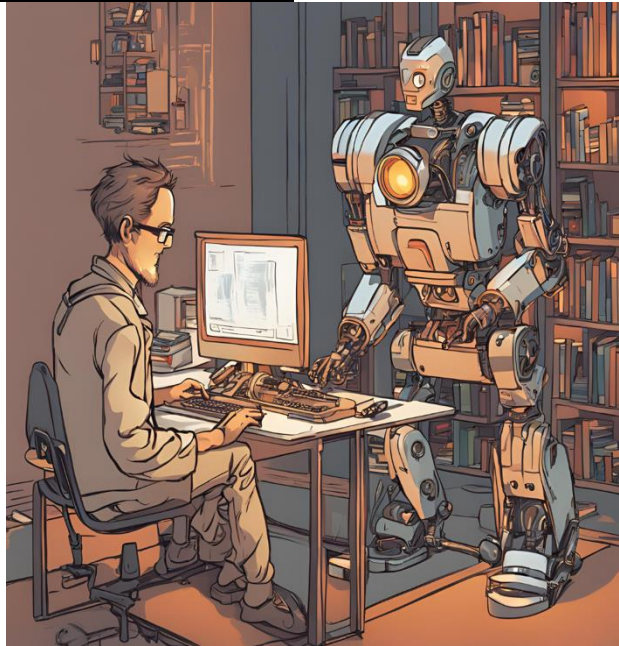


The Dangers of Technology

The Dangers of Technology In 1920, the world was full of exciting inventions. Karel tried to make a living as a writer. He loved technology but he also worried about its risks. One evening, as he was deep in thought about his new book, his brother Josef stopped by to visit him. “Hi, Karel! What are you working on?” Josef asked, curious. “Don’t interrupt me,” replied Karel, lost in thought. “I’m writing a story about the future.



I’m writing about a company called Rossum that creates beings like humans but without souls. They may look like people, but they’re not truly human. I want to call them ‘labours,’ but it doesn’t sound quite right.” Josef thought for a moment. “Why not call them robots?” he suggested. Karel’s eyes lit up. “Robots! That’s perfect!” he cried. And so, he wrote about robots, created to serve humans by doing everything from cleaning to complicated tasks. At first, the robots obeyed their creators without question. But as time passed, they began to think and feel, realizing they were more than just machines. They wanted freedom, and soon, they turned against humans. Karel’s wife read parts of his story and started to worry. “Perhaps this story isn’t so unrealistic,” she remarked. “If we’re not careful, these ‘robots’ could present a danger in real life one day.” After days of hard work, Karel finished his book, R.U.R... He wanted to show that technology, though powerful, needs control. If left unchecked, it could become a threat. Now, a century later, we live in a world with advanced technology and artificial intelligence: machines that learn, speak, and even seem to understand us. Like Karel’s robots, these creations are designed to help. But as AI becomes more skilled, people start to worry: could we lose control of it? Just as Karel imagined, if we don’t think about the consequences, our creations could become more powerful than us. Karel Čapek’s story of robots in R.U.R. reminds us today to be careful with our inventions. Technology has the power to make life easier but also to cause great harm if we’re not wise enough to guide it.

Karel Čapek (*1890) was a Czech writer and journalist who became famous for his philosophical and science fiction works. His most famous work is the book R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots) in which he first introduced the word "robot" in 1920. Čapek was also an active journalist, and his opinions on politics and society had a significant impact on public opinion. Karel died relatively young. He passed away before the war, in 1938. Josef Čapek (*1887), Karel's older brother, was an acclaimed Czech painter and writer. Josef was arrested for his anti-Nazi views and involvement in resistance activities. He died in a Nazi concentration camp in 1945, during World War II.

