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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Dear << Test First Name >>**    Welcome to our 23rd Newsletter - May 2021   **Up Coming Events**   We are continuing our Webinars Season - please book early and join us for:   **Date**: Wednesday May 26th**, Topic: Value based approaches, does it really increase quality?**   Time: 13.20-14.30 BST 14.20-15.30 CET  Register here: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)   **The Webinar Team includes:​**   * Sofía Moreno-Perez International Ambassador, Spain (chair) * Rossana Alexandrelo (AQuAS). * Javier Narbona (Junta de Andalucía)   We will debate these issues and opportunities with you.  Send your questions for our panel to Maggie Ellis: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)  and we will try to include them    **Date: Wednesday 9th June 2021 Topic: Social Policy and Technology**    Time: 13.20-14.30 BST 14.20-15.30 CET    Register here: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)    **Speakers this time will be:**   * Rait Kuuse, Social Policy Minister, Estonia * Lisa Cameron, MP, UK Parliament.   We will debate these issues and opportunities with you.  Send your questions for our panel to Maggie Ellis: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)  and we will try to include them    **Date: Wednesday 23rd June 2021, Topic: Moving the Cyber and Sovereignty Debate Further   *Following the recent popular session on this topic we will hear more views on this topic.***   Time: 13.20-14.30 BST 14.20-15.30 CET    Register here: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)   **Speakers this time will be:**   * Paul Lukowicz, German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence, and University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, * Michael Short, Chief Scientific Advisor Department of International Trade, UK Government, * Peter Wintlev-Jensen, former EU Programme Manager, Industry and International Policy. now Independent Consultant,   Denmark and Aalborg University.    We will debate these issues and opportunities with you.  Send your questions for our panel to Maggie Ellis: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)  and we will try to include them     **Date: Wednesday 7th July 2021, Topic: Legal and Ethical Aspects of Technology**  Time: 13.20-14.30 BST 14.20-15.30 CET    Register here: [westsqas@mac.com](mailto:westsqas@mac.com)       -----------------**EKTG Board welcomes it new members**------------  **Dr Ian Campbell** is the former innovate UK Executive Chair. Ian has extensive entrepreneurial and business experience in the healthcare sector. Prior to Innovate UK, Ian was CEO of Arquer Diagnostics, which focuses on bladder and prostate cancer diagnosis. Before this, Ian spent 15 years in a variety of executive management roles within the health and life science sector.  **Bill Gilmour** is a major television director. He joined Scottish Television in 1960 as a camera operator, moving after four years to floor managing, before joining Granada Television in 1967. Gilmour began directing in 1972. Bill lives in Edinburgh, enjoys long distance single-handed sailing, Himalayan trekking and watching Indian tigers.  --------------------------------------**News**------------------------------------------   **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE GETS THE EU TREATMENT**  **Can the bloc marry AI ethics and progress?**     The [European Commission will propose its long-awaited rules on Artificial Intelligence](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence), with the lofty aim of developing “human-centric, ethical and trustworthy AI”. Big ambitions. And arguably critical questions for society to consider.   **But that is not the full story.**   The initiative is part of a greater attempt to advance the EU’s industrial and technological sovereignty – “strategic autonomy” as Paris would have it. Aware the continent is punching below its weight in the digital economy, and worried this will have longer-term geo-political consequences, the Commission wants Europe to be able to compete with the US and China, at the AI top table.   The question is whether EU can reconcile both objectives – an ethical AI policy and a strong AI industrial base.   One thing is already certain. The new rules, [drafts of which were leaked yesterday](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZaBPsfor_aHKNeeyXxk9uJfTru747EOn/view?usp=sharing), will have consequences across the board, not just for “Big Tech”, but for the growing number of economic and societal sectors in which AI is expected to create added value and social welfare, from transport and agriculture to healthcare and urban planning.   But given AI requires large amounts of free flowing data, and the use of ever more controversial algorithms, it is far from evident how to strike the balance between Europe’s technological ambitions and ethical-humanist constraints related to data privacy, safety and non-discrimination principles.   Facial recognition technologies for mass surveillance, to mention just one hotly debated issue, may be banned in the EU, with no or only limited exceptions allowed. The list of possible AI applications continues to grow. So what other AI technology should and will Europe deem beyond the pale?   While all sides in the AI debate agree there must be constraints, too much regulatory rigidity risks killing the goose that lays the golden egg, hindering rather than aiding the EU’s ability to compete with the world’s technological superpowers.   