatively small and that social impact ventures require longer timeframes and different metrics, beyond profit, to measure success. This, in turn, necessitates a 'patient capital' approach to funding.

Panellists also spoke about the high cost of talent in the marketplace and how it disadvantages social impact organisations, as the best and brightest individuals are scooped up by for-profits with large balance sheets. On a positive note, panellists agreed that being an organisation with a social mission could, over time, be leveraged to achieve commercial advantages.

Rising to the challenges, chasing the possibilities

Keynote speaker:

Natalie Kyriacou OAM, CEO, My Green World

Natalie Kyriacou OAM captured the audience's imagination by sharing a story of the day an orangutan stole her underwear in the Bornean jungle. He re-appeared another morning, almost to mock her, with the underwear dangling around his neck. That trip was the catalyst for Natalie's commitment to environmental issues and an inspiration behind her organisation, My Green World which she founded "to inspire young people to participate in wildlife, in environmental conservation and education".

As we collectively work towards using technology to tackle some of humanity's most pressing challenges, Natalie dared the audience to imagine "how will technology change with nature and with one another for the better?" to create a fair and hopeful future for everyone. She shared an example of the Ocean Data Alliance, an organisation that is building a digital twin of the ocean, which is enabling us – for the first time in history – to monitor what's happening in our

oceans in real-time and the impact this has on the world's ecosystems, ports, cities, and citizens. And it is allowing decision-makers to use machine learning to monitor, predict and respond to changing conditions such as disease outbreaks, illegal fishing, or coral bleaching events.

Natalie encouraged us to think critically about, and scrutinise, whether and how frontier technologies are advancing the wellbeing of humanity and environment. She highlighted the importance of collaboration and bringing different ideas and voices to the table when developing solutions to complex ecological and societal challenges, and noted the five Ps of Sustainable Development Goals - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships – as our collective blueprint towards balancing the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of frontier tech.

"Nature must be embedded in all of our principles, governance, structures, approaches, conversations, and implementation plans around frontier technology." Natalie Kyriacou

Contact

humanitech@redcross.org.au
www.humanitech.org.au

humanitech
Powered by Australian Red Cross