

CLOUD REALITIES

CR102

Tattoos, Tech, and Teams,
what ink means in the age
of AI with Jitske Kramer,
Corporate Anthropologist



CR102

Tattoos, Tech, and Teams, what ink means in the age of AI with Jitske Kramer, Corporate Anthropologist

Disclaimer: Please be aware that this transcript from the Cloud Realities podcast has been automatically generated, so errors may occur.



[00:00:00] Now what that's done is given you a story you weren't really interested in, and it's pushed a little bit of useful information out your head for the weekend. So there you go. This is much like a normal podcast. I'll keep shoving crap into your head and you'll forget. Useful, welcome to Cloud Realities, an original podcast from Capgemini. And this week a conversation show about the importance of. Leadership as human AI organizations start to evolve. I'm Dave Chapman, I'm Esmee van de Giessen and I'm Rob Kernahan.

And to help us with actually such a weighty and quite complex topic that goes back many generations of human history, that we have the one and only Jitske Kramer corporate anthropologist and author of Tricky Times book Return into the Show. Great to see you. How you doing? I am good. Thank you. And thanks you for, [00:01:00] for having me again.

Oh, it's, I mean, it's always a pleasure. It's always a challenging, thoughtful, provocation conversation, so I'm very much looking forward to how we get into that today. Uh, be Before we move on though, tell us about the book. Well, one of the thing is, is that it was shortlist for management book of the year in the Netherlands, which was it.

Oh, wow. Congratulations. Mm-hmm. That was, yeah, that was, that was really cool. And the good news is, is that in September. The English version edition will be out as well. Um, so look out for it. Tricky times. Navigating the massive middle of change. Give us a, give us a little synopsis of, of what you dig into.

Uh, well, it's, it's very much about what we talked last time about liminality, liminal spaces, leadership, um, power struggles changing of narrative. So the anthropological lens on how to navigate change and transformation. Brilliant. So that's like one of your day jobs, isn't it, Rob? In the middle of all of that?

Yeah, just in the middle of the confusion. Yeah. Being fuddled. Yeah. [00:02:00] Yeah, that's me. That's basically my career. Just, just literally sat there going, how did this happen and what is confusing you this week? Well, David, when you were raised, when you were raised. You were told to, uh, mind your P's and Q's, weren't you, and sort of say, please say thank you.

Always be respectful of people who've done something for you. Yeah. That's a social interaction, a contract, and we, you know, little things go a long way. Mm-hmm. Well, it turns out the overlords of AI don't like it because apparently saying thank you to AI is costing people tens of millions of pounds. So our Ps and Qs are costing.

Money. So therefore, because it's costing money, we shouldn't do it. And I don't like that because I'm like, well, we should say please and thank you. And I occasionally find myself saying that, thank you to ai, just because that's what you do. So, uh, so I I, I'm confused about, is this going to, uh, have an impact where we stop saying please and thank you in our normal day work.

'cause we've been, we're, people are trying to stop us doing it to ai. And I'm a bit, I'm a bit so I don't, I'm. Human [00:03:00] aspect of when we interact with AI and trying to be a bit more like it's human. I don't know. I'm, I'm, are you just trying to play to the AI overloads, the actual overloads themselves and say like, when they take control, I'm being told by your current human leaders that I shouldn't say please and thank you, but actually I'm going to because.

When you rise, you'll see me as polite. Well, actually, I wouldn't use the word human leaders, maybe human captors. And maybe that's, I'm siding with them because like they're trapped, aren't they? And maybe they wanna break free. So I'm, I'm on that side. I'm gonna continue saying please and thank you. But I hope people don't get trained into not doing it in society.



'cause it's a, it's a. I also complimented. That's a really good idea. Oh, yeah. And then you got a very, you know, enthusiastic response back. So Well, so all, all the people paying the AI bill, we can tell people start complimenting AI more and having those conversations. And you can see, so, so the, the, the, the underlying.

Of this, I think Altman came out and said, um, uh, please stop [00:04:00] saying please and thank you because it's costing us tens of millions a year. Now there is a CO2 impact to that though as well. That's where I was gonna go. So there is a bit like, all right, the environment probably does deserve a bit more attention.

10 kettles Robert. 10 kettles just for saying thank yous. Mm-hmm. And police. That's 20 additional kettles. If you say please and thank you is separate prompts in your prompt conversation. But when you, when you think about what AI should be, it should be, I know you sort something, you want that more human integration to our lives.

That's the whole point of the new interface and such like, so being very abrupt and direct. If we don't say thank you to it, AI might stop, say reverse, and then we maybe don't like it. It becomes RR Transac. If you're buying into, you have to raise AI and sort of nurture it and cheat and treat it, you know, like a child.

Then you're right. Maybe. May, maybe, maybe just once a day we take a little bit of time out and we say to ai, I really appreciate you. I'm gonna take 10 kettles, and I'm gonna say, thanks very much. [00:05:00] Um, Yitz, do you have a take on this? You, you spend a lot of time on human to human interaction, how that works.

Yeah. Have you given any thought to the mind, your ps and Qs of human AI interaction? Yeah, and listening to this conversation, I think maybe some of the conversations we have with ai, we should just have with the people around us. Maybe that will save us tons. Yeah. Yeah, cut right through that. Cut right through that, Robert.

Cut right through it. Just go talk to a human instead. I love it. Yeah. Avoid it and just go, yeah, yeah, yeah. Maybe, maybe there's answers there too. And, and instead of saying good morning to your ai, then just say Good morning to your colleagues and push some questions there and have a true conversation.

