

## **Speculating on living with and designing artificial agents**

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As networked, computational technologies become embedded in nearly every aspect of everyday life people are learning to live with them and their new and artificial forms of agency. Yet relating to these connected and agentive things intentionally is a challenge due to the fact that they are typically designed in ways that obscure most of what they are and do (for example, minimal speaker designs that house the Google Assistant). Design ideals of simplicity have become rather simplistic, as things now hide their true sociotechnical character. Moreover, supporting people in living good lives by providing value for end users is no longer the primary goal of such products.

There is an undeveloped capability to handle the complexity entailed in agentive technologies well, and the possible design space for them is much larger than what has been explored. This is especially true when considering opportunities for providing value for end users that lie outside of economic models based on data surveillance, and the novel kinds of beneficial relations that could be supported if agentive technologies were designed differently.

In order to begin to explore this design space of agentive technologies, we re-imagine through a *design fiction* how we may design them differently, with a focus on their relational qualities and new roles they can play in our lives. This experimental approach to philosophical issues opens up the possibility of radical alternatives, breaking away from current limited conceptions of what these kinds of things are and can be.

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