

Tech's Hidden Side: Uncovering the Unexpected Consequences of Technologies for Consumers

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As technology becomes increasingly embedded in consumers' everyday lives, even well-intentioned innovations can lead to unintended outcomes for consumers (e.g., early AI models reinforcing racial biases). This session aims to understand why unintended consequences unfold and to offer valuable guidance for the responsible introduction of technology. The four papers included in this session unveil how novel technologies (i.e., bitcoin, autonomous products, robots, augmented reality) can foster illegal behavior, impair decision quality, and reinforce racial biases. The projects further identify effective interventions that prevent these consequences in the first place. Together, these four projects combine real-world data, experimental studies, and advanced methods (i.e., eye-tracking, web-scraping) to offer insights into the complexities surrounding technology implementation.

The first paper "*The Impact of Cannabis Legalization on Bitcoin Transactions in Dark Web Markets*" (Maximilian Gerrath, Hossein Jahanshahloo, Andrew Urquhart, Yakov Bart, Anatoli Colicev) investigates how recreational cannabis legalization affects dark web activity using 12 million Bitcoin transactions from 17 marketplaces. Conversely, legalization increases dark web transactions, especially in high-poverty states.

The second paper "*The Nicknaming Effect: How to Regain Control Over Autonomous Products*" (Jenny Zimmermann, Emanuel de Bellis, Reto Hofstetter, Stefano Puntoni) demonstrates that nicknaming (e.g., calling a robot vacuum "Robbie") increases consumers' perceived control over autonomous products, thereby enhancing product attitudes. The paper further examines different nicknaming strategies and types of nicknames.

The third paper "*Racialized Robots: Navigating the Tension Between Inclusivity Signaling and Biased Robot Acceptance*" (Andrea Weihrauch, Martina Cossu, Sadaf Mokarram Dorri, Szu-chi Huang) identifies that robots with Black facial features enhance brand inclusivity yet lower perceived warmth, competence, and, in turn, acceptance. Less anthropomorphic designs and repeated exposure reduce these negative effects.

The fourth paper "*I Have Seen Enough?! How Augmented Reality Affects Search and Decisions*" (Kim Uhlendorf-Leo, Sebastian Uhrich, Franziska Völckner, Kristin Diehl) reveals that using AR for product presentation increases search between different options but decreases search for attributes within an option, leading consumers choose options inferior on search attributes. A reminder in the AR interface attenuates these negative effects.