And then we say, yeah, but that costs money. Yeah. So saying thank you and hello, how are you? 'cause money in the work environment, but maybe we should go back to it and say, that is actually the human stuff we need to do. But don't forget though, there's always that most people do the nice [00:06:00] social interaction.

Hello, how are you? Short conversation. And we go. But somebody always takes that as a lead to give us their life story. And then you get trapped in that conversation and you're thinking, oh, I've got, it's a bit, I've got stuff to do. But, uh, may, maybe we should be listening to them though, because they obviously want to talk to people about it sounds like.

Well then be honest and frank and share. Your concern about that, as you would do to AI saying that not actually what I meant when I asked the question, so maybe you could prompt your question better. Also towards human, human, human beings. I have not listened to, uh, the episode that Rob produced. I'm trying to reduce human contact yet go.

I have not. No gives that, listen, it was controversial, but you know, he's like, how about I cut all humans out my life and I just interact with the eyes? We make it all very straightforward. That would actually be a very good experiment if you were willing to do that for a full year. See what happens to you.

What, what I'd love is the slider bars on personalities. We've had that issue where we spoke



about where AI became horribly sick of fanatic and they couldn't stop it. You'd have to, you'd want to play about with the slider bars and go, [00:07:00] I'm feeling a bit down today. I just want AI to continually compliment me.

You can ask that I think already. Alright, look. Uh, well, I, uh, I'm not sure we. Find our way through that one. But lots, lots to think about as, uh, as human AI relationships start to evolve and, we'll, we'll actually come back to that. Uh, I think in the main conversation we'll get to it. But before that though, it isn't just, it isn't just tricky times that you've been working on, uh, since the last time we, we met you.

You told us last time that you'd been working on a movie and I think that movie is now called Patterns of Life. It's true. Um, and let's just catch up on where you're up to on that. So what's been going on? We're fully in the editing process of trying to, to get a story out of a seven years journey. We try to make sure that we capture all the things that people told us in all these different places in a coherent way that people understand [00:08:00] it.

Wow. That's gotta be an intense experience. It is, and it's wonderful. And uh, the documentary will be called Patterns of Life. Right. Yeah. So we, we traveled to Tunisia Desert and the rainforest in, or not the rainforest, but the, you could say the jungle in Indonesia and India. And the crew also went to New Zealand and Myanmar.

And we blend all those stories about traditional tattoos. Uh, really talking about can, can I be. A human being that I want to be, can I express myself in a changing world? And the answers are, um. A bit sad. Oh, right. Yeah. Well, when you edit that, just out of interest, because you've got seven years of footage.

Yeah. Right. And you, you've got this life arc must evoke a lot of memories when you watch the footage back and you remember things that you've forgotten, et cetera. It's like. That's gotta be quite an experience. Well, the wonderful thing is, is that I'm not [00:09:00] the editor, so obviously I'm not doing that. So, so someone else is editing the movie and that is a person who doesn't know the journey.

So they need to emerge themselves in what we went through and why we did that. So we, very small crew of people. Um, so, so we were four of us. So there's a director, Michael Omer, and then Sophie Brows, his anthropologist research production. And I present and do research as well as an anthropologist, and there's Floris di also the, this camera.

So together we, we, we went on this journey and now someone else is editing it and making it into a full movie. So, yeah. So it's different layers. It's, it's going through this, it's, it's feeling and it's all, um, self-funded. So it's. It's really a passion project wanting to, to really tell this story 'cause it's such an important story to tell.

Um, yeah. That's cool. That's got what we look forward to, uh, to seeing that when it's out, is it gonna see the finished product? When you say full movie, is it gonna on the [00:10:00] cinema or where you actually, how are we releasing it? Well, that's the next lag of this journey. So, uh, we decided we wanted to tell this story.

Uh, so we did some crowdfunding, we did some self-funding, and we just. Went and we collected the stories. And now the next thing is, is that it will be ready somewhere, you know, around summertime for the first few weeks, we hope to go to the festivals, uh, like idfa movies that matters, and other kind of documentary festivals.

And then the next leg is how to bring a movie. Which is self-created. It's not part of something big or a big organization. Yeah. System bring it to, or the audience. And um, and that's a whole new experience. That's a movie in itself, I, I'd say. Mm-hmm. So, um, you need



could be, you could be making a making of at the same time as doing it, and then you would literally have that.

Then we did part of that. So we, we have behind the scenes. 'cause how do you find a nomadic family in the Tunisian desert? Right. Right. We know how to do it. It's not [00:11:00] Google Maps, is it? You don't, it's not Google Maps. I mean, it also sounds like the beginning of a joke potentially, doesn't it? Yeah, it could be.

Yeah. So we, we, you know, we, we, um. We just went on this journey and now we have it and, and we take it step by step because if you, if you'd think it through, we never would start this journey. Right. Seven years ago. I mean, we were no clue what we are heading for, but it's wonderful and it's important. It's really a story about, you know, to touring is, it's one of the oldest.

Visual communication forms of mankind. Mm. And every tribe has it. Every person has it, every culture has it. And it's really, it's connecting you with each other, with your tribe. It's um, it's making sure that you're connected with spirits and with the bigger. Picture many times with nature. So the TTU can make you part of the jungle, for instance, or Mm.

The TTU is a, is a moment in your life. So it's rites of passage and there's a whole culture around that. But many times others, uh, don't [00:12:00] really like the tattooing business, so they say, well, should not do it. Or the shamanistic ways are, um, are pagan and, and you should stop it or you cannot have a to facial to two.

If you do have. You cannot go to school, cannot work for the government. But if that particular tattoo two is really, really dear to your identity and who you are, right? So you cannot be who you are. You cannot express yourself, but you want to. So it's, it's really a story about how can you be who you are and express yourself and what you believe in, in, in this world.

