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Can Robots Love Their Neighbor?

We've been building robots recently. From the ones who bosses use to check on their employees, to the Japanese ones that mimic human facial expression, robots are becoming more interactive than mere tools.

While unquestionably cool, let us always question as we press onward: is this good? Can these robots lead to loving our neighbors and loving God more?

Let's take a brief thought vacation into a world with more automated processes and more robots.

Good Things About Robots:

1. They allow interaction where it wouldn't otherwise be possible. The boss working from home can talk to her employees. Businesses ensure that every customer receives a warm greeting without having to rely on the mood of the employee.
2. Robots can go where people can't. Robots could be used to go into dangerous conditions, biohazard areas, and extreme temperatures to perform remote controlled rescue operations. That's pretty great.

Bad Things About Robots:

1. We could become disconnected to each other. If bosses start to rely on their robo-check-ins, it may well decrease the actual amount of face time between employers, employees and each other.
2. Businesses could use robots to create bureaucratic walls that average people just wouldn't be able to scale, creating frustration and even allowing cover for unethical practices.

I use business examples, because that's where we're most likely to see the use of robots.

Home uses (such as sweeper-bots) seem less likely and less drastic.

Like most things, especially technology, robots can be good or bad depending on the intention or use they are put to. There are a lot of great, humanitarian uses robots could be assigned to: robot fire-fighters?

I wonder if there will be come a time when we rely on the robots so much that we forget how to do things ourselves, when we become so accustomed to being served that we forget to serve others.

Technology is so convenient. It makes us feel as though everything is about us: we can get that app, watch that kitten dance video on youtube, find that recipe, or otherwise get immediate gratification without so much as glancing at another person. But how can we love others if we don't even see them?

No matter how convincing that silicone smile is, it's never going to peer into us or love us back the way another person can. Not to mention the problems for employment robots could create. Think of grocery store robo-registers (we already have these), robo-sales people, robo-fire fighters: while promoting safety, they'd put people out of a good job. What if the primary career became robot technician. One day, everything would be so incredibly automated (from cash register operation to food production) that the only thing we would need would be someone to fix the robot when he breaks.

Sure, things might be easy, but what's so good about easy? It seems to me that hard work (on cars or on land or with other people) makes the day a bit more satisfying than downloading videos all day. Could all this automation one day interfere with loving God and loving neighbor?

Now Jesus didn't have any robots back in his day, but what do you think he would have thought about them? Would he have encouraged us to use them? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

P.S. I don't worry about robots taking over the world. I just think we should think about technology as it evolves and before it becomes too ingrained in our lives to question.

What do you think of robots? Should there be a limit on the role of technology in our lives? What other good and bad uses could robots have?

Source:<http://www.revelife.com/731165797/can-robots-love-their-neighbor/>