

## Creation of a new ETH Chair for Ethics and Technology

Dear Mr. President, dear Madam Rector,

The Zurich Hub for Ethics and Technology ZHET ([ethicsandtechnology.org](http://ethicsandtechnology.org)) is an association based in Zurich. It is supported by a group of committed representatives from ETH Zurich, the private sector and foundations. On their behalf, we are addressing you with the recommendation to consider the creation of a new Chair of Ethics and Technology at ETH Zurich.

Research on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and especially the resulting technologies are more topical than ever: they help banks to digitise, solve justice cases, swarm as coordinated drones. They are key to the intelligent network structures of internet providers and sit on our laps as robot dogs. In other words, AI-enabled technologies have become the silent foundation of our modern society.

AI research, for all its benefits, also poses new risks to society, for example: the scalability of autonomous weapons systems that could turn them into cheap weapons of mass destruction; cyber weapons and the new warfare in the form of confrontations of computer systems; skewed data producing distorted software outputs that can then lead to unjust judicial decisions; or the loss of a societal climate of truth through misinformation and disinformation of individuals or masses by means of bots and artificially created videos and images. We take the liberty of enclosing the paper by Regina Surber, Scientific Advisor ZHET, for a more in-depth explanation of the topic.

It is equally important to us that ethicists also deal with this topic and expand their knowledge of technology in exchange with renowned researchers. It is time for a fruitful dialogue in both directions.

An ethical embedding of AI research is therefore indispensable in our opinion. This requires the rapid creation of chairs on ethics and technology (working title). These should involve the private sector in their work, as the private sector is already investing a great deal of resources in AI.

The renowned ETH in Zurich is one of the world's most important research and teaching institutions for technology, as well as being closely networked globally with other university research institutions. At the same time, it is surrounded by and already works closely with research facilities of important global companies in Zurich, for example with Google, IBM or Disney Lab.

We therefore take the liberty of warmly recommending the creation of a Chair on Ethics and Technology at ETH Zurich.

Thank you very much for your favourable consideration of our request. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Zurich Hub for Ethics and Technology (ZHET)

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