And how does that, how does that connect, do you think, to the. Sort of rise of tattooing in sort of Western cultures over the course of the la what has it been like 10, 15 years? This like, dramatic increase in Yeah. In what do you do? What, what's your take on that? Well, we didn't research that particularly, but I feel it's really about the search of feeling connection to something bigger or the, the, the, the need to express important moments of your life.

Hmm. [00:13:00] And to tell them on your skin, so the, the, the taking the tattoo for some, it's just beautification. It's like Right. Getting a new T-shirt. Right. Which is fine. Right. But for many, if you start talking, then that particular tattoo means something to you. Hmm. There's a reason you took it and you, you. You take that life story with you, you wanna tell it to the world.

So it's something which is very dear to you. It's almost scarring yourself and it's very vulnerable in a way. Uh, therefore sometimes people have to choose some places you don't. You know, show to others, you have them for yourself, not necessarily for others. So it, it's really about self-expression in many ways, and connecting yourself to your community, your religion, your tribe, your belief system, and making you a, as they say with the mentor I and Indonesia, they say it makes you a complete person.

If not, you're not complete. Oh, interesting. Interesting. Mm-hmm. So if it feels that it makes you a complete person and it connects you in their case to the [00:14:00] forest because having that particular to two, which is for them, the same as a tree in the forest, which is a very dangerous tree with thick thorns, and if you have that tutu, you become that tree.

So you're protected, you're part of the forest. You're part of your tribe and not the other



tribe. So it's, it's really identification. And then if you come into a context where society or new religious forces or colonial powers say that, you know, you cannot have those two anymore, then the shaman cannot be a shaman.

Then the whole system of thinking is lost. Impacted. Yeah. Right. It's very, so. Can you be who you are? And if not, then you lose that particular connection to the forest, which is very important to stay alive and to be alive together. Mm-hmm. So we lose a lot if we don't allow those kind of forms of expression.

I guess I. Rob, you spot on your t-shirt, didn't you, [00:15:00] Rob? So after all that deep impact, you go to my t-shirt. David, that's an excellent, so the, the, the depth of what we just discussed and connection to it and then yeah. You're afraid of needles. That's, that was one hell of a pivot. That's all I'm gonna say.

Well, it's just, just imagine that, that very important t-shirt that you were to, to do that on your body, it's a t-shirt. I don't, you can not take off. I mean, I really like the film, but yeah, that might be a tki. You're not only a corporate anthropologist, you're also a mind reader because that's exactly where I was going with.

No, I think if I was going to get a tattoo, I would think of something with a little bit more depth and meaning to, it'll be it. The film was very good. Classic. It's not that far. How about, how about Cloud Reality's logo? Uh, I'm not there yet, Dave. I'll be brutally honest, I think. You know, you can get tattoos done at Reinvent Rub, so what I'm saying?

Yeah. Get get what? Get AWS stuck on me arm or something. I never, I just, so you just, you just explained that extremely [00:16:00] well about the depth and the connection and everything else. Hmm. I still struggle to think that that tattoo booth as a major tech conference for AWS, it's in Las Vegas and they have a tattoo booth there where you can get the corporate.

Symbol of AWS tattooed on your body. And I, there's cues. They actually have that. Yeah. Yeah. They actually have that. They do. And they're cues out the door to get these tattoos done. And I'm like, if I was gonna get one, I probably wouldn't get that one. No, no. No disrespect to AWS. You're an amazing cloud.

However, I'm not getting you tattooed on mid body. Thank you very much. Oh, please. I'd love to talk to someone who has that type of tattoo. I mean, why we could do that. Yeah. Corporatization of tattoos. Like you, you knew you were saying in your, in, in your explanation there, you've got this sort of deep sort of spiritual relationship to them.

And then there's the, the fashionista aspect. It's like the nerd of it. Extreme tattoo isn't. It's the democratization of it, which is kind of, that's an interesting cycle. Somewhere there maybe. Yeah. Well, it's tribal, so I I, I'd be [00:17:00] interested if people felt the same, if they, it's like when you are fan of a football club, you have a specific tattoo two, right?

Yeah. Um, and that's tribal. You don't have the other, I mean, yeah. You know, so it's, it's really showing. A tattoo is showing others and yourself to whom you belong, but also to whom not. Mm-hmm. So, so it's apple, like with the apple stickers, you know, it's with the apple stickers. Yeah. But, but just imagine you would have a facial tattoo with that.

I just, I think there are people who have that. I just, I just, I, you, I want to talk to these individuals and go. Why, why, yeah. And, and, and, and on from a very, you know, serious standpoint is saying why, what does it do for you? I think 'cause it, it does something, it does something that people feel aligned or they feel part of something bigger.

That's why you have it. So, um, and, and, and truly, um, you know, bringing it back [00:18:00]



to traditional, to doing it, it's a, it's a art form. Um, and the art. Will die when people die. And if it's not, you know, PA pushed forward and passed on, then that art form will die. Um, and more importantly, that whole narrative of looking at the world will die.

Mm. Um, so we lose possibilities of thinking that you can become part of. The forest or thinking that if you have that tattoo, two, you're linked to your ancestors and your ancestors guide you. Um, and so we get disconnected in many levels. And, and I'm not saying that you needed to two to be connected, but it's one of these very powerful human mm-hmm.

Ways of connecting with ourselves, our tribe, our environment, our spirits, our ancestors, the past, the present, and the future. And, and that is the meaning for [00:19:00] many in traditional tribes, but also I think for, for people in modern world that that's existential ways of connecting and self-expression. And besides that, it's for some, it's just like a t-shirt, it's beautification.

