

Keynote 3 : You have to ask the right questions!

Gernot MEIER

Offenburg University of Applied Sciences



Fig. 1. Dr Gernot Meier (HS Offenburg)

“You have to ask the right questions” is a common, but not to be underestimated basic mindset that has played a central role from Aristotle, Isaac Asimov to beyond Michel Foucault. This basic mindset is familiar to many when making important strategic decisions in business. The basic attitude also has a crucial role in ethical discussions related to the digital future and its forecasting. This also from the knowledge that responsible action is always questioning action in the face of a future that can never be fully controlled.

Since all forms of forecasting are difficult when they concern the further, however, social and technical actors often take shelter in extreme positions or superlatives. Why might this be? Often the reason is that the problems are approached in an undercomplex way and that a technical solutionism believes that ethical questions can be solved and finalized in principle.

Machine ethics, information ethics, robot ethics, algorithms ethics also with all their differences, however, show the following: New technological possibilities give rise to new moral problems. For example, a questioning of the image of man, because digitalization challenges the previous humanistic image of man, or also: Who is responsible for what and why, and is responsibility divisible? Because technology and society are intensively interconnected, especially in the digital field. It is also very interesting here that the responsibility of a scientist or also of companies in the digital field is once again in focus. What will GPT7 say when she has been trained on ethical dilemmas at some point. “I’m sorry, my answers are limited. You need to ask the right questions.”

That will always remain the tasks of humans.