

Tijs Vandemeulebroucke, from a non-technical perspective, explores the ethical dilemma of artificial intelligence (AI) in relation to sustainability. He delves into the dual roles of AI in sustainability: its application for environmental goals and its own sustainable development. Emphasizing the urgent crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, he highlights human technology's role in these issues, particularly in the Global North. Vandemeulebroucke defines AI broadly, focusing on societal and political aspects rather than technicalities.

He raises ethical questions about relying on technology, which contributes to environmental crises, for solutions. The talk addresses AI's potential in mitigating climate and biodiversity impacts, like enhancing efficiency in various sectors and predicting environmental changes. However, Vandemeulebroucke cautions that AI's benefits hinge on its sustainable development, urging consideration of its full lifecycle impact, including mining for materials, e-waste, and energy consumption in data centers.

Concluding, he stresses the need for public awareness of AI as a "world object" impacting various global networks. Vandemeulebroucke advocates for tech companies' transparency and accountability, integration of AI and environmental policies, and a critical evaluation of AI's necessity versus desire. He leaves with a thought-provoking question about envisioning AI technologies without these negative impacts.