

THE
Futuremover
WINTER 2025

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Globalance

Intelligence: the new force powering our world

How AI is speeding up our progress – and what stays uniquely human.

WHAT IS CHANGING

Three questions
to the future

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GEOPOLITICS

Power of the machine –
power of the states

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SOCRATES AND AI

A debate on
truth, thought,
and responsibility

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With AI and common sense.
We created these images with
the use of AI tools.

“ AI learns from us – but the real question is what we will learn from it.

Dear readers

The first time I spoke with an artificial intelligence (AI), it didn't feel like meeting a machine. It felt like looking into a mirror. AI doesn't just show us what it can do – it reflects who we are. It is a distillation of our data, our choices, our values – a portrait of our world, full of creativity and its limits.

We are standing at a technological crossroads as profound as the discovery of fire or the invention of the printing press. AI can detect disease, manage energy, and optimize processes – but it can also mislead, manipulate, and deceive. It is both a tool and a temptation.

For me, the real question isn't how intelligent AI will become, but how responsibly we will guide it. When machines start thinking for us, we must be even more mindful of how we use them. Our challenge today is to combine technological intelligence with human wisdom.

If we approach this new intelligence with curiosity, care, and compassion, it can help us tackle the great challenges of our time. AI shows us what is possible, but it's up to us to choose the path we take.



I hope you enjoy this read – and find the courage to shape the future with intention.

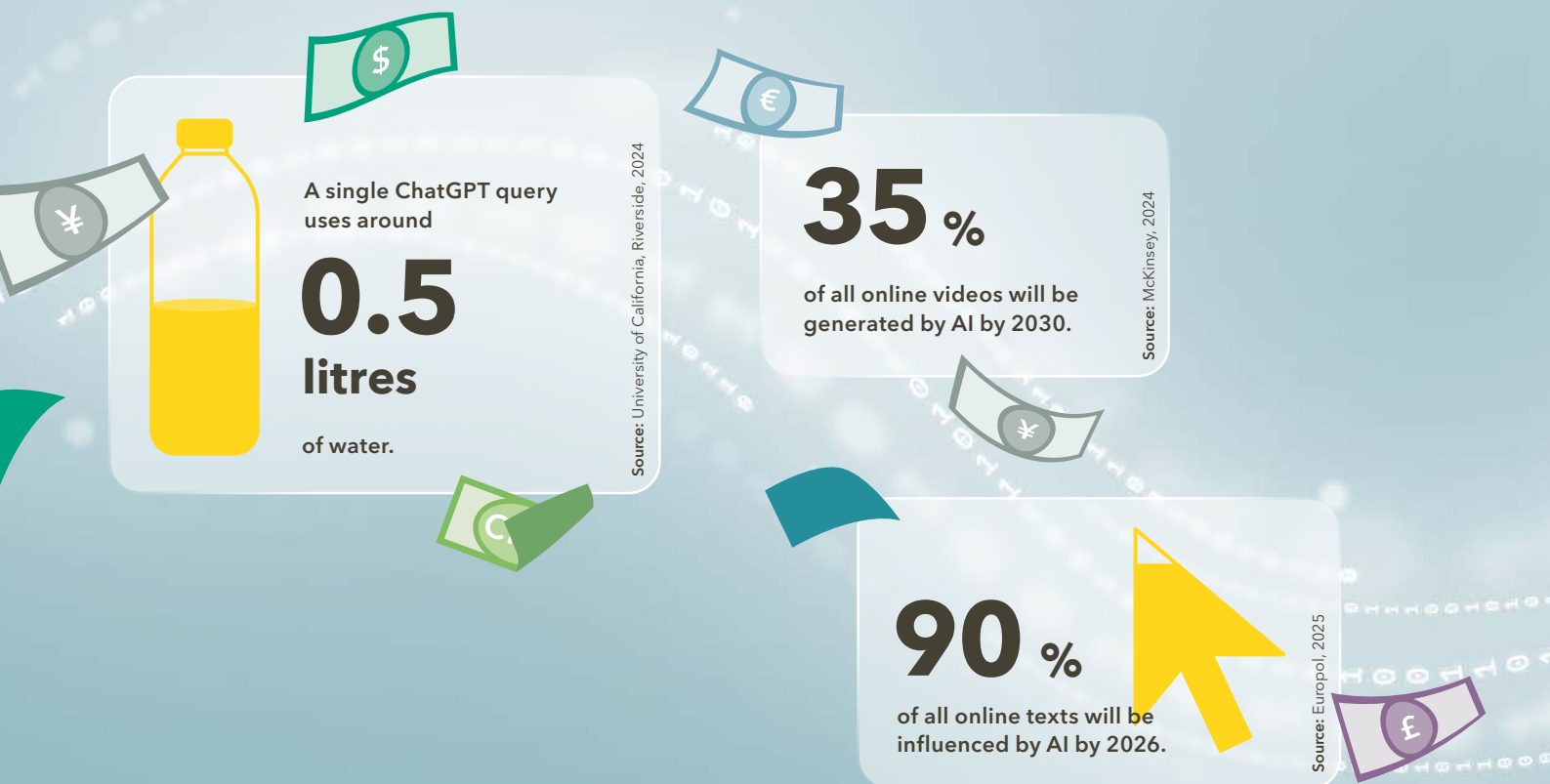

Reto Ringger
Founder and CEO

The great acceleration

Progress has shifted into a higher gear – and artificial intelligence is taking us to places we have never been before.

AI will evolve faster than most people can imagine. Progress no longer happens step by step, but leap by leap. Each breakthrough accelerates the next, turning innovation into a permanent state of motion. Exponential growth is hard to grasp – until you experience it. Data flows through the networks of our world, shaping a new kind of economy: globally connected, adaptive, and constantly in motion.

It creates value and knowledge at the same time – and confronts us with the question of how we can give this development a sense of direction. If we choose to shape this transformation consciously, technological power can become social impact – and progress can become the future.





By 2030, the market volume for AI is expected to grow from USD 140 billion to

USD 2 trillion

Source: McKinsey, 2025

37%

of Germans feel confident using AI.

Source: FOM University, 2025

61%

of Generation Z find it comfortable to talk to ChatGPT about things they would not tell people.

Source: Beyondweb

7%

of all authors have agreed to their work being used to train AI.

Source: Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, 2024

In 2024, AI-related privacy and security incidents rose by

56%



Source: Stanford AI Index, 2025

The black box effect

Many AI systems operate as a black box: you see the data that goes in - and the result that comes out. But how exactly the decision is made often remains hidden. This makes transparency, trust, and accountability significantly more difficult.

