



Hi, everyone. I'm Di Mayze, global head of data and AI for WPP. And I've got a really special guest for us today. Hi, Daniel, would you like to introduce yourself?

What kind of special, just out of curiosity. Yes, I'm--

No, I won't define that.

So I'm Daniel Hulme. And I guess, for the past 20 years, I've been researching AI. And my undergraduate, my master's, my PhD, postdocs, were all in AI. I had a master's program in UCL for four years, where I had hundreds of students going out there applying, these emerging technologies. And I'm also an entrepreneur in Residence for UCL, so I help them take deep technology in and figure out how to have an impact on the world. And I used to say that I have an evil corporate hat. I'm not allowed to say that anymore.

No.

I'm the CEO of Satalia. And Satalia has about 100 people distributed across Europe and we build AI solutions for some of the biggest companies in the world. And I'm now very honored to be part of WPP and also have a dual role, which is the chief AI officer for the group. And really, my goal is to bring together, enhance, amplify all of the amazing things that the group is doing in AI.

We're very, very happy to have you here and I'm sure everyone's wanted to meet you since you joined the family. So I'd love to hear a bit more about how you, bearing in mind the background you just talked about, and Satalia, and WPP, all do fit together.

Yes, so Satalia has an interesting background. We traditionally do two things. We have a services company where we build innovations for organisations that combine different types of technology, particularly AI technologies, that solve very, very difficult problems. And several years ago, we realised that we have two choices. We can either continue to expand as a services company or we can take some of these innovations that we've built and try and create assets that are resalable, reusable.

So we have a couple of assets. One is in logistics and supply chain and the other one is in workforce. And I guess the relationship that we have with WPP is really to amplify those two things. One is we have these amazing set of assets that solve problems across the supply chain, that augment e-commerce, augment marketing, which we are looking to accelerate to market with Wunderman Thompson Commerce. And then, we have obviously our services ability, where I think we can go and bring AI to our customers and sell them additional services.

I guess we've got a heavily R&D element where I think we can bring AI into WPP to be able to enhance all of our services using these types of technologies so we can be more effective to our customers. And of course, we also want to build more and more assets so that we can generate revenues, not just by selling our time, but by licensing.

Love that, and it's a brilliant time to have supply chain capability and to be linking that to marketing activity, given the challenges.

Indeed. Actually. I'm very excited. I guess, historically, marketing would create demand that would put pressure on the supply chain. And what I think we could do with AI is have visibility to that entire what we call digital twin, identify pockets of resource in the supply chain that could then inform marketing. So rather than marketing inform demand, can actually your supply chain inform marketing? Which is a really interesting thing to tackle.

I love that. Flip it on its head. So you've talked about your work with UCL. Tell me how you balance academic AI and commercial AI.

So there are different flavors of AI, right? I use two definitions, although there are many definitions out there. The first definition is getting computers to do things that humans can do. And over the past decade, we've built brains, neural networks that are able to do things that traditionally, only human beings can do. We can get our brains to recognise objects and images to correspond in natural language.

Now, I would actually argue that these technologies are solved in some respects. The bottleneck in using them is data. The bottleneck in using them is talent. But there are other types of AI that still need a huge amount of academic development. There's a concept called optimisation, essentially decision making, which is a completely different field in computer science.

And actually, I would argue that companies don't have machine learning problems. They have decision problems. And so, there's still lots and lots of things that are going on in academia I think that need to be brought into industry. And I'm very keen to make sure that we're pulling these out of academia and making sure we're driving real value for our customers.

So I guess, the second definition of AI that I like is-- it comes from the definition of intelligence, which is goal-directed adaptive behaviour. We have a goal to increase our yield, to utilise our employees, whatever. We need to answer that question very quickly. But what I'm interested in is how we can build systems that can adapt themselves safely in production, make decisions, learn about whether those decisions are good or bad, adapt their own understanding of the world so that tomorrow you can make better decisions. And that requires bringing together a kind of a plethora of different types of technologies, not just machine learning, to solve those big, hard problems. And talking about the goal-adapted behaviour, where do ethics fit in with all of that and the decisioning and the role of AI in making these decisions?

It's a really great question. And this concept of AI safety, AI ethics, we hear a lot at the moment. And I used to, I guess, position myself as an AI ethicist, an AI safety person, given my background. But recently, I guess, I've got a controversial view now on AI ethics.

Oh, go on. Hit us with it.

So I would say that there's no such thing as AI ethics and a lot of the challenges that we're dealing with in AI are building systems that are safe and that can adapt themselves safely. And that means mitigating bias, it means making sure that things are transparent, explainable. These are questions of software engineering. And I guess, historically, with software, we would build it. The reason why AI is slightly different is we now teach it, which brings lots of interesting challenges to deal with. But those are more to do with safety problems, as opposed to ethical problems.

