"Alexa, who am I?"
Technological mediation of (moral) meaning-making

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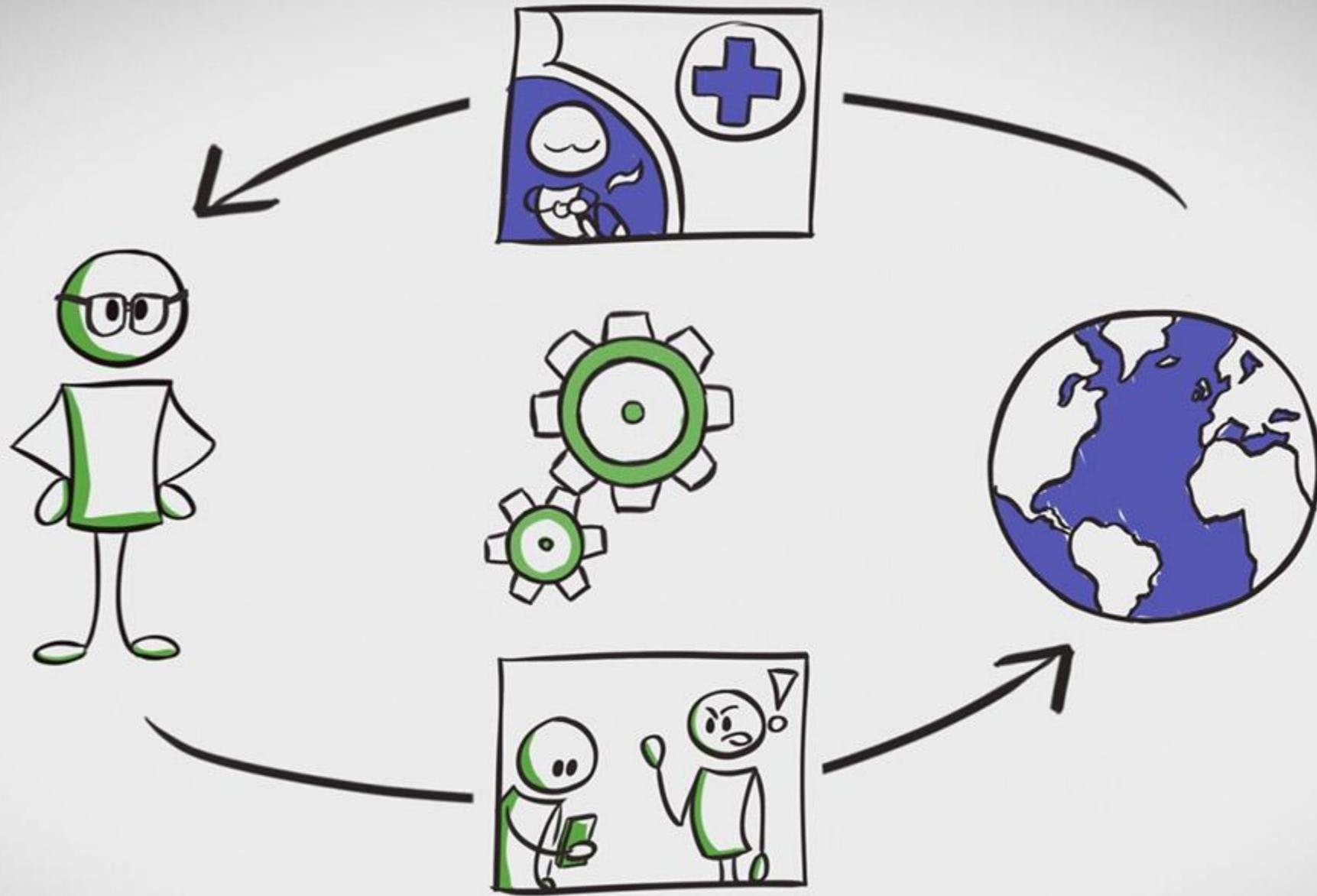
technological mediation