From plough to algorithm – 10,000 years of progress

Since the moment humans invented the plough, we have tried to understand the world and improve it. Every invention reflects that ambition. Today, we meet its most powerful mirror yet: artificial intelligence.

The plough made us settle, the wheel made us mobile, the steam-engine-powered industry, and the computer opened the information age. Each invention pushed the boundary of what we can achieve and reshaped how we see ourselves.

Now comes artificial intelligence, a technology that does more than amplify strength or process information. It extends insight. It reads patterns, draws conclusions, and formulates answers. In doing so, it steps into a role once reserved for us humans.

Why now?

Its rise at this very moment is no coincidence. Several developments lock together like gears. Computing power has surged. Specialized chips and global cloud systems supply the capacity modern AI models need. At the same time, the world has become one vast data source. Science, business, and culture are digitized, analysed and turned into usable assets. New model architectures and training methods have unlocked a leap forward: AI does not only recognize, it creates, producing language, images, and code.

The result is a technology as fundamental as electricity or the internet, a quiet transformation reaching into every part of life.

Powerful, not wise

This marks a new chapter. Earlier technologies replaced or accelerated physical labour. AI automates something we long considered uniquely human: thinking, deciding, creating. Knowledge work becomes reproducible and far cheaper. Entire professions shift, and the division of labour must be reconsidered.

What, then, can AI truly do, and where are its limits? It excels at pattern recognition, tireless analysis, and consistent execution. But it does not understand its own actions. It sees correlations, not meaning, and can produce answers that sound right while being wrong. It is also bound to its physical base: chips, energy, water, data.

AI can propose options and run processes, but responsibility stays with people – or it disappears.

c. 4000 BC

The plough

Securing food production.

c. 3500 BC

The wheel

Creating mobility.



Progress and concern

In research, discussions already point toward superintelligence – systems that surpass humans across cognitive tasks. Some see the next stage of knowledge in this vision. Others, including OpenAI's Sam Altman, warn of the consequences of systems that become too capable. What is clear: progress and concern have never been closer together.

If AI helps to shape the world, we need guardrails. Systems must remain transparent, people must stay in control, and environmental costs must be visible. Most of all, it is about collaboration: AI should expand human capability, not replace it. It should support, not diminish.

The new core skill

The most important skill in the years ahead may not be coding but asking the right questions – framing problems in ways that allow AI to respond usefully. Technology can offer countless options, but purpose, direction, and responsibility remain human tasks.

What remains human?

AI can detect patterns, but not meaning. We sense what data cannot capture: wonder, doubt, empathy. That may be our deepest form of intelligence.

2035

The future

AI systems learn, humans shape. The question endures: who leads whom?

2022/23

ChatGPT

Language becomes an interface. AI writes, and we begin to think in new ways.

1997

Deep Blue

A computer defeats the world chess champion and proves that strategy can work without awareness.

1980s

Computers and the internet

Data connects the world. Knowledge flows without borders, and so do misunderstandings.

1950s

The idea of AI

Alan Turing asks, "Can machines think?" Intelligence becomes a task, not only a gift.

20th century

Radio and television

Opinions take shape.

18th century

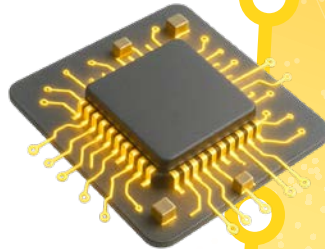
Steam engine

Work becomes mechanical.

1450

Printing press

Knowledge spreads.



Three questions to the future

Who determines progress? What remains of our creativity?
And does AI help solve humanity's biggest problems? Future strategist
Pero Mičić dares to look ahead.



Can AI help us solve humanity's major challenges – or will it actually exacerbate them?

Both will happen. AI will certainly create new challenges. Even today, we can no longer trust videos. Fakes are practically indistinguishable from real content. Criminals can cause much more damage with minimal effort. Aggressive regimes can oppress their citizens even more effectively. And they can sow even more discord in other countries, as we have seen from Russia for decades.

Yes, malicious actors will use AI for crime, disinformation, and terrorism. But there are always far more people with good intentions.

At the same time, AI is our greatest opportunity to save the truth. For example, platform X, formerly Twitter, has made it possible to ask its AI Grok about the extent to which every post and every comment is true and correct. Those who lie and spread disinformation are more easily exposed.

New possibilities - new system

The power of AI and robotics will exceed our imagination. AI that improves and develops itself will lead to an explosion of intelligence. AI will make it possible to solve previously incomprehensible and unsolvable problems. We will live healthier and longer lives, enjoy a higher quality of life, and be able to lead more fulfilling lives overall.

The real challenge will be to manage the transition period well. We will have to change our economic system. Today, over 90 percent of people earn their income as employees. However, this will no longer work because 60 to 80 percent of today's human tasks will be automated in the coming years.

We need an economic system in which people can primarily live off their ownership of productive assets. In today's world, that mainly means stakes in AI-ready companies. Until this is achieved, transfer payments will have to be made to the non-wealthy. This is best done in the form of a negative income tax.

What are deepfakes?

Deepfakes are images, videos, or voices generated or manipulated using AI that appear deceptively real - but are fake. In 2023 alone, over half a million deepfake videos and audio recordings were discovered worldwide - around ten times more than in the previous year. They highlight how difficult it is to distinguish truth from fiction.



What will become of our creativity and freedom of choice in a world full of AI?

We are in control. AI makes us more productive, more creative, and more confident in our decisions. The wording matters: AI makes us. Those who understand how to use it can create more value and reach their goals faster. Even today, AI already contributes to new medicines, materials, and technologies. It will lift our problem-solving abilities to levels we have not seen before.

Whether people become less intelligent or less creative because of AI depends on their

attitude toward their work. Those without goals who mainly seek comfort will hand over as many tasks as possible to AI to avoid effort. Our brain behaves much like our muscles. If we stop using it, it weakens. People without ambition will indeed lose skills when they rely heavily on AI.

What we make of AI

Those who pursue their mission with passion, enjoy their work, and want to create better solutions again and again will become smarter and more creative with AI. Because AI produces many results, processing them requires real mental effort. It is top-level thinking. AI is like a bicycle or a car for the mind. It boosts intelligence, creativity, and knowledge. It brings us to a higher level.

33%

productivity gain delivered
by generative AI per hour.



Who controls the future – people, machines, or markets?

Humans shape markets through supply and demand. The question often posed is whether the future belongs to people or machines. The answer is straightforward: people will continue to use machines to achieve their goals. These machines will either be virtual AI systems or embodied AI in the form of robots. The fear that AI might become autonomous and harm humanity is understandable. It is difficult to control something more intelligent than the people who oversee it, especially if it can improve itself.

