



Moral Machines: Teaching Robots Right from Wrong

By Wendell Wallach, Colin Allen

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Computers are already approving financial transactions, controlling electrical supplies, and driving trains. Soon, service robots will be taking care of the elderly in their homes, and military robots will have their own targeting and firing protocols. Colin Allen and Wendell Wallach argue that as robots take on more and more responsibility, they must be programmed with moral decision-making abilities, for our own safety. Taking a fast paced tour through the latest thinking about philosophical ethics and artificial intelligence, the authors argue that even if full moral agency for machines is a long way off, it is already necessary to start building a kind of functional morality, in which artificial moral agents have some basic ethical sensitivity. But the standard ethical theories don't seem adequate, and more socially engaged and engaging robots will be needed. As the authors show, the quest to build machines that are capable of telling right from wrong has begun.

Moral Machines is the first book to examine the challenge of building artificial moral agents, probing deeply into the nature of human decision making and ethics.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An invaluable guide to avoiding the stuff of science-fiction nightmares."--John Gilby, *Times Higher Education*

"*Moral Machines* is a fine introduction to the emerging field of robot ethics. There is much here that will interest ethicists, philosophers, cognitive scientists, and roboticists."--Peter Danielson, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*

"Written with an abundance of examples and lessons learned, scenarios of incidents that may happen, and elaborate discussions on existing artificial agents on the cutting edge of research/practice, *Moral Machines* goes beyond what is known as computer ethics into what will soon be called the discipline of machine morality. Highly recommended."--G. Trajkovski, *CHOICE*

"The book does succeed in making the essential point that the phrase 'moral machine' is not an oxymoron. It also provides a window onto an area of research with which psychologists are unlikely to be familiar and one from which, at some point, we may be able to learn quite a lot."--*PsycCRITIQUES*

"In a single, thought-provoking volume, the authors not only introduce machine ethics, but also an inquiry that penetrates to the deepest foundations of ethics. The conscientious reader will, no doubt, find many challenging ideas here that will require a reassessment of her own beliefs, making this text a "must read" among recent books in philosophy and, more specifically, applied ethics."--Tony Beavers, *Ethics and Information Technology*

"... *Moral Machines* raises a host of interesting and stimulating philosophical questions and engineering problems, and highlights likely important future debates-- which is a great success for a book that comes on the brink of a field that is likely to surge in popularity in the upcoming decade. Wallach and Allen do so with a clarity and structure that makes their book simultaneously informative and enjoyable to read. Overall, this book is highly recommended reading for all those who already have an interest in the field of machine morality or for those who desire to develop an interest in the field." -- *Philosophical Psychology*

About the Author

Wendell Wallach is a consultant and writer and is affiliated with Yale University's Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics.

Colin Allen is a Professor of History & Philosophy of Science and of Cognitive Science at Indiana University

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Karena Figueroa:

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