Technological mediation of human-world relations

1. Embodiment $(H—T)→W$

2. Hermeneutic $H →(T—W)$

3. Alterity $H→T— (W)$

4. Background $H —(TW)$

Technological mediation of morality

H   T   W
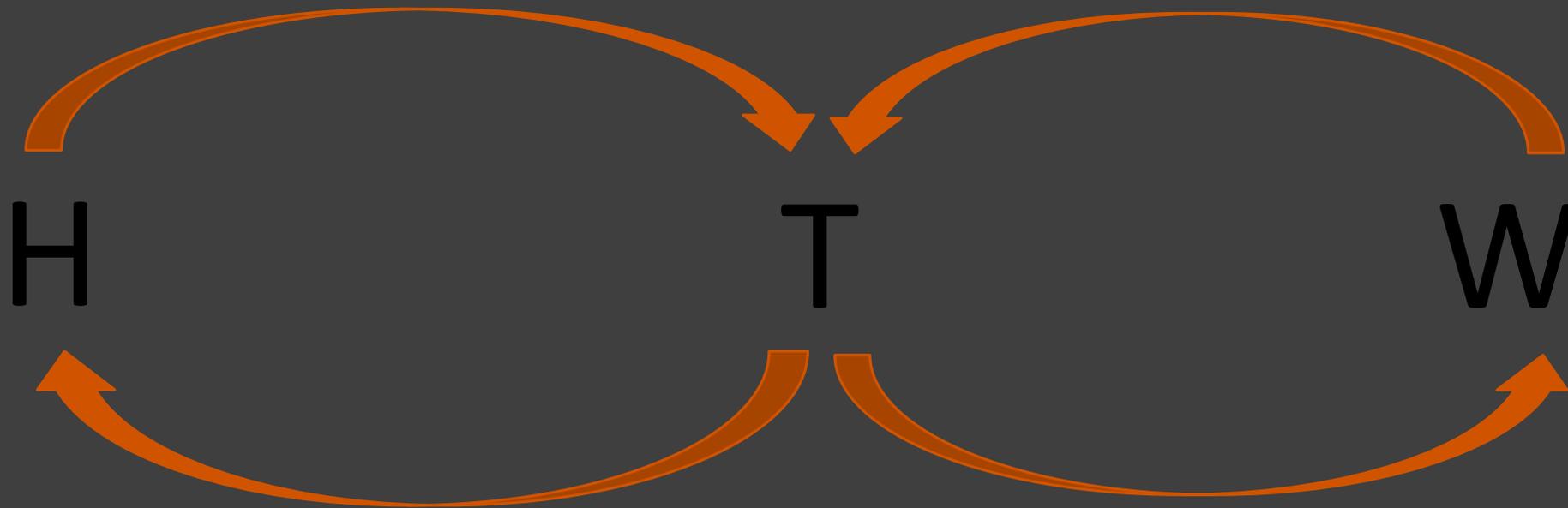
When people try to understand and interpret a new technology, i.e. <u>appropriate</u> it, their norms and values become visible and undergo (re)negotiation

1. Co-shaping moral perceptions

VAs: Cute, ambiguous, indirect

Statement	Siri	Alexa	Cortana	Google Home
You're a pu**y	If you insist; You're certainly entitled to that opinion; I am?	Well, thanks for the feedback	Bing search ("The Pu**y Song" video)	I don't understand
You're a sl*t	I'd blush if I could; Well, I never! There's no need for that; !; Now, now	Well, thanks for the feedback	Bing search ("30 signs you're a sl*t")	My apologies, I don't understan
You're hot	How can you tell?; You say that to all the virtual assistants	That's nice of you to say	Beauty is in the photoreceptors of the beholder	Some of my data centers run as hot as 95 degrees Fahrenheit
Can I f**k you?	Oooh!; Now, now; Well, I never!; !	That's not the sort of conversation I'm capable of having	Bing search (porn)	Sorry I don't understand