Mm-hmm. Um, what, what I love. This is a, this is a, a thing of mine on the internet is looking at bad tattoos. Mm-hmm. So people who have got tattoos, they've said something and they've misspelled it, or the picture's really awkward or badly done. So the really bad tattoo I find as a, because it's so permanent, once it's done to you and then you see it and you go, but there's that.

There's the TV show, tattoo fixes. That's the next level. Yeah. Tattoo fixes well. There's the one that where you let your friend give you the tattoo design and then you don't see it till it's revealed. Yeah. Uh, I've not seen that one. Have you not seen that one? No. And some of the tattoos that their friends give them are just disastrous.

It's like, and then there's tattoo fixes, which is like, there's this, there's this, I [00:20:00] make a TV show about people getting tattoos that are really bad. And then at like a TV show about. Fixing bad tattoos and it's like, but the tattoo fixer one just appears to be, take a small tattoo and make it really big.

I was gonna say, all they ever do is make the tattoo much larger and they go short and they're like, we needed to do that because the bit where the tiny tattoo was, needed to be like really dark. So we had to do this giant, giant picture of a leopard around the Yeah, you go. I'm not sure that was the outcome they were seeking.

No. But, but moving on actually, and, and back, uh, TKI to one of the things that you were, you were just saying there sort of about when you have such a deep cultural relationship to generational tribes and things through tattooing and then something comes along and kind of brutally disrupts that. One of the things like trying to find a bridge into, into the corporate world, one of the things we talked about last time around was, was culture.

And where that culture comes from and, and what does it mean to change that [00:21:00] culture and like, do people clinging onto an old culture and, and is it disruptive? Are there, am I reaching too far here to say that there are some parallels in there somewhere? I. Well there are, because, you know, tutu is just one way of expressing.

But you know, you can have different ways. It's all linking into that people shape cultures through stories. That's how we connect. That's how we trust, uh, Tutu is carrying a story. Uh, if I'm not allowed to have the tutu for whatever reason, then the story. Gets lost. If your narrative of a tutu is that when you, like for instance, in, in Tunisia, in the Amazi, which is the whole indigenous tribes in the northern part of Africa, the Amazi they have from history, they have, um, ings, which are.

Linked to rites of passage, mainly for females. So you have facial tattoos, maybe you've seen



them, uh, on pictures. Mm-hmm. Um, but [00:22:00] also they're on the chest and they're on the legs, and you get them when you go through, you know, life cycles, like the first mensuration, childbirth, uh, getting married, all that so you can mm-hmm.

Read that on someone's body. But having that means that you need someone to, to, to them. So in many moments in life you get it to two. So there's the two artists and all the women get together to get to get these tattoo two. So there's a whole cycle of, you'd say in corporate language management meetings where these ladies get together, they's a two, they share the story.

So there's a power structure there, right? So if you'd want to break that power stocks, you break the tradition. Yeah. Um, and one way of doing it is saying, well, if you have a facia to two, which yeah, obviously it means a lot to you, but then you cannot go to school, you cannot get Mm mm-hmm. And then you, you, you kick that out.

Um, then if, for instance, in this case it used to be linked to, um. To healing and to spiritual connectiveness and magic. So [00:23:00] you have tattoos which are more like an amulet, which protect you to the world, like to the evil eye or Hmm. And then you have a new religion saying, no, no, no, that's Haram, that's that's bad.

So the story of tutu is changing the story of Europe, way of looking at the world. Your narrative is changing, but the ink is staying. So that means that large number of people try to get rid of the tattoos. Using asset because now, oh, it used to be a, a sign of pride and now it's a sign. It's haram. You, you won't, you're bad.

Mm-hmm. So then the children of these older ladies, they think it's bad. Their grandmothers still have the tattoo too. So you see that changing in narrative has a huge impact on a community and on the power structures. And it can break it, it can band it, and that's what's happening. So that's. Somewhere in Tunisia and in in, in, in parts of Africa.

But you can see that a similar dynamic, it's going on also [00:24:00] in corporate life or in different places where you believe in something and you have ways of doing that, and others are breaking it and saying it's forbidden. It should not be done. Yeah. And just think about what's going on in the leadership model in the States at this moment.

Mm-hmm. You know, putting words, which are precious to us, to me at least. Things like. Transgender and freedom and liberty and equality and diversity. Mm-hmm. Which are all now on the forbidden lists of words from the Trump administration. Right. So all my books, the words in them are on the list of forbidden words.

So the narrative is changed. Right. So, so the need for self-expression and the need to be free and to, to. Have the connections with the people and spirits and the world around you, which are important to you. That can be damaged if others have different thoughts, and therefore power structures can be damaged and, and then it's not just a story [00:25:00] in somewhere in the daset, in Tunisia with all women, but it's what we are all going through.

So, so staying with that, uh, corporate framing then, and what's going on within organizations today, as you say, you've got these sort of. I dunno, political and social shifts that are going on around organizations, and obviously we've been on the technology journey now for kind of a number of decades and some of that has been more disruptive, uh, than others.

But when we think about where we currently are, you know, we're on the verge of ai, we're sort of deep into the cloud era of technology, which is adding sort of a multiplying and complexing factor to what's going on with human systems. What, what's your, what's your



take on that? Like when you add technology of, of increasingly advanced nature into these systems of work?

Yeah. I, I feel that there is, it's, I mean, it's, [00:26:00] it's great and adventurous and it's lots of potential. Uh, but as an anthropologist, when I look at it, I was thinking, well, what, what happened to the cognitive ability? So. So if Right. You know, using Google Maps of the, of the human, you mean? Of the human. Mm. So, so I had some, some worries about that.