In a bid to avoid “overregulation”, it seems the Commission will propose that only “high-risk” AI applications should be singled out to meet new, AI specific standards, for example when it comes to data and record keeping, accuracy and robustness and human oversight. One-size-fits-all is not likely to be a promising approach. However, it remains to be seen whether narrowing the scope of the legislation in this way meets with the approval of the Member States and the European Parliament.    Positions on AI diverge among the Member States, reflecting the national sensitivities and strategies that some capitals have already put in place on AI. Berlin appears to believe that distinguishing “high risk” from “low risk” AI is too crude and simplistic a method, preferring the fine-tooth comb of more nuanced categories, coupled with standards and obligations increasing in severity. Others favour a more liberal, light-touch approach.   What side the penny will drop remains highly uncertain and will no doubt lead to much speculation and lobbying.   Nor is it certain that Europe’s ambitions to bolster its technological sovereignty, championed by Paris above all, will avoid what some are likely to describe as harmful protectionist recipes, such as the idea that in the EU Single Market, AI technology also needs to be based on “EU data”, or at least on data that is gathered in accordance with EU law and humanist norms.   The European Parliament will have a crucial voice in all this and many MEPs view these new AI rules as the next opportunity to establish its prowess as a tough standard setter for technology. Avoiding the internal turf wars that are currently bogging down the Digital Markets Act (DMA), it has already created a special committee on the subject called AIDA ([Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/aida/home/highlights)). For those who favour light touch regulation and free trade, this is not necessarily good news, considering the Parliament’s track record on consumer protection, fundamental rights like privacy, and curtailing the power of Big Tech. Some of the Parliament’s asks have already been picked by President Ursula von der Leyen, who in a recent [letter](https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/news/von-der-leyen-assures-meps-well-go-further-on-ai-that-harms-fundamental-rights/), reassured MEPs that the Commission would not stop with the upcoming Regulation on introducing more robust rules for AI technologies that pose a risk to fundamental rights.   We must not forget also that significant work on AI is ongoing in various international fora. Given the borderless nature of data and (so far) the Internet, the international dimension of regulating technology may well become more relevant over time. That the US, also under new President Biden, increasingly views EU regulation of digital markets and data as a potential barrier to trade will not have gone unnoticed in Brussels. Undoubtedly, the US will also closely monitor the new AI initiative. That said, to date there has been little concrete evidence of EU and US policymakers seriously readying themselves to grapple with these issues in unison and coordination.   While the latter may yet happen, it means that for now the EU will follow its own political instincts, for better or for worse. Whether these instincts leave room for a regulatory framework that ensures access to high-quality data, not just European, as well as sufficient flexibility for AI to blossom, the next year or two will tell.   **Continual learning in medical devices: FDA's action plan and beyond**  Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) software have the potential to improve patient care. An underlying algorithm can either be locked so that its function does not change, or adaptive, in which the AI and ML system performs continual learning. Continual learning, also known as lifelong learning, is a technique in which the decision logic of mathematical models is updated through new data while retaining previously learned knowledge.1,2 By contrast, locked AI and ML systems prevent the ability to learn from post approval, real-world data, and thus cannot improve over time in the same way as adaptive systems.  [Read more](mailto:https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(21)00224-1/fulltext?rss=yes&utm_campaign=update-lanres&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=126725772&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-99np93usL1I6nOePB4S52TBQnrdzeMjzqwyElVRGcCJfBoFNDcLgHkWnGhoI8AAqBUVWwp3QIMZ2gd-5d5PpFB3FQ9cw&utm_content=126725772&utm_source=hs_email)     **Health information technology and digital innovation for national learning health and care systems**  Health information technology can support the development of national learning health and care systems, which can be defined as health and care systems that continuously use data-enabled infrastructure to support policy and planning, public health, and personalisation of care. The COVID-19 pandemic has offered an opportunity to assess how well equipped the UK is to leverage health information technology and apply the principles of a national learning health and care system in response to a major public health shock.  [Read more](mailto:https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landig/article/PIIS2589-7500(21)00005-4/fulltext?rss=yes&utm_campaign=update-landig&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=126748472&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8foqGBQLvmmKJqCeFeP3zxAZea8-TAjYLOy3fyXWV-yoZjUaRHCBZZFmYViznj-oLILCX0YmGQNkMVC5QFKdZxHQ_JuA&utm_content=126748472&utm_source=hs_email)     **How the light gets in**  When palliative care doctor Rachel Clarke looked back over her notes typed hastily pre-dawn in the midst of a global pandemic, she expected to find only darkness—an unrelenting stream of death and despair. To her surprise, her insomniac's diary was “illuminated by pinpricks of light”. “People began to organise, street by street, village by village, to make sure that their most vulnerable neighbours…were safe and fed and kept from harm”, writes Clarke. Rainbows appeared in windows up and down the country in support of key workers, volunteers set to work sewing masks and manufacturing visors, and a retired British Army officer approaching his 100th birthday united a divided nation by walking laps of his garden to raise money for the National Health Service (NHS).  [Read more](mailto:https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(21)00224-1/fulltext?rss=yes&utm_campaign=update-lanres&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=126725772&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8t7PUNdoakDzKWLTe4eug1gg6fGijEzpPZTDTxp22HYt4K8Ck-Zd-p4gMrt5Cab6u8XVspZvEPbxqq09TqPh_emk-SOw&utm_content=126725772&utm_source=hs_email)    **Social rights for all generations: time to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights**    On 4 March the Commission released the long-awaited Action Plan of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The goal of this policy is to ensure the implementation of the Pillar by identifying areas for action both for the EU and Member States. In this Special Briefing we look at the main objectives outlined in the Action Plan and what they mean for older people in particular.    [Read more](https://www.age-platform.eu/special-briefing/social-rights-all-generations-time-deliver-european-pillar-social-rights)  **Strengthened joint call for a European Parliament inquiry on COVID-19 and long-term care**    On 25 March, AGE organized jointly with the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the European Public Service Unions (EPSU) an event supported by Members of the European Parliament from all main political groups. This event highlighted the need for the Parliament to conduct an inquiry into the tragic impacts that COVID-19 has had on residential care across the EU.   [Read more](https://www.age-platform.eu/policy-work/news/strengthened-joint-call-european-parliament-inquiry-covid-19-and-long-term-care)   **Thomas Heatherwick’s design for a car that eats Cardon Dioxide**     [Read more](https://www.dezeen.com/2021/04/19/heatherwick-studio-airo-electric-car-clean-air/)      -----------**EKTG Chairman’s Craig White interview with Unprecedented**-------------------------  Unprecedented had the opportunity to speak to Craig White, CEO of [Agile Homes](https://agile.property/), he spoke to us about how Agile homes worked through the pandemic and gave advice to those entering the workforce today.  ***Background into you and your business*** Agile is a start-up company that is delivering low-carbon affordable homes for people in housing need. We do this using an innovative development model that unlocks land hidden in plain sight to help meet the challenges of the housing crisis and climate emergency, head-on. We use modern methods of construction (MMC) using natural and renewable, carbon capturing materials to deliver prefabricated, modular homes.  ***Define leadership and what being a leader means to you.*** Leadership for me is about unlocking the potential of people to enable them to feel confident, capable and trusted to do their work individually and collectively. When that is in place, delivering on our shared vision, values and objectives to deliver safe, civil and affordable, low-carbon homes is easily achieved. Giving people permission to lead is also important to me. Leadership is not simply the sum of experience, age and title, far from it, it manifests itself in all of us on a daily basis.  ***Who are your Leadership role models/inspirations?*** I don’t know. It’s not a question I have been asked before. I would tend to question whether anyone or model can embody the virtue of leadership fully. I am open to constantly learning and would say leadership is a practice, not a place. Philosophically, Systems Thinking underpins my work, which presents a world model that says everything is interconnected and interdependent. Once understood, this demands that we seek to understand any model holistically, find the position one occupies in it and then seek where others are, what their preferences and behaviours might be, empathise and then find out what steps can be taken to positively influence their and my actions to achieve better outcomes.  ***What are the “non negotiable” behaviours that you expect you and those around you to live by?***   * Respect for people and the planet. * A workplace where all contributions and voices are welcome, heard and taken account of. * A place where taking care of each other is shared and not left to others.   ***What impact has Covid-19 had on you and your business?***   It has absolutely demonstrated interconnectedness and interdependence of us all and has affected each of us. We have colleagues who have lost family members, and we have tried to ensure that their loss is acknowledged properly, respectfully and, where appropriate, marked by us as a business as well as privately.   For the business, it slowed things down, but we achieved amazing things nonetheless. We implemented furlough selectively and were able to keep staff on 100% take home in Lockdown 1. In Lockdown 3, senior management took a 20% pay cut, which meant we were able to reduce the impact on the rest of the staff to minimise the reduction in their take-home to 10%. We are now seeing an uplift in sales and are unlocking furlough systematically for all staff and we hope to do the same for the SMT.   **Are there any people within your support network who made a big positive impact on you as a Business Leader during those early weeks/months?