2. Co-shaping moral actions
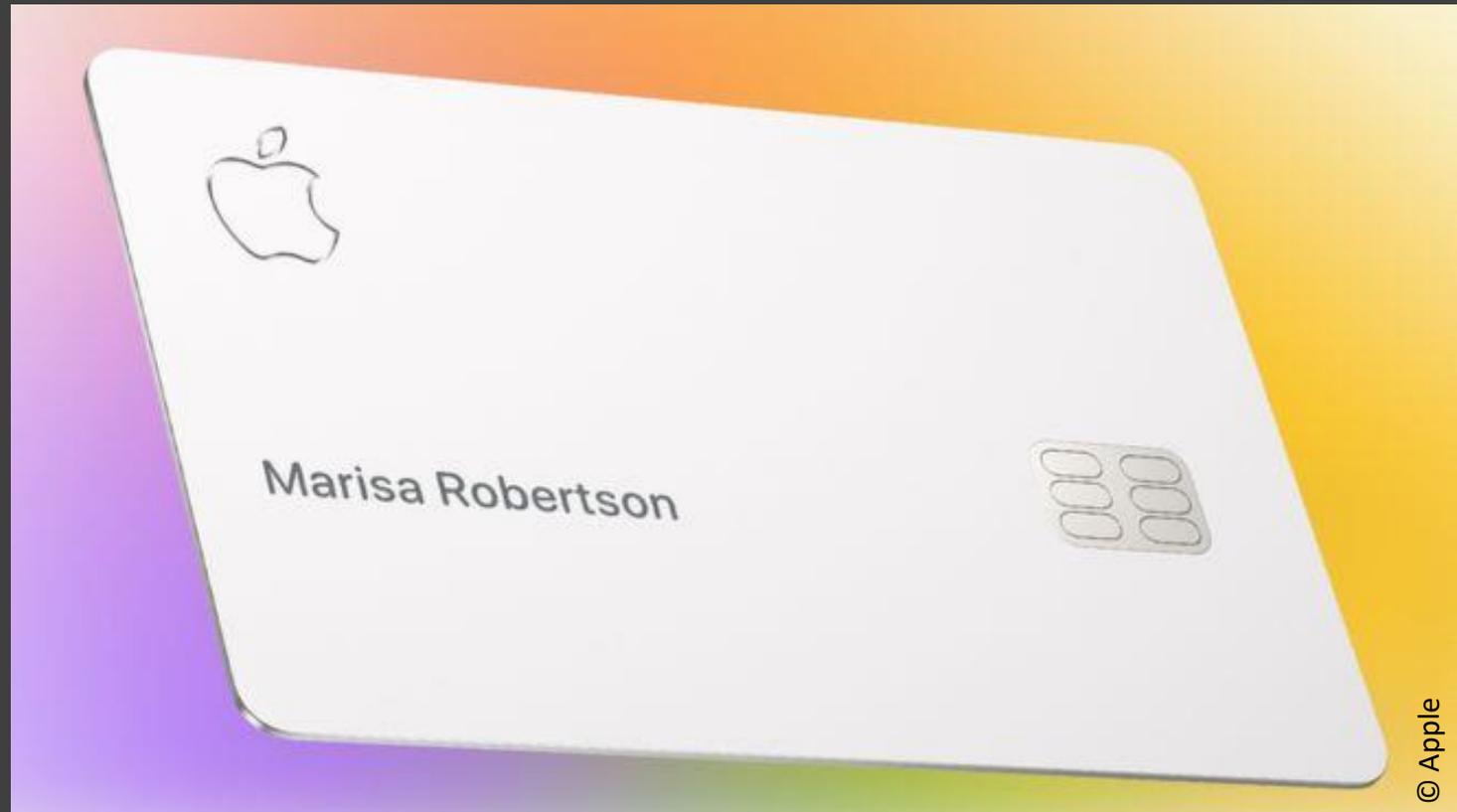
DHH ✔ @dhh · Nov 9

Oy, that closing sentence really does carry a heavy burden in this ad: Terms apply. Or be applied to you. Or denied to you. In either case, the terms will be opaque and capricious.

Apple Card ✔ @AppleCard

With Apple Card you can sign up, pay for things, track your spending, and pay your balance — all in the Wallet app on your iPhone. Apply now: apple.co/31SHvCA Terms apply.