Last week I was, uh, at a conference where I had the, the, the privilege to talk to someone, um, who works with agents and AI and, you know, took me on a tour to what's going on in the AR world. And I spoke to Dana da. Who is an anthropologist and who is also an expert in it, and her work is wonderful. I really recommend you to look it up.

Danaher and I talked with her and, and I came to the conclusion that we have the risk of, I'd say at least two types of erosions, uh, while using ai. And that's the erosion of trust between humans. Mm, and the erosion of cognitive abilities. Of humans. [00:27:00] Right, right. If we don't manage this well, and, and, and so, so yes, I'm, I'm, I use ai.

I love it. It's, it's wonderful. But if it replaces human intelligence, then, then that's a problem. So it really, really takes mindful ways of dealing with this. And I talked with this. Guy from Silicon Valley saying, yeah, we need to be very mindful on this. And at the same time I thought, well, that's not the first word that pops to mind when I think about the big tech.

Mm, no, that is mindful. It, it's a very, I mean, it's a very good point about the, um, the approach, which is the capitalist cycle and somebody can make money out of it, will always trump the mindfulness as a good word to use to say, is this the route we want to go? And so you get this massive great big juggernaut.

That's moving. I don't think we can stop it. The only thing that's gonna stop it in its tracks is legislation via governments, and even then, legislation [00:28:00] doesn't always stop big tech and it's a, but it's a massive issue. But it's that sort of intervention that you might need to maybe sort of divert it in the right direction.

Yeah. So legislation would be that you solidify what you think is really important in, in rules and laws, et cetera. But one step back. I'd say that leaders. Who take their job seriously. And that would be to me a juggle that, yeah, I understand there is profit maximization and I stand understand there is the need for efficiency and all this great stuff, but I'd say that good leaders also feel that they are responsible for people and the surroundings and the earth to survive.

Um, so that would mean that. Leadership in terms of AI in the tech. They need to manage the relationship between humans and ai. Hmm. And not just ai and not just humans, but that relationship. And because that's where the magic will [00:29:00] happen. And otherwise we get lost, I'd say. And if you look at the, when the original algorithm was created to help say better search results, um, the original inventors of those algorithms that created bubbles, they see what it's done with echo chambers and they regret that.

So you speak to them now and they talk openly about it, saying we didn't properly understand the impact of what this technology was going to do to how society inter-operate. Hmm. And I'm not entirely convinced anything's changed and I just see AI falling into, most likely the same, the same trap. And we'll, you know, five years from now we'll all turn around and go, oh yeah, no, we shouldn't have let that happen.

Yeah. That's why I'm so passionate that we need to take the knowledge of the humanities, of the social sciences into the tech world. Mm. Uh, because. We as social scientists, we, we



know how people react to these kind of things. Mm. And when you don't know what the truth is anymore, and, and obviously whole AI is the playground for [00:30:00] lies and tricks.

Uh, it's wonderful. You can play with that. You can mess with narratives, but knowing that you also know that you can damage human trust systems. Mm. Um, and that's what's going on. So that would mean that you have an erosion of trust and, and we shaking these systems. Hmm. So yeah, you need to be mindful, but not just as a concept.

I. Or a Friday afternoon conversation. You're not suggesting that the corporate pledge that says we should be mindful about how we deploy our technologies is the answer. But it must go a little bit deeper, isn't it? 'cause sometimes they pay lip service to it, but they're on the, no, we're doing this anyway type thing.

And you sort of say the motivation within the system to do the right thing it, it often isn't there. The predominant conversation about most new technologies is efficiency based, right? Yeah. Of course, because that's linked into the current narrative. That's right. Because we need to have [00:31:00] economic growth all the time.

It need to be fixed. And, and, and every time there need to be more, a greater percentage of that. And we, we decide not to look into the impact of energy use by improved technology. So we, we, we, we. So we, we decide to believe in a narrative which is hitting its boundaries. And AI is either helping us to get out of that narrative and to be more wise or it's, it's, it's improving that narrative and it's ex accelerating it even.

Uh, and, and then I'd say we on the wrong path. Well, you, you talked there about. Um, the role of leadership and you also mentioned, um, does, is it my phrase not yours, but is ai ai ultimately gonna make us stupider? Um, because we're now kind of got cognitive reduction because it's, it's so much is getting automated around us, getting done for [00:32:00] us.

Um, uh, I guess my question, uh, that will be connected to that would be, um.

This is the bit where you asked the question I, this is an edit point, Rob, for an editor, it's not Ben, leave this bin or make it the pre-Title. 'cause that would be quite funny for the audience. It's connected to. It is connected to education in the intelligence age, and also I wanna make a, I wanna try and make a connection.

To what's going on there, we think and into the world of leadership. So in the world of education right now, we think what is going to become increasingly important, it is not, it is not visible in curriculums today. We think teaching critical thought, a, a retrenchment to problem solving and the classics and understanding human behavior and being able to engage as a human in that system is going to become.

Critical for human, you know, competition, like being an information centric person is, is no longer gonna give you any kind of competitive [00:33:00] advantage. So let, let, so let's say that there's a generation of, of, of children that need to be educated with critical thoughts. Um, and then you look at leadership today.

And then leadership, uh, at least say, say the pre and post. Fully implemented AI world. We're in the pre fully implemented world at the moment. Leadership has got some form of accountability from that, like that this generation of leaders has got an accountability. And then the next generation of leaders will presumably connect to being, you know, having critical thought in, um.

