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## **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

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The paper starts with a discussion of today's trend of responsibility, its origin, and reasonability. Further, the advantages of social responsibility are presented. Then, the advantages and risks of current technological transformations are highlighted. Provided explanation of risks of technological transformation and their nature. Different visions on addressing such risks and the respective reactions of humanity are described. Inter alia, approaches to corporate digital responsibility and trends in regulation are discussed. Presented the main trends for regulation of digital responsibility. As a result, the conclusion of the insufficiency of reactive management and the necessity of proactive actions for preventing risks to address all significant risks of technological transformation is made. Provided expectations about the growing role of institutional funds in such preventive management.

**Keywords:** Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR), CSR, Technological transformations, Social responsibility, Management.

### **Introduction**

It seems that in the post-war period, Ukrainian society will undergo a reassessment of the concept of «responsibility,» particularly when considering the role of business responsibility. The purpose of this work is to analyze the justification of the social responsibility of business in the context of technological transformation.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary [16], «responsibility» means:

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(1) The state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone; (2) The state or fact of being accountable or to blame for something; (3) A moral obligation to behave correctly towards or in respect of; (4) The opportunity or ability to act independently and make decisions without authorization.

This interpretation of «responsibility» is the result of etymological evolution influenced by studies of various aspects of this multifaceted phenomenon over centuries.

Although the understanding of responsibility probably appeared with the advent of humans, related issues were discussed by ancient Chinese and Greek philosophers. References to the application of the concept of «responsibility» in modern European languages appeared towards the end of the 18th century, predominantly in a political context [23]. Research by Carroll, Freeman, Garriga, Melé, and others has shown that corporate social responsibility is important for society and, as the author intends to further demonstrate, is quite dynamic and ambiguous.

### **The Trend of Responsibility**

The rapid development of globalization that began in the second half of the 20th century has made the issue of collective responsibility very relevant. This issue has been explored by various philosophers, including O.G. Spirkin, Joel Feinberg, Bernard Williams, David Lewis, and others.

The trend towards ethics and social responsibility encourages different types of activities to find important levers of influence on their stakeholders. The concept of responsibility is even traced in areas that are not usually associated with morality.

At the same time, such a trend leads to negative attention being paid to socially irresponsible behavior, for example: the Theranos and Dieselgate scandals, unethical practices in the banking sector, global companies or their suppliers (Nike, Nestlé), environmental disasters caused by oil companies, scandals with companies aiming to gain trust and provide independent and unbiased opinions (audit companies, rating agencies, FIFA), unethical behavior of officials, and so on.

The existing definition of social responsibility in ISO 26000 [15], as the responsibility of an organization regarding the impact of its decisions and actions on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior, is quite "vague" and depends on many factors such as environment, culture, social status, occupation, etc. [22].

This allows to make the conclusion that society's response is usually a reactive reaction to such scandals, and that understanding of social responsibility is quite dynamic and in most cases cannot anticipate new "unknown" problems.

### **Rational Social Responsibility**

A responsible approach to principles can lead to significant benefits being missed (which would have been obtained through other behavior), as well as losses from adhering to such principles.

At first glance, it may seem that social responsibility negatively affects financial performance and, at best, leads to a redistribution of wealth in society. However, research results [7, 8, 14, 17, 21, 22] indicate that “playing a game with a non-zero result” with social responsibility is beneficial, and moreover, the absence of social responsibility leads to risks to sustainable development. Therefore, investments related to social responsibility and adherence to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principals may be treated as source for competitive advantage, investment attractiveness [7, 8, 14, 17, 21, 22], innovative and sustainable development.

The importance of sustainable development is emphasized by researchers [13, 26], as well as by countries, international and intergovernmental organizations.

### **Responsibility in the Era of Technology**

A relatively new issue in the perception of social responsibility is the responsibility of technology and technology companies. The rapid development of technology is already bearing fruit and paints a bright future for the «Machine-to-Machine» (M2M) economy, the «Internet of Things» (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) [4, 11, 12, 18, 19], Blockchain, and other technologies. At the same time, the author’s analysis of the corporate websites of the largest technology companies (Dell, Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Meta, OpenAI, Samsung) shows that they are all concerned about the well-being of external users, thus also following modern approaches to corporate social and digital responsibility. However, considering that users have no real rights to change something in a license agreement, we should only hope that the companies fully control technologies and that their missions will be fulfilled, one can hope for a sustainable and «beautiful» future...

...But, rapid, wild development of something usually leads to additional challenges, and even companies with strong social and digital responsible practices, in case of potential conflicts in a grey zone, most probably, would choose a license-to-operate approach [17] that may be in compliance with existing rules but biased by commercialization rather than society interest, therefore may be “technically” efficient but not effective.

Moreover, according to some authors, current situation is critical for humanity. For example, Shoshana Zuboff and many others argue that this leads to a significant asymmetry in knowledge and power between technology companies and the rest of society [11, 20], and also creates the following challenges: automation of work and skills by technologies, destruction of entire industries [6, 11], risks of degradation, diseases, and increasing social inequality [11], «reduction» of human rights [11], the possibility of using Overton windows

to manipulate and even change the paradigm of society [11]. Concerns about the development of technologies and their superhuman capabilities are expressed, for example, by Geoffrey Hinton, who was formerly Vice President of Google and is sometimes referred to as the godfather of AI [27], and SEC Chairman Gary Gensler directly speaks about the almost inevitable crisis caused by AI [5].

