

perpendicular angel design

organizing and simplifying, one illumination at a time

AN EVENT APART DC 2018: TECH HUMANISM: DATA, MEANING, AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE BY KATE O'NEILL

Kate O'Neill's talk on Tech Humanism is desperately needed in the current tech world. She frames both the problems we're facing and approaches to handling them in a way that we can both appreciate and use. Her talk ranges from the current negative impacts of the decisions we make designing stores to the positive impacts we could have designing artificial intelligences.

(pdf backup)



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First up this morning is Kate O'Neill on Tech Humanism. #AEADC

8:59 AM - Jul 31, 2018



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Business and user tension are perfectly aligned if you make them aligned - @kateo will give us the frameworks to have those conversations and be tech humanists ourselves #AEADC

9:02 AM - Jul 31, 2018



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The tech side: there's a crazy amount of momentum around using data to create innovative experiences and digital transformations. Companies want to make their companies more profitable through automation. [#AEADC](#)

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The human side: what one word epitomizes means to be human? (Mine's "clumsy.") Innovation, imagination, playfulness, empathy, love, compassion. How many of us thought of checking a box that said "I'm not a robot"? Nobody? [#AEADC](#)

9:05 AM - Jul 31, 2018



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Absurdity and meaning - we do a lot of absurd things in business that we don't really acknowledge as absurd... "digital transformation". Ridiculous work processes. Things we do because we always have.

Absurdity crowds out meaning.

Meaning crowds out absurdity. [#AEADC](#)

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The less you create meaning the more opportunities absurdity has to flow into the empty spaces. [#aeadc](#)

Humans crave meaning. We're driven by it, we're compelled by it, we seek it. It doesn't play out the way we think it should, but we crave meaning.

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The answer to the great question of life the universe and everything is 42. Douglas Adams was asked why he chose 42, he said it's funny.... since then a whole subculture has sprung up to explain why 42 might make sense. [#AEADC](#)

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42 is the ascii code for the *, which in programming is the wild card, which means it can mean anything.

We make meaning the way we always have, by attaching different significance to different events based on how much and how we value them. [#AEADC](#)

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Meaning is about what matters.

All the things we talked about are all things machines could arguably do. Empathy, creativity, checking a box....

But meaning will be something, for the time being, we get it and we need it. [#AEADC](#)

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How can we scale businesses meaningfully through strategic alignment and automation?

How can we create meaningful experiences and scale them through data and automation?

That's the tech humanist integrative view. [#AEADC](#)

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It's all about integration. You bring about new things that have never happened before. Integration happens at every level. It's far more important that we integrate roles and look at the human experience, not just the "customer" experience or the "user" experience [#AEADC](#)

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We have to have that whole-ism to recognize the baggage that people bring with them into any interaction and respect it and honor it. Otherwise we'll miss out on nuances that help us create loyalty and foster brand connections and such. [#AEADC](#)

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“Integrated Human Experience Design (I-HED) - to design meaningful and dimensional experiences, offline and online, not just users, awareness of people across all their contexts, intentional layer of interactions and transactions, the adaptive execution of strategic intent [#AEADC](#)”

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The integration of the physical layer and the digital layer is happening - the digital is layering on top of and shaping the physical even more.

The gig economy — we've created a weird dynamic where the relationship between employer and employee is very different [#AEADC](#)

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The relationship between employee and customer isn't as distinct as it used to be either. The gig economy is breaking apart the old relationship and reforming it in different ways. There's also "GLOCAL" where you can play into local markets and global markets all at once [#AEADC](#)

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West Elm sells local artists in local stores, and allows them to help grow to larger regional or national markets... and at the same time shows that people may want to buy from local artists [#AEADC](#)

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In all of these interactions, a ton of *our* data is involved. It all plays a role in how companies decide what to automate and what to scale. We have to remember that humanity is represented by that data. We need companies to use our data to make meaning [#AEADC](#)

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Always ask yourself “What can we be doing to be more relevant and contextual - to create a deeper bond, and respect the human in the process?” #AEADC

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But why should we care? We are all human. We’re talking about your data, your kid’s data, and all of us. Also, machines really are gaining momentum - we don’t know the full implication on human work, and how that will reshape our lives. We have to do it right.