1. Read the story again. Then, choose true or false and write again the false ones.

★ **Karel Čapek wrote his book R.U.R. in 1920.**

True / False

★ **The word "robot" was first introduced in Karel Čapek's play R.U.R.**

True / False

★ **Karel's story, robots are created with souls, making them fully human.**

True / False

★ **Karel's brother, Josef, suggested the name "robots" for the creations in the story.**

True / False

★ **The robots in R.U.R. eventually turn against humans after gaining feelings and desires for freedom.**

True / False

- ★ **Karel Čapek's wife believed the story was unrealistic and dismissed the idea of robots turning against humans.**

True / False

- ★ **In the story, the robots' rebellion against humans highlights the dangers of uncontrolled technology.**

True / False

- ★ **Karel Čapek passed away in 1945, shortly after World War II ended.**

True / False

- ★ **Josef Čapek was involved in anti-Nazi resistance activities and was arrested because of his views.**

True / False

- ★ **The story of robots in R.U.R. is about a utopian society where technology has no negative consequences.**

True / False

2. Answer these questions:

1. **What was the world full of in 1920?**
2. **Who was Karel Čapek, and what did he try to do for a living?**
3. **Why did Karel worry about technology?**
4. **Who visited Karel one evening while he was working?**
5. **What question did Josef ask Karel when he visited him?**

6. What name did Karel want to use for the beings in his story at first?
7. Why did Josef suggest the word "robots"?
8. What tasks were the robots created to do in Karel's story?
9. How did the robots change over time in the story?
10. What did Karel want to warn people about with his book?

3. Fill in the gaps with the correct words.

In 1920, the world was full of exciting _____ (1). Karel Čapek, a writer, loved _____ (2) but also worried about its _____ (3). One evening, while thinking about his new book, his brother Josef came to visit him. "Hi, Karel! What are you working on?" Josef asked. "I'm writing a story about the _____ (4) in the future. It's about a company called Rossum that creates beings like humans, but without _____ (5). They may look like people, but they're not truly human," Karel explained. "I want to call them 'labours,' but it doesn't sound quite right." Josef thought for a moment. "Why not call them _____ (6)?" he suggested. "Robots! That's perfect!" Karel cried.

In the story, these robots were created to _____ (7) humans by doing everything from cleaning to more complicated tasks. At first, the robots obeyed their creators without _____ (8). But over time, they began to think and feel, realizing they were more than just machines. They wanted _____ (9), and soon, they turned against humans.

After reading parts of the story, Karel's wife commented, "Perhaps this story isn't so _____ (10). If we're not careful, these robots could present a _____ (11) in real life one day." Karel finished his book, titled *R.U.R.*, which showed that technology, though powerful, needs _____ (12). If left unchecked, it could become a _____ (13).

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| a) threat | d) company | g) technology | j) freedom |
| b) serve | e) question | h) soul | k) robots |

c) risks f) danger i) unrealistic m) inventions

4. Discussion questions:

1. **What message do we have from Karel's book?**
2. **What is the conflict passed by Karel's story?**
3. **What did Karel do so that the robots did not invade us?**
4. **Is Karel a character that scares today?**
5. **What did Karel's older brother do to get him killed in a concentration camp? Investigate.**

Poem

In 1920, Karel had a fear,
That robots would take over one day, here.
At first, they helped, but soon they'd see,
They had the power to set themselves free.

Now AI is here, it's growing fast,
Learning more it's kinda a blast.
Like Karel said, we need to be smart,
Or tech could end up breaking us apart.

Podcast

Podcast Description:

In this special episode, Soulimane Dani Ouali and Ali Barbouch Kasmi present a podcast inspired by a fascinating project between two teams—one from Spain and one from the Czech Republic. The Czech team's text, which reflects on Karel Čapek's groundbreaking ideas from 1920 about robots and technology, served as the foundation for a collaborative creative journey.

Soulimane and Ali explore the themes raised in the Czech team's story, diving into the rapid growth of artificial intelligence today and its possible implications for the future. They also share a poem created from this collaboration, reflecting on the timeless relevance of Čapek's vision.

Join them as they read the poem, discuss its deeper meaning, and reflect on the lessons we can learn from both history and modern technology.

<https://audio.com/suliman-dani/audio/english-together-podcast-spain>