The fact that risks are taken seriously is evidenced by the recent Bletchley declaration of 28 countries (including the USA, China, the UK, the EU countries, India, and Australia) regarding cooperation in response to the potentially catastrophic risk to humanity from AI [25], as well as the existence of software products that hinder artificial intelligence [24].

Researchers believe that adherence to codes of conduct, such as Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR), will increase trust in technological business and provide competitive advantages [9, 11]. CDR is a relatively new definition and there is no paradigm for it nowadays, and two main visions co-exist: (1) CDR as an extension of all levels of Carroll's CSR pyramid and includes all pillars of ESG framework [11], (2) CDR as separate pronouncements and obligations that organization follows using technology [9].

CDR, as a partly [17] voluntary obligation of organizations, partially mitigates risks of technological transformation of society, but itself seems insufficient. It should be noted that active work is already underway to create Codes of Ethics dedicated to artificial intelligence (AI) [26], and rules for technologies are being created, such as principles for trustworthy AI in USA and EU [2, 3, 10]. Moreover, AI is among the main topics on governmental sites [1], and a strategy for the development of technology regulation is already drafted [1, 2].

Understanding the pros of new technologies we agree with Geoffrey Hinton [27] in his vision that development is impossible to stop, therefore assuming that humanity will find its way after one more scientific revolution, it is proposed to focus on the possibilities of managing business processes in the era of technology and possible aspects of social responsibility.

In particular, it is proposed to consider the question of how much one can rely on technologies in decision-making and what are the limits of human control over something with the help of technology. Perhaps the absence of a sufficient number of managers who work with technology and understand it will be one of the main limiting factors in the development of technology. Thus, the secrecy and complexity of the software code, as well as the possibility of unstable operation of new technologies, create risks of manageability and personal responsibility for managers for what they do not fully understand.

The author's experiments with the use of the GPT3.5/4 chat allow us to make a preliminary hypothesis that, nowadays, conclusions and decisions made with the support of technology should not be fully relied on, because they necessarily require additional human participation (Human Intelligence). We

assume that, in most cases, managers perceive the latest technologies as a black box that produces results based on the input information, but the manager cannot have full confidence in such information. Thus, the adaptation of technologies will depend on the risk appetite of management and business.

The questions remain open on how to manage processes, as well as perceive the responsibility of technology companies and machines, if machines can make decisions independently. Leaving the issue of human interaction with intelligent machines to fantasists and special organizations, such as Department of State, ISO/IEC JTC 1 technical committee of ISO, OpenAI, we assume that with the development of technology, management issues will become more complicated, and future managers may ask the following questions:

- How much can responsibility be placed on a machine for its actions?
- What does a machine's duties to humans and society include?
- According to what criteria should a machine make decisions from a human point of view?
- Is there a responsibility of the machine to other machines (especially in the M2M economy)?
- What will happen if the understanding of the machine's responsibility does not coincide with the human one?
- What decision will the machine make in case of a dilemma and will it inform the person about it?
- Can machines demand responsibility from others, including humans, when actions contradict the interests of others (people or machines)?

Looking at the logic of computer programs that already “playfully” defeat world chess champions, the question arises whether it is possible to control technology based solely on human logic?! Therefore, it seems that existing rules and visions will change with new challenges in the near future.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the sustainable development of society now requires the participation of state and supranational institutions in regulating the rules of the “game” in the rapidly growing “wild” technology market. Such participation requires resources that may be comparable to those available to commercial companies in order to be efficient. There is a mechanism for allocation of funds to such preventive actions of society and it must be sustained and developed.

Within the framework of this document, these issues also remain partially open, and further research is planned.

### **Conclusions**

The study showed the importance of responsible behavior and sustainable development of society, which is very relevant for today's and post-war realities of Ukraine.

Based on the above results, it can be concluded that the development of social responsibility of business is naturally related to the fact that more socially

responsible businesses are more sustainable in the long term and even may have a short-term advantages. Such an approach in perspective plays the role of a protective mechanism that reduces risks and leads to a sustainable positive outcome and is in line with ESG investing trend.

It should be noted that social responsibility is usually perceived as adherence to already known rules and is based on past mistakes of society, which during technological transformations may be insufficient, therefore, it seems necessary to have proactive mechanisms for identifying unregulated potential conflicts both in society and within organizations. Therefore, the role of society seems to be crucial for the sustainable development of humanity nowadays and it is expected that must be a shift from self-regulated to more regulated market. Such changes require significant institutional funding that must be sufficient for effective preventive management of the technological transformations.

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## СОЦІАЛЬНА ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНІСТЬ В УМОВАХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЧНИХ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЙ

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Публікація починається з обговорення сучасного тренду відповідальності, його походження та доцільності. Далі представлено переваги соціальної відповідальності та висвітлено переваги та ризики сучасних технологічних трансформацій. Надано пояснення ризиків технологічних трансформацій та їх природи. Описано різні бачення щодо подолання таких ризиків та відповідні реакції людства. Серед іншого, обговорюються підходи до корпоративної цифрової відповідальності та тенденції регулювання. Представлено основні тенденції регулювання цифрової відповідальності. В результаті зроблено висновок про недостатність реактивного управління та необхідність активних дій щодо попередження ризиків для вирішення всіх значущих ризиків технологічної трансформації. Висловлено очікування щодо зростання ролі інституційних фондів у такому превентивному управлінні.

**Ключові слова:** Корпоративна цифрова відповідальність (CDR), CSR, технологічні трансформації, соціальна відповідальність, управління.

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*Тези надійшли до редакції \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Тези рекомендовані до друку \_\_\_\_\_.*