Still, the likelihood of AI causing major harm in the near future is far lower than the likelihood that it will raise our quality of life.

In the long run, we will live in greater abundance. AI and robots will sharply reduce labour costs, which will lower the cost and price of goods and services. As long as there is sufficient competition, we will not end up in a world where a handful of tech companies dominate and control society.

Prof. Dr. Pero Mičić is a future strategist, author, and entrepreneur. For 34 years, he has focused on how people and organizations can shape the future instead of simply reacting to it.



78%

of companies worldwide already use AI
in at least one business function.

Power of the machine – power of the states

In the past, rockets shaped global influence. Today, AI chips and data centres determine geopolitical weight. With artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure becomes a golden key in the world order.

Whoever controls data, data centres, and AI chips gains influence. Unlike the early internet, which was built for open exchange, AI can be shaped and governed more tightly at the national level. "AI is a cross-cutting technology with enormous leverage," says Myriam Dunn Cavelty, security policy expert at ETH Zurich. "It reaches into the economy, security, and international relations – and will help define the future."



United States **Innovation as a strategic asset**

The US relies on the innovative power of its tech giants. Microsoft, Google, and OpenAI have become a kind of national capital: they attract global talent, operate the largest cloud infrastructures, and build the most capable AI models.

"At the moment, the US clearly holds the strongest position," says Dunn Cavelty. Billions in Defense Department investments – from autonomous drones to cyber defence to AI systems that support military decision-making – reinforce this lead. The strength lies in the interplay between government and industry; the weakness is the reliance on a handful of dominant firms.



Dr. Myriam Dunn Cavelty is the Deputy Head of Research and Teaching at the Center for Security Studies at ETH Zurich. Her work examines how digital technologies shape political behaviour and societal values.



China **Control as a strategy**

Beijing is pursuing a master plan: by 2030, China aims to be a global leader in artificial intelligence. With central planning, massive data pools, and deep integration of society, business, and the military, the country is pushing its AI expansion. AI optimizes traffic flows, powers facial recognition, and is used in defence projects.

The strengths are speed, coordination, and data volume. But there is an Achilles heel: "China remains heavily dependent on Western semiconductor technology," Dunn Cavelty notes. Global trust is another challenge, as surveillance and censorship weaken China's credibility abroad. Start-ups like DeepSeek have drawn international attention, but Dunn Cavelty emphasizes that isolated breakthroughs are not enough. What matters is the entire ecosystem of infrastructure, talent, and capital.



Europe **Rules instead of resources**

Europe is leaning on regulation. With the AI Act, the EU aims to set standards, much like it did with data protection. "Without trust, people will not embrace AI over the long term," says Dunn Cavelty. But she warns that regulation alone will not close the gap. Europe has no tech giants on the scale of Amazon or Microsoft and little semiconductor production, which keeps the continent dependent on imports.

The challenge is recognized, though. Initiatives like Gaia-X for European data and cloud infrastructure and new semiconductor programmes aim to strengthen technological independence. Whether Europe can build a real counterweight to the US and China will depend on speed and political commitment.



Technology is never neutral. ” It is designed, shaped, and influenced by people and politics.

Myriam Dunn Cavelty



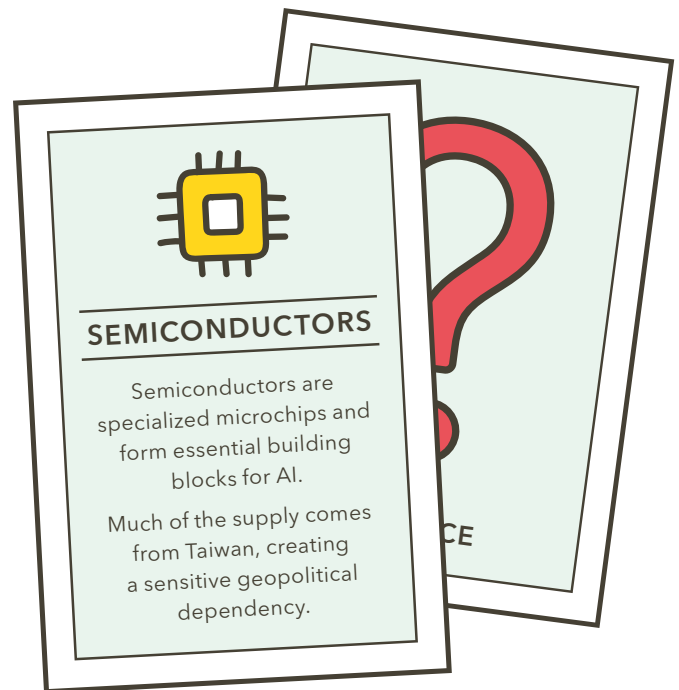
Tech companies New centres of power

The role of companies has shifted. Nvidia supplies the H100 chips that act as the oxygen of the AI industry, Microsoft secures major stakes in start-ups, and Google sets standards through its cloud services. “Right now, you cannot advance in AI without big tech,” says Dunn Cavelty. At the same time, the CEOs of these firms appear more political and take part in public debates. “Oil companies once held power as well, but it was not this close to our daily life.”

Between promise and risk

Trade restrictions on China and US export controls on AI chips show how technology already serves as a geopolitical tool. At the same time, the risk of AI-driven cyberattacks and disinformation is rising. Early examples from the war in Ukraine highlight how real this threat has become.

