

Evgeny Morozov on global fight for AI supremacy

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At Economics Festival 2018, the Belarusian sociologist, journalist and writer, expert in media and technology, spoke of the ongoing global war between American and Chinese companies for the global hegemony of artificial intelligence, and appealed to EU politics

Introduced by Simone Pieranni, journalist of “il manifesto” and writer, Morozov in Trento described how companies extract value from population data. He explained how the information provided in using technologies becomes a source of business: companies sell services that have been realized mainly thanks to the widespread contribution of users. An example? The facial recognition built, step by step, from the data provided by the individuals’ feedbacks on a large amount of pictures. He presented the balance between the two superpowers in the field, China and the USA, for the hegemony in artificial intelligence. With America trying to limit Chinese growth and with China going on with heavy investments, the acquisitions of robotics firms in Europe and the distribution of an AI manual in schools.

And how does Europe behave? For Morozov in Europe we have to decide whether to opt for the services offered by Chinese or American companies, whether to buy from American producers or Chinese interlocutors who then sell our data to their government. Finally he turned to European politics claiming the urgency to manage this challenge. According to Morozov, to stem the concentration typical of digital capitalism. an alternative data collection and control system is possible: not at central government level, but at municipal level, together with citizenship.

We took the opportunity to ask him some questions:

- **What’s the geopolitical situation regarding AI?**
- **How could we avoid a dystopic ending?**
- **What’s the difference between Google Smart Cities and other models?**

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