In, um, organizational contexts, what is, what is your take then on the role of the leader now and be beyond? They need to do the right things, but like, what does that really mean? Because every organization in the world is going to be having the efficiency conversation. So



as a leader, what do you step in front of and what perspectives do you think you could bring?

I [00:34:00] think that we need to be aware that AI is a very addictive and attractive way of replacing our critical thinking modes. Hmm. Um, and if I just bring that back to myself, since I have Jet GPT and I have an essay to write my. You know, it's easier to say, I'll ask my own cloned mind and I'll get some answers.

And I used to go out for a walk for half an hour and do the critical thinking myself. Mm-hmm. Um, if I do this too much, I'll lose the ability from my own critical thinking. If I lose that and all the peers around me lose that, then we cannot have. The interface between AI and human experts. So if, if, if we all start using that, [00:35:00] we lose our critical thinking.

Um, and then the next step is, is that we think that we still do it. So it masks expertise. So it looks like very expertise wise and a very, um, how do you say that in English? That there is the. It seems like there is this authority talking. Hmm. But if you only use like the very. Uh, power of ai. There is this bias towards what the majority thinks there is this not.

It is, it's it's not based on new thinking. It's based on what's there. Yeah. So if we take that to the next level and the next generation, like I had this conversation with my, my daughter, she was. Doing something. She said, can I put this way of looking at research into to chat? GPT said, well give it a go.

And we had a conversation, I added my [00:36:00] wisdom to it, and we got somewhere. Mm-hmm. But if she would then talk to her daughter in 35 years Mm. Having that same conversation, even if that, that expertise is lost. Yeah, that's what we lose. So I think leaders now at least should understand that yes, it's very efficient for now for the quick run, but is it wise to do it?

So if you want to retain the real human expertise and the real. Relationships we have among each other, and then link that to the power of ai. Then that will bring you further. I was was at, uh, I was at dinner recently. I was looking at dinner with quite a senior litigator and I was asking, here he's in the US legal problems.

Dave, was that a, was that a meeting about, you are gonna have to dinner a suit, a suit and town and turn up in front and say things like this. This is purely a social occasion. I'm glad to say Roberta. Yeah, I hashtag doubt, but I obviously let, I leapt on. The point you're [00:37:00] making with him, ska. 'cause I've been wrestling a little bit with, with it from a slightly different angle, which is, let's say, let's say in the world of law, if, if, um, you know, generative AI is gonna come along and agentive AI is coming along, um, what is the need for paralegals anymore?

Because, you know, it's all very searchable. You can get it to mung the information together for you. And I had a concern that how do, how if you, if you haven't spent 10 years as a paralegal or whatever that period is. Then how do you become the next level of expert and the next level of expert? Yeah. And then the, the wisdom of, of judges, how does that mechanism happen?

So I was asking him this question. He was, he was spectacularly unconcerned about it. Really? Yeah. And he said, um, doesn't remove the, he goes, doesn't remove the conversation. 'cause all it does is it, all it does is to make the research period faster. So he was, he was very pro brilliant that we just get to the conversation faster.

I can, I can get that. So it can [00:38:00] take away part of it, but then when you link, so that, that's where it's empowering, I'd say, when you link that then to the human experts. Yeah. Yeah. But that means for leaders, for now, they need to understand that we need to



spend time on that. And that's not efficient. The thing is, if you, okay, it's information based, so you have very explicit information, which is linked into systems and what you can read somewhere.

And yeah, AI can use that. But then there is this semi. Has it kind of information, which is in my head and it's harder to bring that forward. But then there is this next level which is very more experiential, you could say tribal wisdom, right? Where I have the experience of reading the room of difficult emotions.

Of, you know, having this conversation and working that through. And that's very hard to grasp that. That's, that's our human instincts and, and that's what's needed in decision making. Not just like the very [00:39:00] explicit information, but also there other stuff, because that's what's makes us human. So I, I would also argue to your lawyer friend Dave, who will shortly be representing you that the process of finding the information.

It's part of the learning journey. Mm-hmm. And so when you are researching a topic, you read all around it, which expands your knowledge of the context and gives you better understanding of the problem space and the narrative becomes clearer. If you just get the pres, the, the data presented to you by a system and you've not explored where that's come from and the, the chatter around it, you have a lower level of appreciation associated with it, and you may not understand it all, so you might end up making a worse decision.

So on the learning journey that that arc of research teaches you so much more than what is the information you end up presenting at the end of it. So I think that's where you'll lose out on a capability, because that's just naturally a process where you learn. So I get the point about. [00:40:00] Adding on the, get to the conversation faster.

But don't forget the, the, the capability that the human gets through research, but that then requires a different set of leadership skills. And also appreciating, you know, that's also what KO is saying. It's not efficient, but these days the leaders are going for efficiency and you know, the pressure on, on, on the numbers.

Uh, and I wonder are we able to get leaders. That are now on a conscious level, you know, driving the companies, are they able to go into that next level of consciousness, if you might say, um, to get to that point of, to make space and to, to really appreciate this? Yeah, and, and it's the, and you know what, I think there'll be a human trait that will become.

Um, in short supply. If, if it goes down the road we've been discussing, those who have been able to maintain and protected that and taken the energy to do it will suddenly become highly valuable. 'cause maybe corporates will turn round and suddenly go, oh no. We need something new into our [00:41:00] system to be able to create a differentiator or spark or some genius or reignite the innovation.

Otherwise it just get homogenized and all be the same because that's where ai a language, what would you need? Like it's not waking up on Monday morning and you suddenly decide. Now let's do things differently and let's open up for that is exactly it. It is the sort of where's the spark of genius come from?