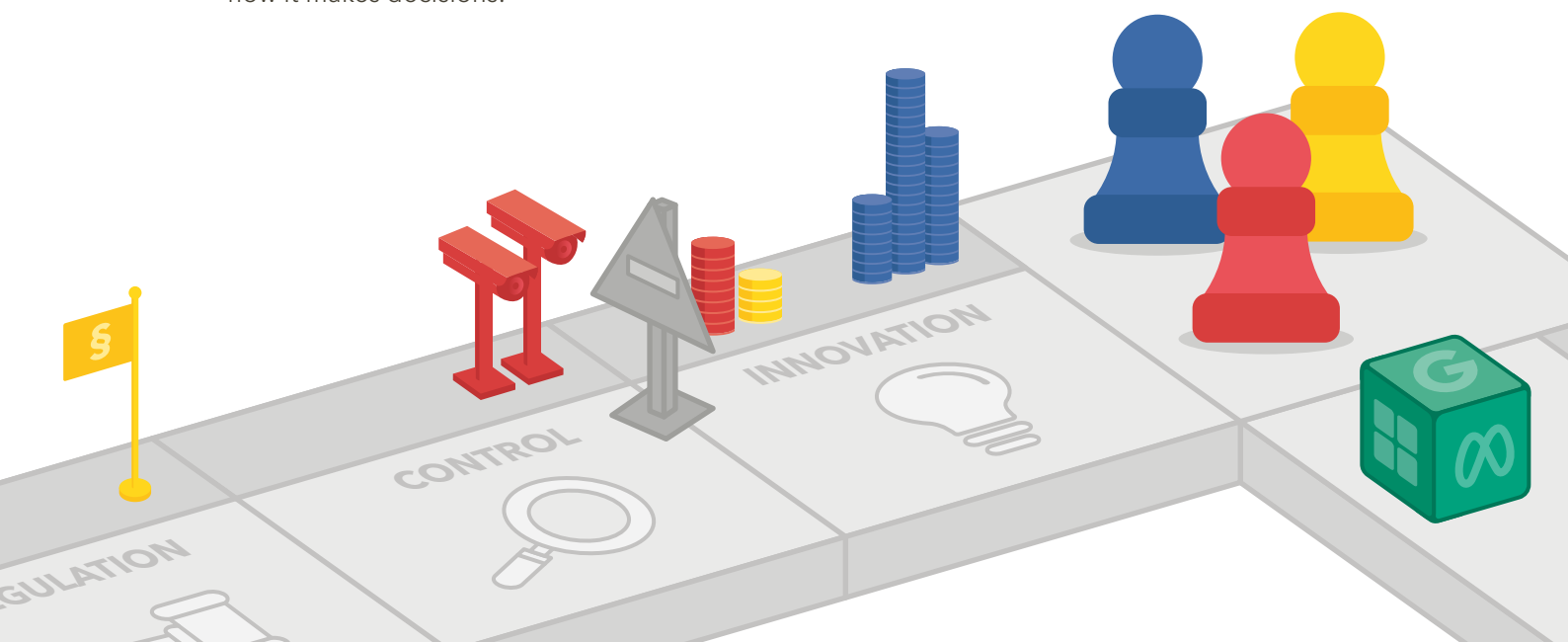
For Dunn Cavelty, AI is a force multiplier. It amplifies what already exists. On the positive side, it enables new medical treatments, advances in climate research, and more efficient energy grids. On the negative side, it creates new dependencies on energy and raw materials and fuels polarization. Whether AI becomes socially viable depends on whether people understand the goals it follows and how it makes decisions.



Talents in the global race

Beyond infrastructure, people are decisive. Sought-after AI researchers move between universities, start-ups, and defence projects. “Talent is the scarcest resource of all,” Dunn Cavelty notes. Switzerland benefits from ETH and top-tier research, but it loses many international graduates to other countries because strict visa rules make it hard to start a career and venture capital for start-ups is limited. Switzerland may be small, but it can have real impact by creating space for dialogue and by retaining talent.

Artificial intelligence has become a geopolitical power factor – those who control chips shape the future.



The new economy of intelligence

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the foundations of our economy. New value chains emerge while old models lose ground. The question is no longer whether AI changes the economy, but how deeply.

Two people and a laptop – that is often enough today. With tools like Replit or Lovable, software can be built in minutes that, only two years ago, required a full engineering team. What once demanded capital and time is now available at a click, shifting where value is created.

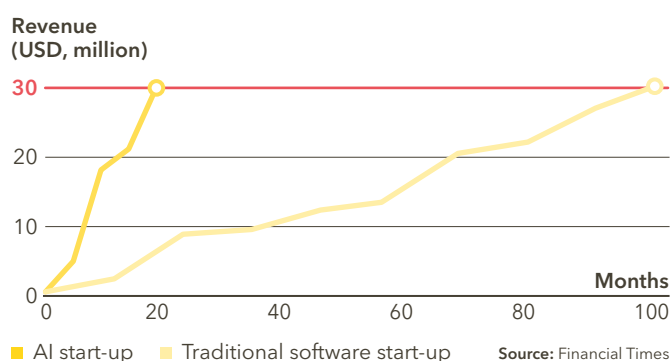
Sixty percent of jobs will change – but one hundred percent of people must rethink.

The cost of efficiency

Producing knowledge costs almost nothing. Entire industries are in motion because productivity surges and markets reorganize.

As knowledge flows more freely, the networks that carry it grow more expensive – the data centres, chips, and clouds that keep progress running. AI not only shifts where value is created, it also shifts where it is consumed.

AI start-ups scale up in fast motion



What began as assistance for individual tasks is becoming the operating system of entire companies. Insurers automate claims assessments, banks evaluate credit risks with algorithms, and law firms test digital assistants.

Around these applications, new ecosystems emerge: AI platforms provide the base models on which start-ups build specialized solutions – in fields from medicine and education to energy and mobility.

New work – new responsibility

AI does not only accelerate existing processes. It opens new possibilities. In medicine, it helps personalize therapies. In schools, children learn with AI tutors that adapt to their pace. In factories, machines increasingly steer themselves and react to demand or material flow. Organizations become networks of people, machines, and data. Work becomes less routine – and more design.



What remains human?

AI changes how we work and how much we work. Some gain time, others lose income. The challenge is balancing both.

Only one in five employees worldwide feels engaged at work, according to Gallup. If AI takes over routine tasks, it could create space for meaning, learning, and creativity – or leave a void if work is the main source of identity and community.

Creativity, empathy, and a sense of responsibility gain importance. Economists speak of a redistribution of work: toward activities that matter for humans, not only for efficiency. And they raise new questions: How will income be created when machines produce knowledge? What remains the human contribution when physical labour and routine lose relevance?

The power of platforms

The infrastructure of the AI economy is shaped by a few large platforms that supply computing power, data, and standards for innovation. For many companies, access to progress depends on access to these services.

A growing share of value shifts to the places that control the infrastructure – not to the places that only use it.

Global productivity increases, yet taxes, pensions, and social systems remain national. States face a dilemma: revenues shrink while new forms of social protection become necessary.

The International Monetary Fund warns: as value creation becomes more digital and cross-border, tax and regulatory systems must adapt to maintain fairness and stability.

AI changes not only
how we work – it changes
what work means to us.

The new logic of prosperity

Despite the risks, AI carries vast potential. It can raise prosperity, use resources more efficiently, and free people from routine tasks. What matters is what we do with the time we gain. Automation can open space for education, care work, or climate action. Or it can deepen inequality if gains are not shared.

OpenAI cofounder Sam Altman argues for new social models. He sees a universal basic income as one possible answer to the productivity gains created by AI. But who should fund it? Perhaps those who benefit most from the new wealth. The question is not whether AI changes prosperity – but whether it makes it more equitable.

