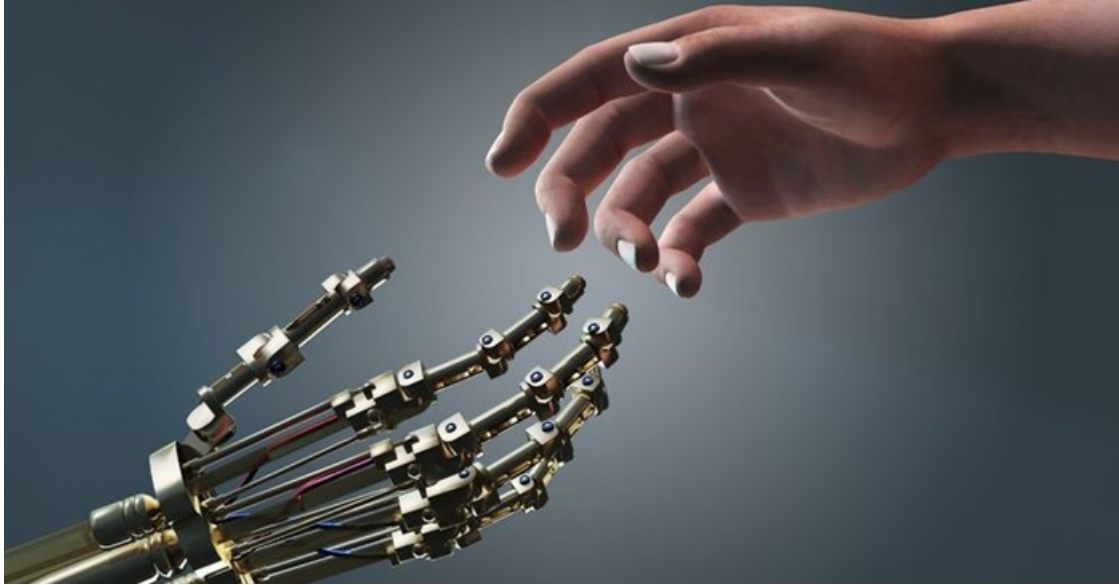


Adopt a humanistic approach to AI

By  Maroefah Smith

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Artificial intelligence (AI) doesn't have to induce a Hollywood sci-fi dystopian nightmare in which robots take over the world. It may instead offer an exciting opportunity to connect consumers to your brand.



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So says the head of user experience at Spree, Sven Schoof, who was speaking at the DHL E-Commerce MoneyAfrica Confex held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre this week.

Schoof said that AI is definitely something that should be considered, but warned that there needs to be caution in approaching it. He added that one of the benefits of AI is its ability to catch up quickly, using the [AlphaGO computer program](#) as an example of this. The program was able to play the old Chinese board game using deep learning to understand and play.

“This just goes to show how quickly machines can catch up to what people have been practising for thousands of years.”

Schoof went on to make reference to the many ways in which machine learning has already contributed to improving UX – from recommendations on services like Spotify and Netflix to fraud detection on PayPal.

Moreover, Schoof indicated that machine learning may also improve a company's production as seen in India's e-

commerce fashion industry. Myntra opted to use machines to design t-shirts for its Moda Rapido and Here and Now brands, and found that its production time had been cut down from 180 days to less than 45 days.



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He went on to say that “humans are very good at intuition but we’re not so good at calculations; computers and machines are by definition very good at calculations.” To make complete and effective use of AI, he suggests that the way to approach AI should be in line with that of Stuart Russell, a computer scientist at the Center for Human-Compatible AI.

According to Russell, AI needs to think like a human instead of a machine and to ensure that there is no robot takeover, the AI needs to be instilled with human values.

ABOUT MAROEFAH SMITH

Enthusiastic UCT graduate with a passion for fashion, film and words.

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