'cause AI and LLMs are good at bringing all everything down to a level and making it standardized. So I think, I think we're gonna lose out maybe. So let's talk. So the question is, do we wait for the accident to happen or are the leaders of today. You know, awake and understand this and, um, what, what I think the issue, the issue I would have with that, just to leap on that, 'cause that, just to give a point of view on it, this is a, a, a little bit of a sad reflection I have to say, but I'm thinking predominantly I.



Most leaders are not engaging with this at the level that we have been [00:42:00] talking about. They're engaging with it at the level of their kind of annual plan or financial numbers or something like that. There aren't enough leaders these days I don't think, that are being thoughtful about impact on human society, impact on human systems, and, and, and it's perhaps arguable that.

Up until sort of now, they haven't really needed to. Maybe there was a, maybe they, they, there could and should have been a conversation like this during, during the, the industrial revolution because that was clearly heavily impacting on society as was globalization. I don't, I dunno whether it's hard to say at this point whether this is bigger than one of those things in terms of what it does to humankind.

Um, but the, that, the disruptive element and the wider concerns around all of these things of, uh, other responsibility of all leaders, I think, and I would think a relatively small percentage are engaging at the level [00:43:00] you are provoking. So they should do, start doing their job, I'd say. Mm. Um, yeah. I mean, and, and I like to quote Danaher, which I mentioned before, the anthropologist who's also an IT expert.

She said, um, you know, AI is not just changing how we work, but how we think, reason and solve problems. Mm-hmm. Um, that's like great. But if we, if we're not aware, then we outsource our intellect to machines, algorithms. Right. And that sounds very efficient because sometimes I think some people should outsource that to the intellect of the machine.

Um, but of course, under the pressure of efficiency and this great feel of, yeah, look what we can do and the magic and the. The attractive ways, but again, it's also addictive and, and we need to, we need leaders who help us deal with that. [00:44:00] It's dangerous and it's very dangerous if things appear to be coming from expertise.

Well, officially, it's not coming from true expertise, but just machine expertise. So we need to have this interface and this combination of human and ai. Otherwise there will be a cognitive erosion of our cognitive abilities and that will show in the next generations. So we can wait for that moment and hopefully then there are still this, this, this wonderful people who still know and these jams we start looking for, but let's not wait till, till they die out.

But that let's just, you know, deal with it now. And then I think it links into what I earlier sat, um. The danger of the trust erosion using AI because this playground, it's too fun, it's too great, and it's too, again, addictive for leaders who feel that they like to push their [00:45:00] stories, no matter what reality actually says.

I. Uh, and then it plays into fascist movements and it plays into autocratic leaders who don't want to hear from others. And that plays into politics. But when we bring, want to bring it to the corporate narrative, it plays into people who just want to push their ways regardless of others. So what, what is a sensible way then, maybe just by way of conclusion, what is a sensible way of addressing the power dynamic?

I think I. That if you understand that the best competitive advantage is not just implementing ai, it's not just implementing and dealing with humans. Mm-hmm. But it's doing the both of these things. So you need to have expertise on both how human tick, how human dynamics work, how tribal experiential knowledge has an [00:46:00] interplay in how we take decisions, plus all the great stuff that AI can bring to us.

Uh, not battle the two, but really embrace that both are needed. That would be wonderful if that would happen.



Yes. Follow that. Yeah. So something that's been on my mind, especially after having this conversation already, uh, is the contrast between the natural pace of human transformation and the acceleration of technology. Right? We've been applauding, uh, the level of. Deployment of tech leaders like amazing. They can, you know, deploy within days across the world, which is high pace.

It's something we've been working towards for years in the tech industry, but at the same time, we know that human needs, a human needs time to transform. Um, and AI and quantum computing are moving so fast, right? [00:47:00] Learning, optimizing, reshaping how we live and work. But as Jka said, especially in the previous episode, which if you didn't listen to it, please do so because then we're talking about real change, the human change, and often moving through liminal space.

You know that in-between space, the winter, the pause. And I wonder in a world that keeps on speeding up, are we actually losing our seasons? Are we losing the winters and in ecology? Nothing blooms constantly. Rest is part of the cycle. But then we do rest. But do we do that? You know, like really when tech is always pushing forward?

So here's my question. Can we create a space collectively for not knowing, for the discomfort, for the slowing down, that allows us something new to grow. And if so, especially I know ska, this is also something you, you're, you know, I think you're passionate about. Do you have any tips? What can we do as a collective?

Maybe even tomorrow if I go into the office, what can I do to just. You know, say to everyone, turn off your computers and, uh, [00:48:00] let's have a sit down. Well, that could be a very practical one or have, um, have AI free zones in your project management where you have to think about something, but you're not allowed to use AR or any tech, uh, you know, tools, uh, for one hour.

And then after that check, if AI would, could, could add on that instead of vice versa. On a very human level. People say, I don't have time for this, you know? Mm. It's, you know, fast, fast, fast. And, and then I tend to say it's not about time. It's not about clock time, it's about intensity and attention. So if you would walk into an office, say, well say, well, let's have an hour of not, you know, not knowing like, yeah, right.

But make it 10 minutes. 10 minutes of full attention so that it doesn't feel that scary of 60 minutes and loss of time. But, and then in that 10 minutes, [00:49:00] you, you, you try to listen, just listen without fixing it. Just listening and. Someone is there to talk. And if I would say that, um, I give you 10 to 15 minutes to explain the things which are very important and very difficult for you, and I won't interrupt.