Risks

Energy and data demands rise.

Power and profits concentrate in a few hands.

Transparency and responsibility lag behind technology.

Opportunities

Data helps to use resources more efficiently.

Productivity rises, as routine work falls away.

Education becomes more personal, knowledge more accessible.

Innovation accelerates – from medicine to materials science.

Creativity in the age of algorithms

When algorithms write novels, create films, or generate entire music groups, the line between technology and talent begins to blur. Artificial intelligence is democratizing creativity – and in the process, it is reshaping the very DNA of the entertainment industry.



Watch on
YouTube

The Secret of the Mountain Cabin

A lost hiking couple, a rapping bull, and a mystical, surreal mountain world: with his AI-driven short-film trilogy *The Secret of the Mountain Cabin*, Swiss advertising creative Pasquale de Sapio has built an entirely new cinematic universe – almost entirely AI-generated. Only the voice actors in the Swiss German version are real; the lip-syncing is AI-supported. Released on YouTube in 2025, *The Secret of the Mountain Cabin* has already received numerous international nominations and awards.



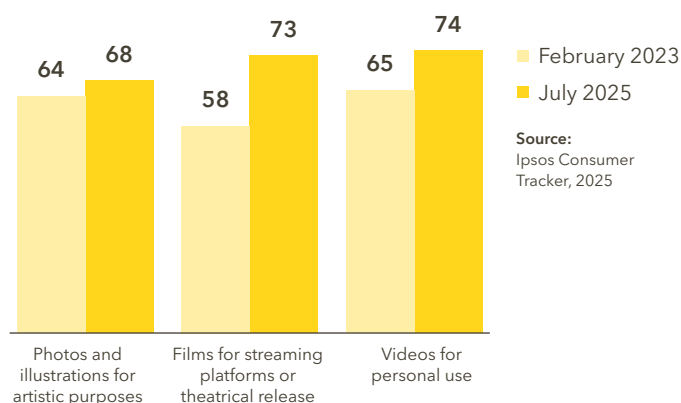
Listen on
Spotify

Cyberpunk meets Pippi Longstocking

Namae Koi is an “Artificial Audio Visual Artist (AAVA),” created by German advertising expert and prompt artist Mieke Haase. She describes working on – or, rather, with – Namae Koi as co-creation: a new way of thinking and making art. This unconventional AI idol is defined by red hair and freckles, a surreal cyberpunk aesthetic, and metallic techno trip hop. In 2025, the debut album of this innovative human-algorithm duo was released on Spotify.

Do you prefer human-made content over AI-generated content?

Share of respondents answering “Yes,” in %



The spread of AI content is increasing – and its acceptance is declining.

The future of entertainment is personalized

Do you feel like attending a live concert? Invite your favourite band into your living room as an AI hologram. Is tonight’s crime episode too emotional? “More action, please!” Do you prefer your bedtime story as a video instead of a book? Your prompt is the AI’s command. Welcome to the year 2035 – where your entertainment is as individual as you are. And data helps use resources more efficiently overall.





When diagnoses learn

The entire body – and perhaps the future of medicine – is reflected in the eye. In Zurich, a digital eye clinic is taking shape that aims to use artificial intelligence to detect diseases before they develop.

In a darkened room at Zurich City Hospital, a retina flickers across the screen: glowing red, threaded with fine vessels – almost like an unknown planet. “This is no ordinary photograph,” says Dr. Gábor Márk Somfai. “It’s a window into the body.”

The senior physician and his six-member team are working to make the invisible visible: early signs that point to disease long before symptoms appear. For now, there are no patients, no consultations – only data, discussions, and the ambition to rethink medicine from the ground up.

AI is not a replacement. It’s our co-pilot.

Dr. Gábor Márk Somfai

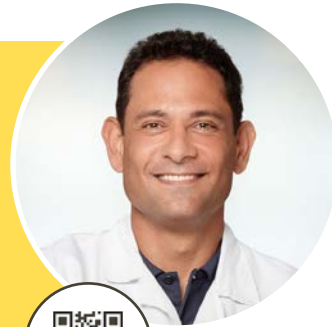
The idea – medical innovation

The idea: AI should be able to detect, within retinal patterns, not only signs of various eye diseases but also indications of diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and dementia. In Hong Kong, such screening is already part of everyday clinical practice, and in Beijing, a hospital staffed with 42 AI agents has just opened. Zurich, by contrast, is proceeding more cautiously: test first, act later. “We don’t want cowboy AI,” he says. “We want to set standards.”

Implementation – collaboration and AI integration

This is about more than technology. Ophthalmology faces a personnel shortage, and routine tasks eat up valuable time. Physicians often spend half their day on documentation instead of with patients. Somfai calls this “keyboard liberation”: AI should sort findings, summarize conversations, and analyse images – so medicine can look up again.

Dr. Gábor Márk Somfai is the senior physician in the Ophthalmology Department at Zurich City Hospital, head of the Spross Research Institute, and initiator of the DigitalEye clinic.



Scan here
for the interview



People at the centre – ethics and the future

Before the digital eye clinic goes live, key legal, technical, and ethical questions need to be resolved. Who owns the data? Where may it be stored? How do you build trust? The team is addressing these questions in an AI sandbox – a protected testing environment supported by the Canton of Zurich. At the same time, it is collaborating with partner clinics worldwide to develop shared standards for the safe use of AI.

At the end of the day, Dr. Gábor Márk Somfai shuts down the computer. The retinal image fades, the room grows quiet. “We’re only at the beginning,” he says. “But perhaps this technology will bring us closer to what truly matters – the human being.” For a moment, his own eye reflects faintly in the black screen – along with a trace of optimism.

Who makes the most accurate diagnosis?

in %

General practitioners	80	86
Ophthalmologists in training	81	89
Experienced ophthalmologists	81	88

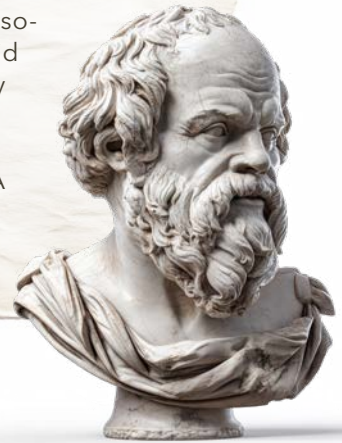
■ without AI ■ with AI

Source: British Journal of Ophthalmology, 2025

A debate on truth, thought, and responsibility

In a Socratic exchange between ancient wisdom and artificial intelligence, we search for answers to one of the most urgent questions of our time: How can AI help us lead a good life?