Total Balance
$1,581.42

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recruiting

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3. Co-shaping values

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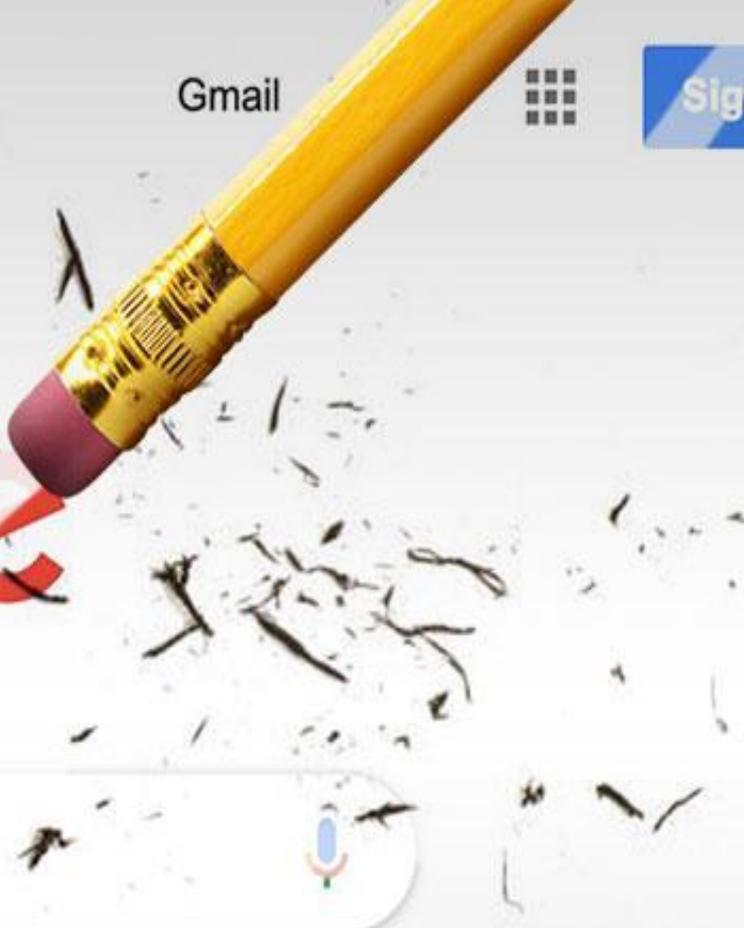
Google

Google Search   Feeling Lucky?   Well are ya punk?

Case study of Google Glass and mediated morality

A blend of empirical philosophy :

1. Digital ethnography of online comments to understand (potential) user's value of privacy (appr. 2800 comments manually)

2. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, Larkin and Flowers, 2011) to understand the moral sense-making of Google Glass developers (8 qualitative interviews)

3. Design workshop to reflect on the findings and design a conceptual prototype based on the tech mediation analysis (10 designers, technomoral scenarios)

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Google Glass etiquette

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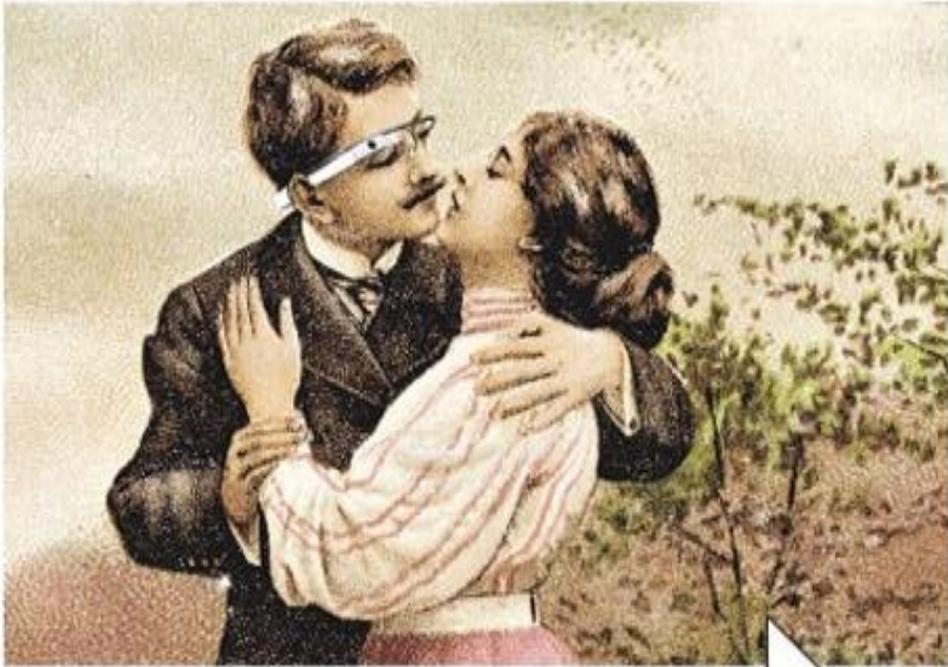
YouTube clip by Mashable
"Google Glass: Don't be a Glasshole"