#AEADC

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We have to tip the scale in our favor and make sure the human vs technology side still represents humans in the equation. Machines are what we encode of ourselves. We encode our values and biases into the algorithms, everything that we believe about the world #AEADC

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Why not encode the machines with the best of who we are, our most enlightened selves and egalitarian views, and still make them profitable. What are we encoding that's going to scale? They are going to scale, that's how they work. [#AEADC](#)

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The focus on meaning necessarily requires alignment in your strategy, which allows focus and prioritizing of resources and adding efficiencies, which keeps customers and gains customers. The work of creating more meaningful experiences leads to more profit. [#AEADC](#)

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Strategic purpose leads to purposeful strategy. That sounds like a tautology but it's not. Meaning, which takes shape in business as purpose, and figuring out what you're in business to do allows you build a strategy around it [#AEADC](#)

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Disney theme parks are all built around one theme: create magical experiences. It's incredibly hard to distill what you do around something that meaningful. Everyone from the janitor to the CEO knows "Solve this problem in whatever way creates the bes magical experiences" [#aeadc](#)

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Once there's organizational clarity, company leadership can decide what to invest in based on what will create magical exeperiences. Like investing in the Disney MyMagic Band. The tech investment reinforces the meaning [#AEADC](#)

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Design experiences aligned with strategic purpose so that purpose (which is the shape meaning takes in business) can scale.

[#AEADC](#)

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Scale: we're talking about removing hard limits so growth can flourish harmoniously. It's important because now when we think about how machines and automation and algorithms affect it, scale happens in an exponential way [#AEADC](#)

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Exponential acceleration and growth is what's happening on anything that is completely dependent on machine powered things. That's why humans need to be considered. You can use data and technology to scale, but not just for efficiency, also for meaning [#AEADC](#)

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You've probably heard "automate meaningless tasks" - ok, but how do we automate meaningful stuff? What has created sense and delight between healthcare provider and patient? How can we encapsulate that and add amplification and automation to that? [#AEADC](#)

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It's getting harder and harder to hold onto my humanity, but
wow is it easy to track my Amazon deliveries.

(This comic was
drawn for me
by the brilliant & hilarious
Rob Cunningham.)



KOinsights



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Cartoon: "It's getting harder and harder to hold on to my humanity but boy is it easy to track my Amazon deliveries" says one cyborg to another. [#AEADC](#)

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Kate O'Neill ✓

@kateo

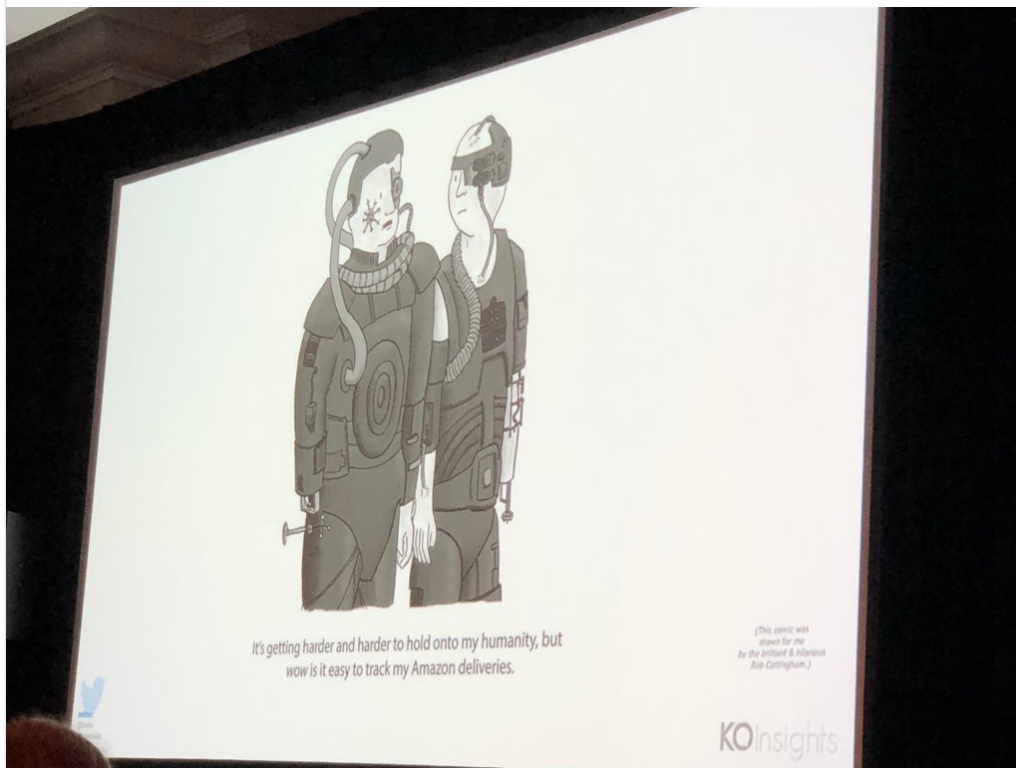


Oh, I want to make sure people see the credit for this one: this was drawn for me about [#techhumanism](#) by [@RobCottingham](#) — do be sure to check out his delightfully nerdy comic [@ntos](#) :)

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Cartoon: “It’s getting harder and harder to hold on to my humanity but boy is it easy to track my Amazon deliveries” says one cyborg to another.