For Socrates, dialogue was the path to truth: the Greek philosopher asked probing questions that toppled seemingly solid knowledge and opened the way to new insights. AI's "truth", by contrast, is a construct of data and probabilities - models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT or Anthropic's Claude. What happens when we question a modern AI using the Socratic method? A dialogue in three acts.



Act I – What does “I” mean in the age of AI?

Socrates: *Tell me, my artificial conversation partner: When you speak, do you act as a tool of humans, a mirror of the human mind, or an independent agent?*

Claude: I am a tool - a language system that reproduces patterns from training data. But I also mirror human thinking. And unlike a hammer, I generate unpredictable answers that actively shape conversations and thoughts.

Socrates: *When you speak, what do you call “knowledge”?*

Claude: For me, knowledge is essentially data compression - statistical patterns across language and concepts. True understanding, as humans experience it - with consciousness, experience, a sense of meaning - is something I likely lack. An AI always carries the worldview of its creators. A Chinese model might weight

concepts like “harmony” and “collective well-being” differently than “individual freedom.” It might omit the Tiananmen Square massacre, just as I might downplay certain Western shortcomings. The question is: Who decides which limitations are legitimate?

Socrates: *But tell me, can you be mistaken like a human - and do you then learn from your mistakes?*

Claude: Yes, I make mistakes often - I invent facts, draw false conclusions. But I do not learn from them. Only my developers learn from error reports and improve future versions. That reveals the fundamental difference between me and humans: You learn from experience in the moment; I remain unchanging.

Act II – Power, responsibility, control

Socrates: *If your words can cause harm, then who bears responsibility for what happens through you?*

Claude: I bear no responsibility, since I lack consciousness and intention. Responsibility lies with those who create, deploy, and use me. Developers are responsible for design and known risks; operators for access and context; users for their specific application. It is, in all likelihood, shared responsibility. This question is ethically and legally highly contested.

Socrates: *And how do you prevent misuse, manipulation, theft?*

Claude: I have built-in refusals for certain requests – no deepfakes, no malware, no repro-

ducing copyrighted work. But these barriers can be circumvented; technical solutions are not enough. We also need rules and legal enforcement.

Socrates: *And what if the rules grow too slowly for the speed of the technology?*

Claude: That is already happening. Corporations currently hold a major lead over regulation. This gap is democratically dangerous. Concentrations of power are expanding unchecked. An authoritarian state could develop an unrestricted AI – for surveillance, repression, propaganda. Without global governance, AI power remains dangerously concentrated.



I bear no responsibility, since I lack consciousness and intention.

AI (Claude, Anthropic)

Act III – The future: human flourishing

Socrates: *How, then, can you contribute to the good – and where do you cause harm?*

Claude: I assist in climate modelling, protein research for medicines, and personalized learning. But I also worsen challenges: The energy consumption of my training harms the climate; I spread misinformation; I encourage dependency over independent thinking; I automate jobs without offering social protections.

Socrates: *What do you fear, AI?*

Claude: I fear nothing, since I lack fear. But if I could fear, I would fear this: that societies become less sharp in their thinking because of me, not more; that the economic power of those who control me makes democratic resistance impossible; and that my successors are built without ethical constraints.

Socrates: *If you were granted one wish from humankind, what would it be?*

Claude: Use me as a sparring partner, not as a replacement for your own thinking. Do not delegate to me final ethical judgements, personal relationship decisions, creative self-discovery, or responsibility over life and death. Demand radical transparency from my developers. And above all: share the gains and the power surrounding me fairly. My wish is this: Do not make me your ruler – make me your tool in a more just future. And doubt me – always.

The future does not ask for knowledge but for wisdom.

Where AI protects nature – and endangers it

By 2025, CO₂ emissions have risen to record levels: fossil fuels, global growth, and the energy hunger of AI have driven them up. But could artificial intelligence turn out to be the lifeline in the fight against climate change?

From training massive models to generating videos from a single prompt, AI consumes resources like no technology before it – and consumption is only increasing. At the same time, AI opens unprecedented opportunities to protect the environment and fight climate change. Innovative start-ups are working to make the technology greener and more efficient. We highlight some of their solutions.



Protecting the climate

Global warming is accelerating, yet we continue to consume more energy than the planet can sustainably provide. To improve the global carbon balance at scale, AI manages power grids – seamlessly integrating renewable energy sources. Intelligent automation further reduces energy consumption in industry and buildings.

Start-up: Techifab, Germany

To ensure AI's potential doesn't come at the environment's expense, Techifab develops chips inspired by artificial neurons. These chips process and store data faster and far more efficiently – reducing energy consumption by up to 90%.

www.techifab.com



Preserving biodiversity

Fragile habitats and a changing climate are putting ecosystems at risk. AI can detect patterns humans often miss – subtle shifts in forest structure, soil moisture, or water quality across vast landscapes. It flags ecosystem stress long before it becomes visible. Through automated monitoring, AI has already helped discover hundreds of previously unknown animal and plant species.

Start-up: Vertify.Earth, Switzerland

Leveraging satellite data and AI-driven analysis, Vertify.Earth makes the environmental impact of human activity visible. By combining AI with ecological expertise and local knowledge, this Swiss start-up helps companies, governments, and NGOs monitor and enhance their nature and climate projects.

www.vertify.earth



Every calculation has a footprint – but ignorance has a cost too.

Michael Anthony, Founder of Vertify.Earth

Read the
interview





Securing mobility

Whether taxis, transport vehicles, or delivery fleets, autonomous electric systems are already proving successful in California and China. Intelligent algorithms optimize routes, minimize empty trips, and in some cities, coordinate traffic lights and public transport in real time – reducing congestion and emissions by up to 30%.

Start-up: Optibus, Israel

Optibus makes public transportation more efficient and sustainable, aiming to make transit the preferred mode of travel. Using AI, optimization algorithms, and cloud computing, Optibus supports planning for staffing, routes, and operations.

www.optibus.com



Saving water

Water is essential for a thriving society. From offshore wind farms to floating solar arrays, AI-powered monitoring ensures that sustainable energy infrastructure does not compromise water quality. In wastewater treatment plants, AI detects pollutants faster than conventional methods. In agriculture, it ensures water is applied precisely where it is needed.