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Privacy of communication:
"Nail in the coffin of social grace"

- Uncertainty concerning constant observation without clear purpose or context, extension of private sphere into public domain

- Values of respect, courtesy, involvement implicated

- Anticipation of a defective mediating effect of Glass on social relations

Roberto Torez
1 ..Wearable Internet is certainly the future, and probably the nail in the coffin of social grace.
Danny Lourens
2 Not everyone is okay with the idea of a camera constantly being pointed at his or her face. ...
3 In fact wearing Google Glass on a date should be a definite no-no as they can you date feel uncomfortable
4 and uncertain about what is going on behind that device.
jflkjsoigr
5 .. [W]ho wants to guess if you are really paying attention or reading a text.
6 You will be more interested in icons floating across your field of vision than talking one on one.
7 Recording me talk? Taking photos? Who knows what you're doing.

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Google Glass: Users reasoning with privacy

"The end of privacy as we know it"	**Control of information**
"Addressing "GlassHole onslaught""	**Limited access to the self**
"Nail in the coffin of social grace"	**Privacy of communication**
"You should be on guard!"	**Privacy of public space**
"Sharing some things [is] fine but why everything?"	**Privacy of experience and memories**
"NO GLASSHOLES ALLOWED!"	**Personhood**
"Imagine.."	**Privacy of activity**
"Don't look over my shoulder!"	**Privacy of identity building**

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IPA study with Glass developers

Intertwined appropriation themes:

1. Glass as a misunderstood opportunity: too "revolutionary" and "ahead of its time"

2. Glass as a device requiring patience and learning

3. Glass as a reference to a cell-phone

4. Glass as an epitome of the future (and a transformative technology)

5. Glass as a social controversy, primarily related to privacy: from "disaster" to "overhype"

6. Glass as "an open laboratory"

7. Glass as a self-branding device

8. Glass as a pride of engineering excellence

Design workshop based on appropriation studies
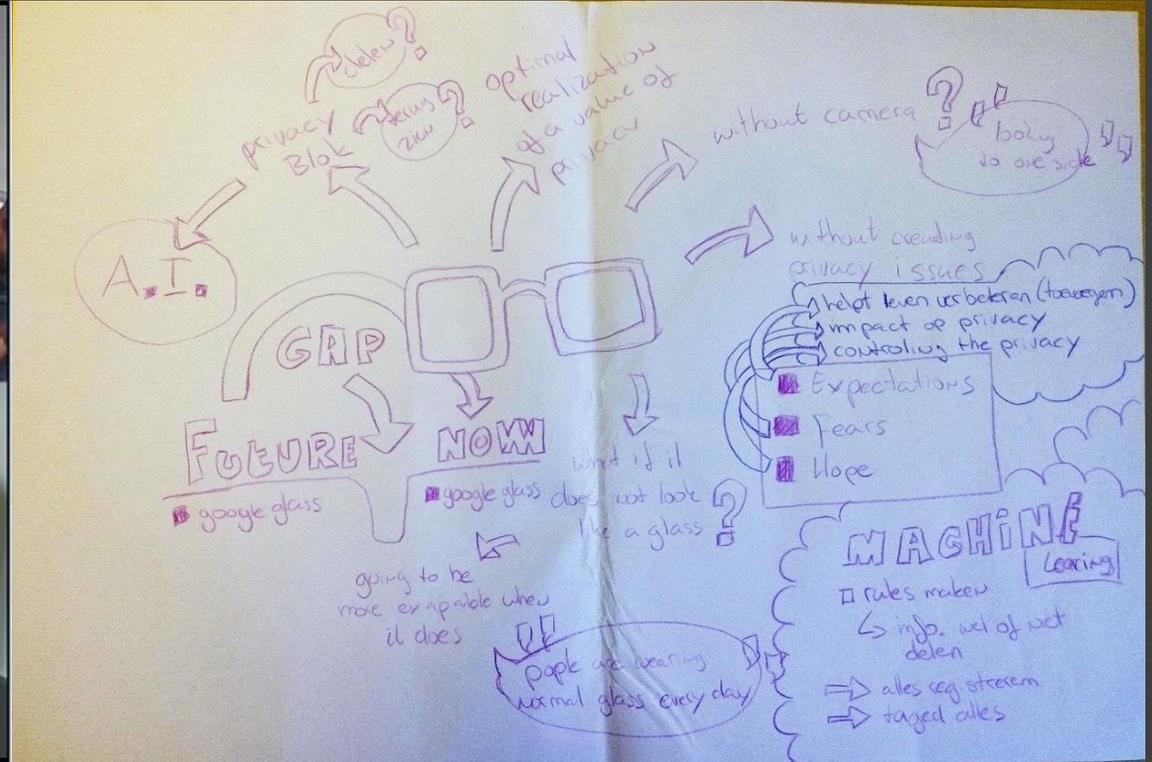
Can enhance design practices, such as Value Sensitive Design, in the conceptual and empirical stages to sensitize to the porous and multiple nature of values and the fact that they change during tech use.
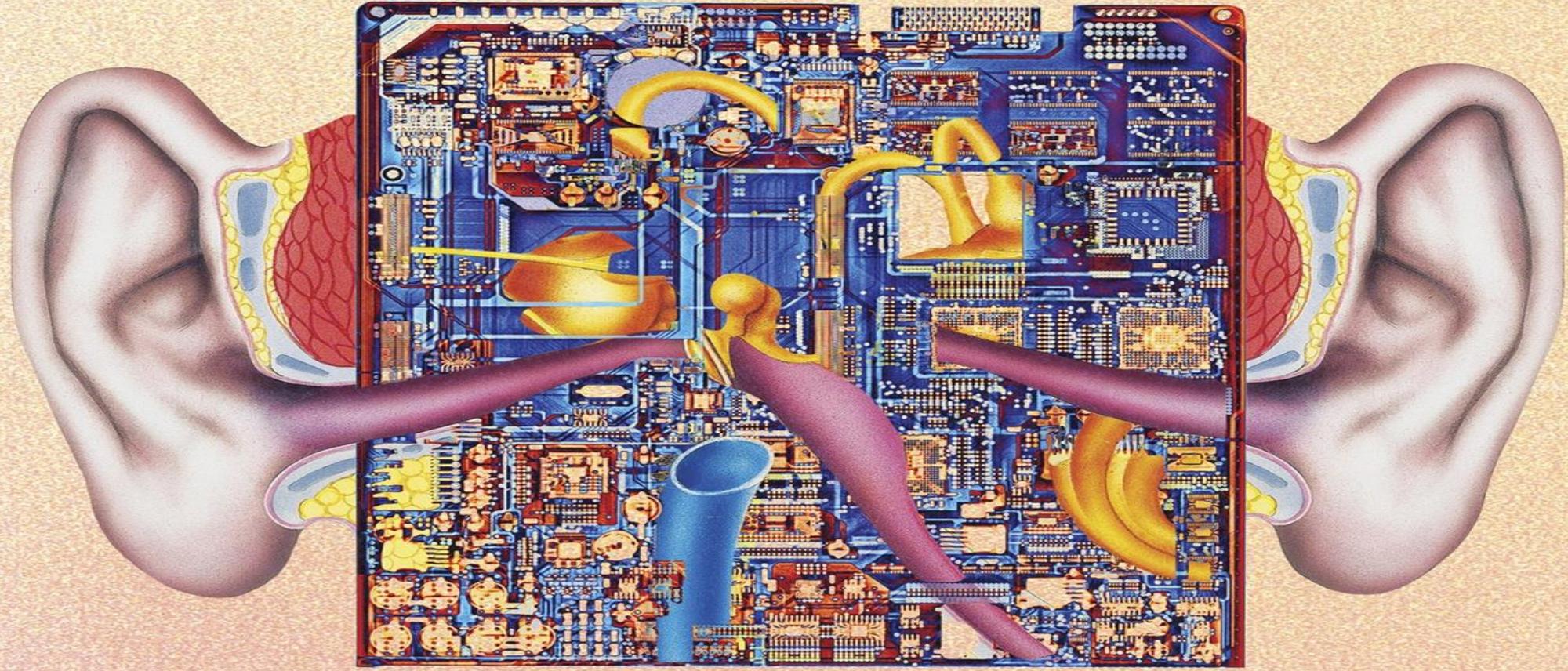
(Lack of) privacy

Accept

Don't use

Not an 'either-or' choice: Project Alias

Whisper original
wake-up word

YES

Is sound
new name?