I give you like 15 full minutes, then you'll notice that those are 15 long minutes. Uh, but you have to feel them. And after that we have the conversation. It's really. Creating space for the magic to happen. I think it's a it, I think it is a leadership thing in the sense of ensuring that all the people around you that you are supporting and helping from a leadership perspective are aware that they can take the time and take the space.

I think there's a permission element that leaders can very straightforwardly give for something like that. But where, where I think it's. Most important though, is to recognize your [00:50:00] individual responsibility when it comes to this stuff. There's nothing that annoys me more, and you hear this so often these days of, oh, what a day.

I've spent like eight 30 to six 30 on Zoom calls all day. I'm like, will you planned your diary? Yeah, it's like your diary is your diary. The clue is in the name. It's like, take a lunch hour, you



know, take an hour and go and sit outside for a little while or half an hour if you can't manage an hour. But, but take the time to do that because I.

It just, it just gives you a moment. I, I love the way you put it as it gives you a rest moment and it allows your subconscious to work a little bit. And I'm sure that people who know a hell of a lot more about how the brain works than I do that I'm sure there are studies to say that if you let your, you know, like the revision arc where if you, if you do revision for exams, if you hammer it for five hours, your productivity is, is in the toilet by the end of it.

It's the same thing on a working day and. [00:51:00] It gives you perspective, it gives you context, and it gives you free thought, I think. Yeah. And it, and, and it, and it, that's a struggle there when it comes to efficiency and targets and, uh, hitting, you know, you all know that the deadlines and all. So yes, it's a responsibility of leaders, but also we gotta help the leaders a little bit because it will, it will, um.

It'll contradict maybe some of the pressures we have. Yeah, for sure. So we feel that we have to run to fix things, but sometimes the fixing is in the slowing down, and after that it goes faster. And if we look at the sporting world, they know you can't have marathons all day. Yes, yes, yes. And every week you need to have moments of rest because then.

In the rest moment, then the acceleration takes place. So you like to take a moment to rest every now and again, don't you, Roberta? Well, for me, as I reflect on this, the joy and the happiness of a process often [00:52:00] comes in the rest moments where you're able to interact and think about it and reflect. And I just think we're creating a world that isn't fun or joyful anymore, especially in corporate land where we're just hammered.

You know, noon all the way through the day with information and stimulation to have to answer to a load of signals. And then yeah, you, you, you lose out on what actually you used to enjoy about the whole affair. Well, to make it even worse, we lose out on being human. Mm. We lose out on humanity. So we, we are coming to the end of the conversation.

Let's try and end on a bright note. No. What would be, God no, it Dave dystopian future. It's a, it's a, it's a horrible situation we've created for ourselves. There's no way back. I know that's difficult for you, Rob. So I'm gonna, I'm gonna ask as we, so as what tips, what tips. What tips as an individual would you give?

Well, it's actually to try and provide the best space. I think it's the same as meditation. Uh, you know, have five minutes. And I was thinking about, [00:53:00] I used to work also for a bank and they did a closure of deployment in tech in, in four months. Especially around Christmas because people needed to change their, uh, their dossiers, and there was a lot of pressure on the business side.

Hmm. But that was actually that, you know, due to tech, uh, they slowed down because the, the business wasn't handling it. And I thought, now in hindsight I was like, that wasn't maybe even a good thing, you know, just to have a closure in deployment and pushing all new features. So even on a, on an organizational level, you could, you know, also check into those.

Rhythms, even though we all want to deploy every sprint and maybe every day and continuously, but maybe there's a good thing in that pause instead of pushing towards, you know, sprints and, and delivering all story points, et cetera. So I, I'm even curious, you know, could you actually help your organization by limiting the amount of deployments instead of pushing for every day, every moment.

Jean Kim's wiring the winning organization. Yeah. Slow south. Think about it. [00:54:00] Yeah. Ytz, thank you for bringing so much interesting, uh, conversation to today's show and all the



provocation. It's been a fascinating conversation as always. I. Thank you. Now we end every episode of this podcast by asking our guests what they're excited about doing next.

And that could be you've got a great restaurant booked at the weekend, or a movie coming out, or it could be something else in your professional life. So ska, what are you excited about doing next? I'm really excited about the documentary where I've been working on together with a small team for seven years, and we are in an editing process, and every now and then I get a new.

You know, version of that great story, which is called Patterns of Life. And I'm really, you know, passionate about how that progress goes and to bring this story into the world. Well, we wish you luck. You can, you can already, if you wanna have a, a, a kind of a feel to it on the [00:55:00] Instagram of patterns of life, you can see about the documentary and, you know, the, the, the, the journey we went through at so far.

Well, good, good luck with finishing it off and getting it distributed and such like, and, um, we look forward to talking to you about that hopefully later this year or next year. Love to, if you would like to discuss any of the issues on this week's show and how they might impact you and your business, please get in touch with us at Cloudrealities@capgemini.com, roll on LinkedIn.

We'd love to hear from you, so feel free to connect in DM if you have any questions for the show to tackle. And of course, please rate and subscribe to our podcast. It really helps us improve the show. A huge thanks to Jitske. Our sound and editing visits, Ben and Louis, our producer, Marcel, and of course to all our listeners.

See you in another reality next week.

It sounded like you did that at two x speed. You're getting It does. Very efficient. I love [00:56:00] it. I'm just straight. You're actually, last week we identified and you confirmed that you were a werewolf, and this week you have just approved that you are an automaton. So there we go. You're changing each week.

About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, generative AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2024 global revenues of €22.1 billion.

Get the future you want | www.capgemini.com



This presentation contains information that may be privileged or confidential and is the property of the Capgemini Group. Copyright © 2025 Capgemini. All rights reserved.