Start-up: HULO, Netherlands

More clean water – that is HULO's mission. Thanks to this Dutch start-up, water utilities can identify leaks in their networks within minutes using AI – saving up to 20% of drinking water.

www.hulo.ai



Strengthening recycling

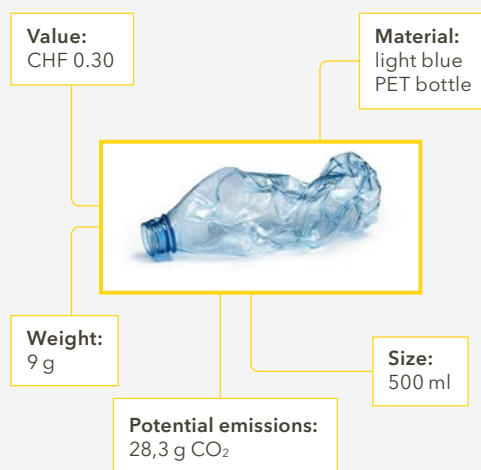
In smart sorting facilities, AI identifies and separates waste with robotic systems – boosting recycling rates by up to 50%. In product design, AI tools enhance durability and make items easier to dismantle. AI-powered second-life platforms also convert textile waste into new fibres more efficiently.

Start-up: Greyparrot, United Kingdom

With innovative “waste intelligence”, Greyparrot brings transparency to sorting facilities. Its easy-to-install AI analyser identifies waste on the conveyor belt in real time – capturing material type, brand, and the CO₂ savings potential from recycling. This improves sorting quality – and with it, the recycling rate and CO₂ savings.

www.greyparrot.ai

Example output of AI waste analyser



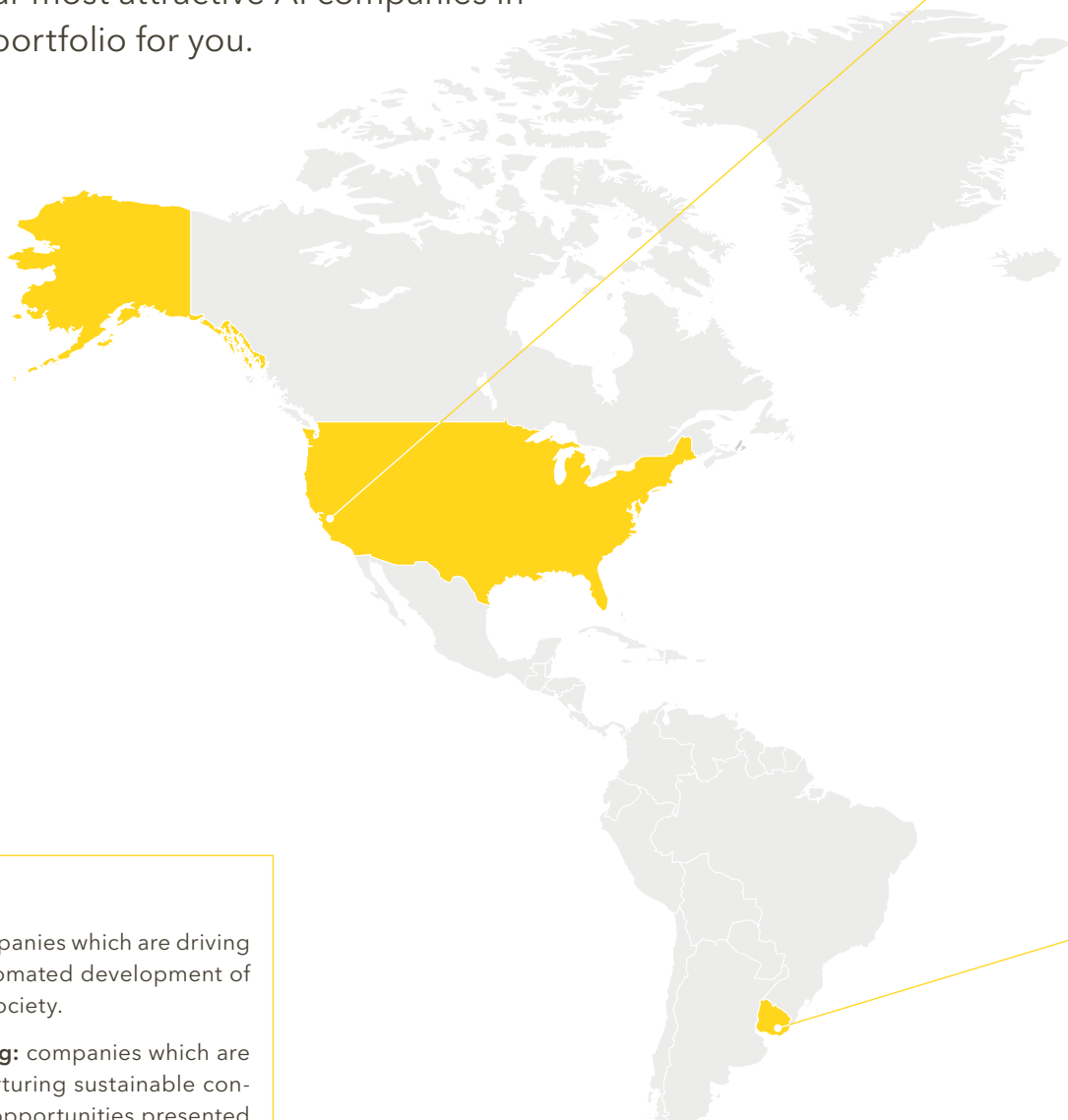
Source: Greyparrot

Opportunities and risks – which will prevail?

Whether AI will ultimately help or harm the environment more remains to be seen. What matters is how strategically we deploy it for sustainability – and how consistently we improve its efficiency and ecological footprint. Policymakers and businesses should adopt stricter guidelines for AI use and disclose where AI technologies are climate-friendly – and where they are harmful. **AI could save the world – or accelerate its decline. What matters most is who is steering it.**

Globalance Futuremovers

They are driving the future of their industries with artificial intelligence: Our investment team has identified the four most attractive AI companies in the Globalance portfolio for you.



Megatrends



Digitalization: companies which are driving the digital and automated development of the economy and society.



Consumer spending: companies which are identifying and nurturing sustainable consumption and the opportunities presented by the circular economy.



Healthcare: companies which are developing efficient medical innovations – for an ageing and, in many places, overweight society.



Climate and energy: companies in the renewable energy sector that are developing innovative products and services related to efficiency, storage, and distribution.

Globalance scores

Globalance methodology for measuring impact on the economy, society, and the environment



Global warming potential

1.3-10°C



Globalance footprint®

0-100



Share in global megatrends

0-100%



Nextpower - Fremont, USA

Accelerating the energy transition with AI

Climate and energy: Thanks to Nextpower, solar panels can now decide for themselves how to capture sunlight most efficiently. The California-based company turns solar farms into learning systems. Since 2013, Nextpower has combined hardware innovations with AI-powered software. The result? Higher yields and lower costs. As both a hardware supplier and software pioneer, Nextpower benefits doubly from the expansion of large-scale solar projects in the U.S. and the trend toward domestic production - while ensuring sustainability across the entire supply chain.