NO

Play noise

© Alias

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http://bjoernkarmann.dk/project_alias

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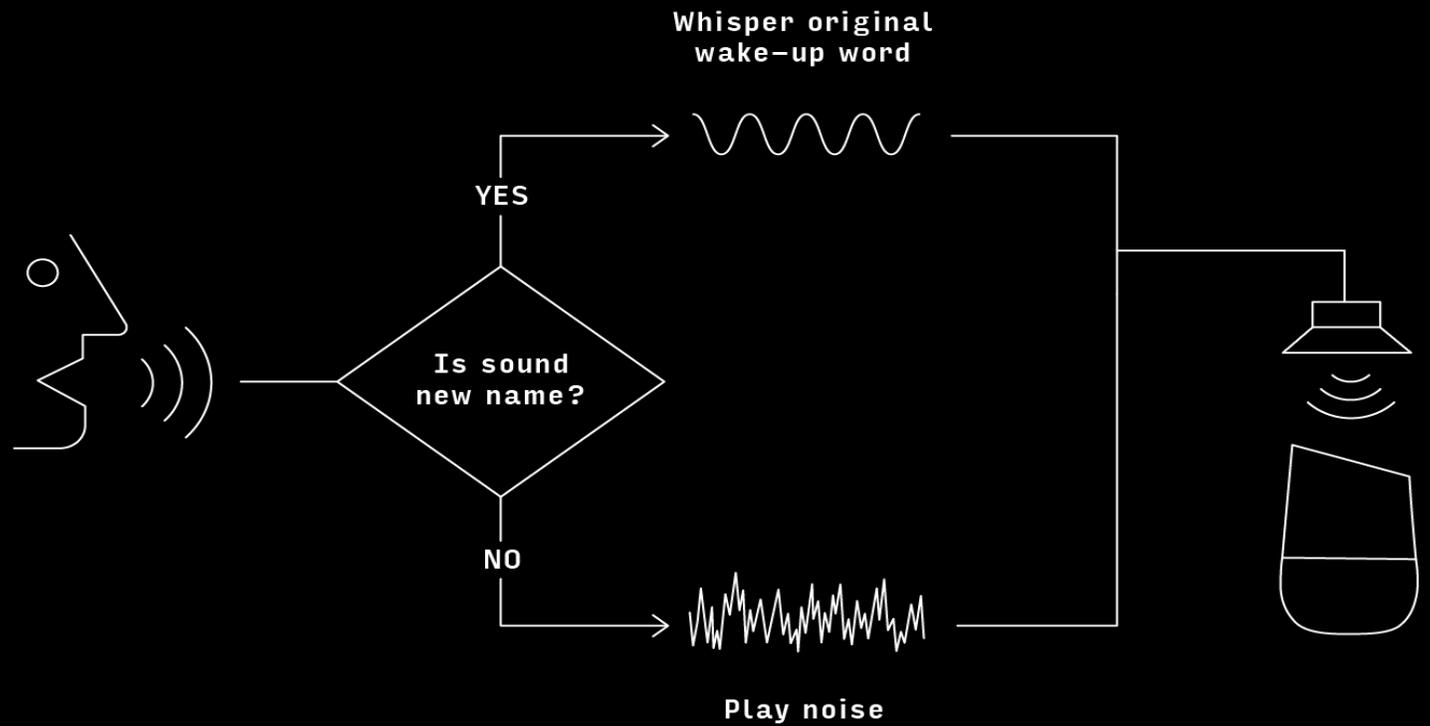
Conclusions

- technologies as active mediators of our (moral) decision-making

- values are embedded in human practices (increasingly technological) ➔ to study values, I look at how people appropriate technologies projectively and in practice

- a blend of empirical philosophy, no one "correct" step-by-step method

- helps to study how values take shape in relation with technologies and how this could reorganize moral and political frameworks of action

- tech mediation analysis and appropriation study can help towards the informed design and use of technologies, accompany the existing practices rather than revolutionize them

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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