**   My partner and co-founder Linda Farrow, colleagues in Agile and of course Zoom. (Although, like all of us, its novelty has now been replaced by weary familiarity!). As a start-up, we have continued to raise investment, despite the changes around us. The faith of our investors has provided not only our financial fuel but an affirmation that what we are doing, is right.  ***What was your internal comms strategy at the start of lockdown?*** *Has that changed in Lockdown 3.0?* At the start, we implemented daily check-ins via zoom to ensure we could keep an eye on people’s pastoral, health and mental well-being. The world had changed hugely and these daily sessions were essential for maintaining our balance. We carried out working from home audits to ensure people had appropriate workspaces and implemented payment for this. We used instant comms tools like Cliq to open-up immediate means of meeting by VOIP or video. Cliq has the ability to have thematic channels where specific projects, issues as well as good news and cool stuff could be shared. As we went, we reduced the check-in meetings to 3 a week, restructuring them to have a Monday Check-in for 30mins to share the plans for the coming week, Wednesday is now a full operational meeting and Friday is a check-out as a collective coffee meeting.  In the summer, we were able to meet collectively, safely and in a COVID-19 compliant way to discuss vision, values and strategy. The weather was kind and we were able to do this on the grounds of one of our Agile Homes, sitting in the sun and enjoying each other's company for the first time.  We ended our office lease and are now planning, with all staff involved, how and where we want to work. We will not go back to the way we were, but instead, find a new way for us to work collectively as well as dispersed. People will be able to shape their work patterns and colocation preferences. We anticipate having a smaller more flexible physical footprint, and when restrictions allow, we have agreed to meet in new and interesting places for specific types of work activities. Cafés will be a popular choice!  ***What have been the Unprecedented decisions you have made?*** *Those where there was no playbook.*  Deciding not to be office based, meant we packed-up everything that wasn’t needed to work from home, and put it into storage. This decision meant we had to reimagine how we would work post lockdown. We are fortunate that we are a design and make a business that creates homes and spaces that people need, so we have the potential to create our own Agile office where we choose. This includes places we might make ourselves or rotate through café and shared workspaces with other organisations.  ***What remain your 3 biggest challenges?***   1. Ensuring staff and clients needs are met in a world of constant change. 2. Staying mentally and physically healthy, when it would be easy not to. 3. The housing crisis and climate emergency.   ***How have you (your business) coped from a mental health/stress perspective?*** From day one of lockdown, we were alive to the impacts that might arise. Daily check-ins allowed us to keep an eye on colleagues and asked colleagues to do the same with each other. We implemented COVD-19 policies that included health and mental well-being provisions.  ***At the beginning of 2020, we were in a talent short market. What is at the top of your "people strategy" agenda for 2021?***  Take on the best, brightest and most motivated to deliver on our vision, values and strategy. Fortunately, our investors have faith in our model, which means we are able to take on people into the business.  **Our work has four layers to it, they are:**   1. To deliver people-centred, low carbon affordable homes for anyone in housing need. 2. We ensure that finance flows successfully into our model, whether that be grant, investment or borrowing. 3. Our processes deliver a unique and innovative development model that brings a land assembly and housing solution to the market, from private sales to community-led housing. 4. We have a compelling product that can get keys into the front doors of homes faster than any other model in the market.   It’s this values-led, intelligent, responsive and unique approach to housing, meeting a very real and pressing need that will be the reason people will want and choose to work at Agile.  ***What advice would you give to those entering the workforce today?***  Say yes to opportunity when it comes, because if you say no, it’s really hard to reverse that decision. There are many people like you chasing fewer jobs than we would hope for, perseverance is the only way to overcome the inevitable disappointments that will come your way. Keep trying. What goes around comes around, never pull up the ladder behind you and, if you really want to be the change you want to see, be an entrepreneur. Now more than ever, we need people to imagine that they can set up their own business, not just to create a job for themselves, but for others as well.  ***The Next EKTG Newsletter will include similar material. If you would like to suggest material please email Maggie Ellis at EKTG.eTechnology@gmail.com***  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  ***If you want to know more about us you can download a document that outlines the*** [*background and history of EKTG*](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/67744b2cb64423c16bf1d1207/files/European_Knowledge_Tree_Group.pdf)[*.*](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/67744b2cb64423c16bf1d1207/files/8f12ceb2-789f-4576-a89f-11c415a5a17d/European_Knowledge_Tree_Group.01.pdf)  ***Please Note: The EKTG for eTechnology is not responsible for content from third-party documents and web-sites.*** | | | |