#AEADC



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Amazon Go stores - scan in with your app, pick up your stuff, walk out - the store senses what you bought. It'll dramatically change the retail landscape. "Anything you take off the shelf is automatically added to your cart. Don't take things for other shoppers. " [#AEADC](#)

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Amazon Go's stores essentially don't let you help people. And this is Amazon, and they just bought Whole Foods. So "don't help each other in stores" can quickly become "don't help each other". we'd become conditioned not to help each other. Experience at scale **is** culture [#AEADC](#)

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Design means you are literally shaping culture. You have to be serious about the weighty considerations that go into it.

Create meaning at scale by designing experiences that will scale which amplify our humanity. [#AEADC](#)

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14



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Eric Meyer

@meyerweb



“Experience [design] at scale changes culture. Experience at scale IS culture.” —@kateo #aeadc

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Designing for Meaningful *Automated* Integrated Human Experiences. If you're not already designing a chatbot or other experiences, you *will*.

what happens when you design automated systems and you design them *for* meaningful experiences #AEADC

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“All models are false, but some are useful.”

- George E. P. Box #AEADC

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Elements of Integrated Human Experience Design:

Integration

Dimensionality (different contexts)

Metaphors and cognitive associations

Intentionality and purpose

Value and emotional load (baggage your users come in with)

Alignment

Adaptation and iteration [#AEADC](#)

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Another prototype example: Carnival Cruises launched a wearable as a digital concierge. Similar to Disney's wristband. How can use the data provided to automate showing increasingly relevant experiences for the users [#AEADC](#)

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On day 1 of a cruise you take part in a thing. Day 2 the wearable calls out the tailored and targeted recommendations for the itinerary. Powers the experience for the user and makes the experience more profitable. [#AEADC](#)

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Relevance is a form of respect. "I respect your time and interests. I'm paying attention."

Discretion is also a form of respect. Don't be creepy or tip the scale on how much data we have about someone. (We all have creepy levels of data on someone.) #AEADC

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Starbucks app - can let you order in advance while you're walking down the street, customize your drink, and choose the store that's 2 blocks further away so it's ready when you arrive. Then it can push offers based on your buying patterns and what time you come in.

#AEADC

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Just about everywhere the physical world and the digital world connect the connective layer is the data captured through human experiences.

Analytics are people. The needs, interests, motivations, desires, of real people doing business with you.#AEADC

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Digital transformation including digitization and automation and AI etc. is largely about *agility with data*

We all became digital as soon as we started doing most of our work in front of PCs. #AEADC

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Meaningful experiences are sensory.

One model of this is nature vs shape of experience.

Water: humans have to drink it. That's a continuous need. Sometimes it's out of a glass, sometimes it's out of a bottle, the packaging is relevant to the experience we create #aeadc

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As the shape of our surroundings change, the shape of our experience changes too. We have to think about and respect the shape of the experiences. Human experiences evolve but the shapes change more readily than the nature #AEADC

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How can we shape human experiences meaningfully?

Metaphor and metadata. There's an association of an idea, and the data that accompanies it. [#AEADC](#)

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Airbnb "Don't go there, live there" - if you lived like a local you'd have a different experience of a place. The list of places you should go in Paris in TripAdvisor is very different from where you should "live" on airbnb - sorting and weighting metadata is different

[#AEADC](#)

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Where humans add the most value is by being human. If you start to get to where you have to design a chatbot or automation, think about the movie phone Kramer model. He got a new phone number and it was 1 digit off from the movie phone. [#aeadc](#)

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You can use humans in an agile way to pose as machines to find out what people are going to ask and find out what people need. Use human interaction pretending to be automated to gather patterns. Start with if-then statements, find the nuance behind the if-then statements [#AEADC](#)

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You want to automate meaningful things, not arbitrary things. If patterns don't build up to something you want to encode with the culture set, you need to be careful about it. Subtle nuances are not AI's strong suit yet [#AEADC](#)

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Humans are generally good at nuance. Meaningful experiences, intelligently automated, aligned with the company's meaningful experience. Create more meaningful human experiences! Be a vocal advocate for the tech humanist need [#aeadc](#)

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