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“Electronics of the Future” Study Consumers’ thoughts on AI, robots, and digital security

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81% of consumers all around the world would like “electronic devices of the future” to make their lives easier. However, users have very different views on what artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and digitalization should and shouldn’t be allowed to do. For example, 71% of global consumers think that, even in the future, electronic devices should only assist humans and that our own thought processes should not be replaced with AI. These are findings of the electronica trend index (2nd edition). In June 2018, a market research institute surveyed 7,000 consumers, representing cross-sections of their relevant populations in the USA, China, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, and Italy, for the world leading trade fair and conference, electronica.

Navigation systems and smartphones have popularized smart voice control in private households. Manufacturers are working at full speed with artificial intelligence and digital networking to build on the current success of smart electronics. The concept of voice control is clearly popular among consumers: Around 60% of consumers worldwide are in favor of electronic devices being able to engage in dialog with humans in the future—along the lines of familiar voice-activated assistants such as Siri, Alexa, and Cortana. Chinese (85%), US American (68%), and Italian (66%) consumers are particularly enthusiastic about being able to converse with electronic devices in the future. However, 17% of consumers all around the world strongly object to the concept of talking electronics.

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What robots should and shouldn't be able to do

There is a consensus amongst consumers that digital assistants shouldn't be too "human-like": In response to the question regarding how future service robots should behave, 72% are in favor of robots with artificial intelligence remaining clearly recognizable as machines. The strongest advocates for this are Italians (78%) and US Americans (77%). However, even in Japan, which comparably has the lowest level of support, there is still a clear majority of 69% in favor.

Robots should learn autonomously

By contrast, a global average of 72% of respondents are in favor of robots using artificial intelligence to learn autonomously and respond to new situations. The same percentage would like robots to provide decision-making support, although control should never be relinquished by humans.

This basic view generally applies to the use of artificial intelligence in electronic devices: The large majority of consumers would like AI to only provide assistance and not replace human thought processes—according to the latest survey, 71% of the world share this opinion. That being said, the number of people adhering to this view is declining in some countries. According to the 2016 electronica Trend Index, 82% of Germany's respondents shared this view, compared to the current figure of just 67%.

On the other hand, opinions as to whether a machine should be able to recognize human feelings and react to them are divided. In Japan and European countries, only around half of respondents are in favor; in the USA this figure is just under 60%, but China has the most positive response at 85%.

electronica 2018

"As the electronica Trend Index shows, consumers all around the world are thinking long and hard about the electronics of the future", says Falk Senger, Managing Director of Messe München and responsible for the world-leading trade fair electronica. "At electronica 2018, from November 13–16 in Munich,

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over 3,000 exhibitors from 50 countries will be demonstrating just how rapidly the world of smart electronics is developing.”

electronica Trend Index 2018

In June 2018, a total of 7,000 consumers representing cross-sections of their relevant populations, were surveyed (online panel) in the USA (N=1,000), China (N=1,000), Japan (N=1,000), Germany (N=1,000), France, (N=1,000), the UK (N=1,000), and Italy (N=1,000) by a market research institute for the electronica Trend Index 2018.

About electronica

electronica is the world's leading trade fair and conference for electronics. The trade fair is the most important meeting point for the electronics industry and also features a supporting program with forums and conferences, such as the electronica Automotive Conference (eAC), the electronica Embedded Platforms Conference (eEPC), the electronica Medical Electronics Conference (eMEC), and the Wireless Congress. electronica Experience will be debuting in 2018 with live demos and applications in Hall C6. The electronica Fast Forward Award has been presented since 2016. Around 73,000 visitors and more than 2,900 exhibitors took part in electronica 2016. electronica was founded in 1964 and has taken place every two years in Munich ever since. The next event will be held from November 13 to 16, 2018.

electronica worldwide

In addition to electronica, Messe München International also organizes electronica China and electronica India. This network of electronics trade fairs also includes productronica in Munich, productronica China, productronica India and eAsia.

Messe München

Messe München is one of the world's leading trade fair companies. It organizes over 50 exhibitions for capital and consumer goods and new technologies. Each year, more than 50,000 exhibitors and some three million visitors take part in over 200 events held at the trade fair center in Munich, the ICM—Internationales Congress Center München, the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München, and abroad. Together with its subsidiaries, Messe München organizes exhibitions in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Iran. Messe München has a global presence with a network of affiliates in Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America and around 70 representative offices abroad serving more than 100 countries.