When I speak to AI ethicists and I ask them, how do you feel if you call yourself an ethicist? They become quite sheepish quite quickly, although I do believe it's something that we need to face into. There are lots of interesting ethical questions that are surfaced by AI that we need to be facing into.

I'll contradict myself now, actually, and say that there is such thing as AI ethics, but some of these questions are firmly grounded in academia. So for example, if we build a sentient machine, do we have the right to turn it off, for example? These are not the questions for business to solve. These are the questions for philosophers and academics. But maybe I can use an example. I use this quite a bit, but imagine you are on the ethics committee of a ride hailing company. And you've built an AI, whose job it is to figure out the pricing of your rides.

And what you've discovered is this AI has realised that when your battery is very low, that you're willing to spend more money on your fare. So this isn't about supply and demand. This is about identifying a vulnerability in humans and exploiting that vulnerability. It's up to the ethics committee to determine whether that's acceptable or not.

And maybe people are calling this AI ethics, and that's fine. But ethics committees are already set up to deal with these types of questions and I don't think we need to have necessarily a separate team of people thinking about AI. I think it's all part of that group.

Yeah, I think it's really a good point because that's driven by KPIs. If they change the KPIs to be a more human-centered KPI, then it's not about AI ethics, it's about how you treat your fellow humans.

Yeah, absolutely. I think, ultimately, we do need to be using these concepts because that's what a lot of our clients are wanting to hear right now. But when you think about ethics and the definition of ethics, which is essentially the study of right and wrong, it always starts out with the intent. What is the intent? The intent is to maximise revenues. And then the question is, how do I set up my system to maximise that intent to achieve that goal?

But then there are adverse things that happen that you don't plan for, like exploiting human behaviour and then you have to deal with that. And that means putting in the right governance frameworks and ethics frameworks to make sure that we're mitigating those risks.

The next question is a big one, so I'm afraid I'm going to have to challenge you to give the short version. So what does the future of AI look like to you?

So I think there's a huge amount of misunderstanding about the capability of these technologies. And I think AI has probably the biggest high powers of any technology in my lifetime. But I also think the organisations that get it right-- I see a lot of organisations get it wrong-- are the ones that are ultimately going to win. And that means understanding what these different flavors of technology are and how can they be applied to add value, but also future proof your organisations?

I'm more interested in not just the application of AI, but the impact that AI is going to have on society. And I have got some quite a few views on those impacts and how we can mitigate some of those risks. But that's probably a different talk.

Oh, you should come back and talk about that. I'd love to explore that more. So that's the easy questions done and it's time to get serious now.

OK.

All right. Are you ready?

Yeah, I'm ready. Would you rather go back in time and meet your ancestors or go forward in time and meet your great-great-grandchildren?

That is a fantastic question. There's a concept called the Methusilarity, which is actually a singularity that might be created by AI, which is when we cheat death. And actually, there are scientists that believe there are people alive today that won't have to die. And I'm one of those hopeful, I guess, tech entrepreneurs that wants to live forever. And so, actually, I'm assuming that I'm going to live for, hopefully, a very long life and I will get to meet my great-great-grandchildren. So actually, what I'd like to do is go back in time and meet my ancestors and just really appreciate all of the random events that have allowed me to be conscious during this period of human history.

I love that answer. I want to go forward but that's just I'll be asking what they're doing with data and have they sorted out the data challenges yet. Right, another one for you?

OK.

Would you rather only be able to whisper or only be able to shout?

Kind of tough question. It might sound like I like the sound of my own voice, and I probably do, but I'm actually an introvert, so I would like to whisper. I think at least we can amplify that if we need to. But I think if people really want to listen to you, it doesn't matter if you are shouting or whispering. They'll listen to you regardless. So, I think whisper.

I did expect you to say that, and I thought anyone who knows me knows that my default is shouty. And I thought, I should whisper a bit more, practice whispering. Right, one more, because I'm pretty sure we're out of time. If you only had one mode of transport, a donkey or a giraffe, which would you pick?

OK, I want to say a giraffe because it's cool, but I think humans owe a lot to donkeys, and I'd like to have a donkey and take care of it, make sure it's happy, kind of respect the contribution that species has made to our species over the past 2,000 years. So, donkey.

I was a bit worried you were going to say that because you're surprisingly tall. And I think you'd end up sitting on the donkey but walking.

I think we'll go arm in arm.

Oh, OK.

We're going to be buddies.

So it's like a transport companion, rather than a means of transport.

Exactly.

OK, I'll get a ladder and get on that giraffe then. We are out of time, but it's been so nice to have you here. And on behalf of everyone at WPP, we very much welcome you and all of your team at Satalia. And Daniel, thank you very much for joining us today.

Thank, Di. That's amazing. Thank you.

Thank you.