Minds & Tech

Sold-out crowd for the first edition of the Minds & Tech conference

It is with a full house that the Minds & Tech conference, organized by Opinno, in collaboration with the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence (MIT CCI) and the city of Toulouse, took place on Wednesday October 9th, 2019 at the Quai des Savoirs

Minds & Tech 1st edition by numbers:

7h of content

20 international speakers

300⁺ attendees

Hundreds of social media interactions with the #MindsAndTech hashtag

For its first edition, Minds & Tech dealt with the following issue: Artificial Intelligence and Collective Intelligence (AI and CI): What impacts and future opportunities for today's humanity?

An original way of debating on the use of new technologies by illustrating how they can be used to answer today's biggest challenges: health, food, education, governance, new sustainable markets, etc.

Bertrand Serp, vice-president at Toulouse Métropole for robotics and digital economy opened the event. The conference was then orchestrated by **Cecilia Nicolini**, Fellow at MIT CCI and Harvard Ash Center as well as director at Opinno Research Center.
As Master of Ceremony, Cecilia was able to give rhythm to the conference, making the audience interact with the different interventions of the day. Doing so, she ensured that Minds & Tech stayed coherent with the spirit of collective intelligence embodied by the MIT CCI. Just like the audience, all speakers represented a variety of profiles who all contributed to enrich the conversations.

Established entrepreneurs :

Paul-Adrien Menez, co-founder at Zero-Gâchis, AI based service referencing goods to help retailers and consumers reduce their food waste.

Nicolas Miailhe, founder at The Future Society, an independent think-tank for the governance of AI and other new technologies.

Nancy Nemes, founder at Ms. AI, venture specialised in AI that stands for diversity and inclusion in the tech ecosystem.

Manuela Cunha, co-founder at Good Tech Lab, research and innovation hub which aims to use new technologies for the greater good using the frame of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations.

Academics:

Aleks Berditchevskaia, senior researcher at Nesta's Center for Collective Intelligence Design.

Juan Garbajosa, deputy vice rector for quality systems and competitiveness as well as professor at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.

Jean-François Bonnefon, research director at CNRS and Toulouse School of Economics as well as author of The Morale Machine.

Henry Shelvin, research associate and project leader at Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge.

Sasha Rubel, program specialist, Knowledge Societies Division, communication and information sector at UNESCO.

Field Experts:

Gianni Giacomelli, head of innovation at the MIT CCI Design Lab and at Genpact, company which helps large companies achieve digital transformation through its AI powered platform.

Vikas Pandey, chief technology officer at Excess Materials Exchange, marketplace to exchange excess materials and products in order to maximize reuse and improve environmental impact.

Denis Rothman, AI author with over 30 years of experience in the sector.

Annalyn Bachmann, manager at MIT CCI and Climate CoLab.

Finalist start-ups from the Challenging Minds competition:

Daniela Blanco, co-founder at Sunthetics, start-up which uses AI to provide sustainable and electrically driven chemical processes to replace traditional heat-powered ones to produce materials such as Nylon.

Charchris Sloan, head engineer at Observe Technologies, start-up using AI to disrupt the aquaculture industry by automating the feeding of farmed fish to minimize waste (environmental and economic impact).

Hadeel Ayoub, founder and chief technology officer at BrightSign, hardware built to allow people with hearing and speech disabilities to communicate and interact with their surroundings.

" Events like Minds & Tech are extremely relevant because they bridge an existing gap that exists in the AI ecosystem [...] they bring together different actors in the field from different stakeholder groups (so the civil society, the technical community, academia, the media, and the public and private sector) to have crucial conversations as it concerns the intersection of artificial intelligence and collective intelligence " **- Sasha Rubel, UNESCO**

Rodrigo Delso, founder and chief executive officer at Urban Data Eye, a data collecting system that uses artificial intelligence to process information on any public space to optimize real time urban management.

How to gather all those different profiles to design an interesting and accessible events for all?

Minds & Tech approach was firstly to explain the concept of collective intelligence, defined by the MIT CCI as the connexion between humans and machines so that they act - collectively - more intelligently.

Furthermore, Minds & Tech used examples illustrating how AI-CI fusion allows to design solutions for health, food chain management and education (non exclusive solutions but aiming to inspire the audience).

After the morning break, conversations turned around AI ethics and Europe's strategic positioning to use and develop AI in good faith all the while keeping in mind Europe's collective vision. Echoing all of the morning's brightest ideas, the discussion between **Sasha Rubel** and **Cecilia Nicolini** made us rethink the ways in which we conceive democracy in the digital era.

Another break for lunch allowed the audience to interact around the buffets, or around the Demo Area which gathered local actors who displayed their B2B solutions using AI.

The afternoon focused on building AI-CI ecosystems: putting into perspective new economic and responsible business models.

Lastly, we ended the day with the session of pitches from the Challenging Minds start-up competition. While the competition was steep, the audience elected **Daniela Blanco** and her Sunthetics project as the Brightest AI/CI Mind 2019.

" I'm just really excited, so happy to see that there is a competition like this one. Very much looking forward to getting to know the other contestants, learn from them, see what's out there and getting to share our ideas. Because I feel like inspiring others is probably what helps the most with this kind of competition." **- Daniela Blanco, Sunthetics**

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