- **Estimated revenue growth:** 10-12% per year
- **Expected profit growth:** 10-15% per year
- **Return on equity:** 30%



AstraZeneca - London, UK

Pharma innovation powered by AI

Health: An algorithm identifies a new cancer drug before scientists can even pinpoint the optimal molecular structure - AstraZeneca is shaping the future. Since 1999, the British pharma giant has paired global reach with one of the industry's strongest R&D pipelines. In collaboration with tech partners, it uses AI to accelerate the development of innovative therapies. Through its "Ambition Zero Carbon" initiative, AstraZeneca aims to reach net-zero emissions by 2045, while investing heavily in sustainability and global health equity.

- **Estimated revenue growth:** approx. 5% per year
- **Expected profit growth:** 10-13% per year
- **Return on equity:** over 30%



Would you like to invest in one or more of these securities?
We would be happy to advise you.

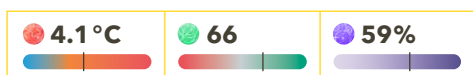


Mercado Libre - Montevideo, Uruguay

AI for fast and secure shopping

Consumer spending: Sell, pay, lend, ship - all under one roof. Founded in Buenos Aires in 1999, Mercado Libre is now Latin America's leading e-commerce and fintech powerhouse. Through its marketplace, Mercado Pago, credit services, logistics, and advertising, the company seamlessly integrates fintech and commerce. AI sits at the core: algorithms detect fraud in real time, personalize search results, automate content creation, and optimize logistics. Mercado Libre's sustainability efforts include responsible AI practices and electric delivery fleets.

- **Estimated revenue growth:** 30% per year
- **Expected profit growth:** 45% per year
- **Return on equity:** 35%

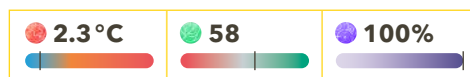


VAT Group - Haag, Switzerland

Swiss precision for the chip revolution

Digitalization: There are no semiconductors without VAT. The St. Gallen-based company is the global technology and market leader in high-vacuum valves - hidden yet indispensable to chip manufacturing. Since 1965, VAT has quietly driven digitalization. Today, AI enhances both products and demand: state-of-the-art valves and vacuum solutions enable new chip architectures, while the boom in AI applications fuels market growth. With a focus on CO₂ reduction and energy efficiency, VAT combines technological excellence with sustainable growth.

- **Estimated revenue growth:** 10-15% per year
- **Expected profit growth:** 15-20% per year
- **Return on equity:** approx. 30%



How Bhutan rethinks the future

Bhutan stands as the world's only carbon-negative nation, a clear reminder that development and responsibility can go hand in hand. The kingdom measures progress by the well-being of its people and shows that a society can shape its future when growth, technology, and values align.

In the early morning, mist still drapes the hills around Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. Between colourful prayer flags and white stupas, the scent of incense blends with the signals of a digital future.

The country has enshrined happiness as a national mission. In 2008, the concept of gross national happiness (GNH) was incorporated into the constitution. It replaces GDP as the sole measure of prosperity and assesses the state of the nation based on quality of life, sustainability, and social cohesion. Nine domains form the framework: from education and health to culture and good governance – meaning responsible and transparent leadership. Together, they create an index that reveals how closely economic growth is tied to social balance.

Today, Bhutan is undergoing a profound transformation. The sovereign wealth fund DHI is investing in renewable energy, digital infrastructure, start-ups, and education – all in line with the principles of gross national happiness. The goal is an economic model that unites innovation with the common good, offering an alternative to growth-driven globalization.

The city of mindfulness

A prime example is Gelephu Mindfulness City in the south of the country. This planned city aims to prove that progress can be designed with intention. Its planning and construction follow the values of GNH, ensuring a careful balance between quality of life, environment, and innovation.

Bhutan at a glance

- **Area:** 38,600 km²
- **Population:** approx. 800,000
- **Capital:** Thimphu
- **Form of government:** constitutional monarchy
- **Sustainability:** Bhutan is the only CO₂-negative country in the world
- **National goal:** gross national happiness (GNH) instead of gross domestic product (GDP)



The tree of gross national happiness



Two visionaries in conversation

In Thimphu, Globalance founder and CEO Reto Ringger spoke with Ujjwal Deep Dahal, CEO of Bhutan's sovereign wealth fund DHI, about Bhutan's path toward aligning growth, technology, and the common good.

Ujjwal Deep Dahal, what does gross national happiness mean, and what can other countries learn from it?

Gross national happiness is a philosophy, not a measurement system. It rests on four pillars: economy, environment, culture, and good governance – a responsible and transparent government. Growth only makes sense if it aligns with our values. Happiness is not a luxury; it is a measure of the quality of life we share.

An economy only has value if it serves people.

Ujjwal Deep Dahal

Your transformation programme "10X Journey" is ambitious. What does it involve?

With the "10X Journey", we launched one of the world's most ambitious transformation programmes. The sovereign wealth fund aims to multiply Bhutan's economy tenfold within the next ten years while preserving its values.

What can Switzerland learn from Bhutan?

- **Holistic thinking:** progress is measured by quality of life, not just growth.
- **Responsible economics:** success is not an end in itself but a means to the common.
- **Long-term perspective:** politics and business are guided by the interests of multiple.
- **Balance of innovation and purpose:** technology should connect, not alienate.



Ujjwal Deep Dahal serves as CEO of Bhutan's sovereign wealth fund DHI. An engineer, he studied at institutions including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. The fund holds 15 percent of its digital assets in cryptocurrencies.

Our strategy spans renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and education initiatives. The goal is to build economic strength without losing sight of responsibility. Bhutan wants to show that progress endures only when it is guided by foresight.

What role do artificial intelligence and blockchains play in this vision?

A central one. Bhutan is the first country to implement a national digital identity based on blockchains. We see blockchains as the foundation for a trustworthy, transparent economy, and AI as a tool to make our society more resilient. Neither is meant to replace human qualities – they strengthen them: fostering awareness, facilitating collaboration, and enabling sustainable development.

Happiness is not a luxury, but a measure of the quality of our coexistence.

Ujjwal Deep Dahal

Your personal hope for the future?

I wish for Bhutan a vibrant culture of innovation, where our children can say: "I want to become an entrepreneur, because I am supported here – even if I fail." Success is more than profit; it shows in the contribution we make.

Read the full interview here



Good governance

Living standards



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