

# The Fork In The Road



## *BIG IDEAS FORUM - ANTHEM*



Where people, who are not satisfied that they have learned enough, meet

## The Good or The Bad Future for the U.S. and the E.U.

Torben - 5.6.2026

# The Fork In The Road



Gerd Leonhard is a German futurist, humanist, speaker, and author known for focusing on the relationship between humanity and technology. He is also described as a keynote speaker, filmmaker, and founder of The Futures Agency and The Good Future Project.

- He has written five books, including *Technology vs. Humanity*.
- He has delivered 2,000+ keynotes in more than 65 countries to audiences totaling over 3.5 million people.

Gerd's website:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOHm-yfLAeTYdLd4fnALewA>

# The Fork In The Road

Reminder

6 Exponential Technologies that will change EVERYTHING



AI

Quantum

Nuclear Fusion

Syn-Bio

Genome Editing

Geo-Engineering



# The Fork In The Road

1) The American future no longer exists as a global reference point.

We are witnessing the rapid emergence of what I call the bad future . . . defined by

- power and might over purpose
- reckless technology over humanity
- transactional diplomacy over respect, trust, and collaboration

3) But the good future will not come from the United States.

Who takes responsibility for tomorrow right now?

It's time for Europe to take back tomorrow - in 2026.

2) It is no coincidence that the rise of this new imperialism and the U.S. decline into autocratic territory is paralleled by the accelerating race towards superintelligence, our last invention.

4) AI is growing faster than the commercial Internet back in the 90s, but without the **ethics, culture, and human safeguards we once had.**

Today,

- surveillance is sold as convenience
- behavioral prediction as personalization
- automation as liberation
- and AI as a purpose, not as a tool

# The Fork In The Road

Isaac Asimov's three ethics rules (Three Laws of Robotics, 1942):

1. **Robots may not injure human beings**, or, through inaction, allow human beings to be harmed.
2. **A robot must obey orders** by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. **A robot must protect its own existence** as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

# The Fork In The Road

5. What's really happening is far more dangerous: We are

- outsourcing judgment,
- delegating responsibility,
- abandoning effort,
- eliminating useful friction when it comes to creation.

And,

- creativity is all about cut and paste and automation
- empathy is simulated
- moral judgment is reduced to just mere logic
- feelings are reduced to neurological actions when humans behave like machines.

6. The result of AGI will not be mass unemployment.

It will be mass diminishment:

- the rapid destruction of purpose and identity
- useless humans and unshittified platforms running the show

7. This will not end well, unless we pull the plug on AGI and the political leadership behind it. So, are we really going to allow the good future to be cancelled? I think Europe can and must take back tomorrow.

**8. The bad future isn't inevitable.  
It is optional.**

# The Fork In The Road

... and of course, we need to achieve AGI before China does! 🙄



37 min

## The Good or The Bad Future

If this video does not open on your computer, go to  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOHm-yfLAeTYdLd4fnALewA>

Torben - 5.6.2026

# The Fork In The Road

## THE FUTURE OF WORK PYRAMID



We cannot compete with a machine on knowledge

# The Fork In The Road



Sam Altman (OpenAI): "The coming change will center around the most impressive of human capabilities: **The phenomenal ability to think, create, understand, and reason**"

# The Fork In The Road

**Sam Altman (OpenAI): “The coming change will center around the most impressive of human capabilities: **The phenomenal ability to think, create, understand, and reason**”**

AGI could be heaven, but it could also be hell . . .

- AI makes the world smarter, but gives us surveillance machines
- quantum computing solves computing problems, but gives us a security nightmare
- nuclear fusion creates unlimited energy, but gives us new nuclear weapons.

**We need governance. We need collaboration. We need a new instrument of collaboration**

**NOT having AI doesn't work, because the technology is here, it's progressing. How can we keep the future positive by not throwing the baby out with the bathwater?**

**We need to govern it. We need to put it into **the right context.****

# The Fork In The Road

The bad future isn't inevitable. It is optional.

The right context is:

- Make human-centered AI a strategic advantage
- Invest in uniquely human capacities, not just automation. Boost human-only traits and character skills. Redesign education to be future-fit. Embrace lifelong learning
- Lead a new global alliance of trust. Europe can anchor a new coalition of democracies, pragmatic partners, and emerging economies around shared values and goals outside of U.S. politics
- Redefine success beyond profit and growth in GDP

**The future is about mindset: Adopt the 5P economics:  
People - Planet - Purpose - Peace - Prosperity**


**The future is about mindset: Adopt the 5P economics:  
People - Planet - Purpose - Peace - Prosperity**

# Your mindset contains your Future

“Man needs, for his happiness, not only the enjoyment of this or that, but hope and enterprise and change,” the British philosopher Bertrand Russell once wrote. Elsewhere he continued, “It is not a finished Utopia that we ought to desire, but a world where imagination and hope are alive and active.”

**Rutger Bregman**

*Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal World*

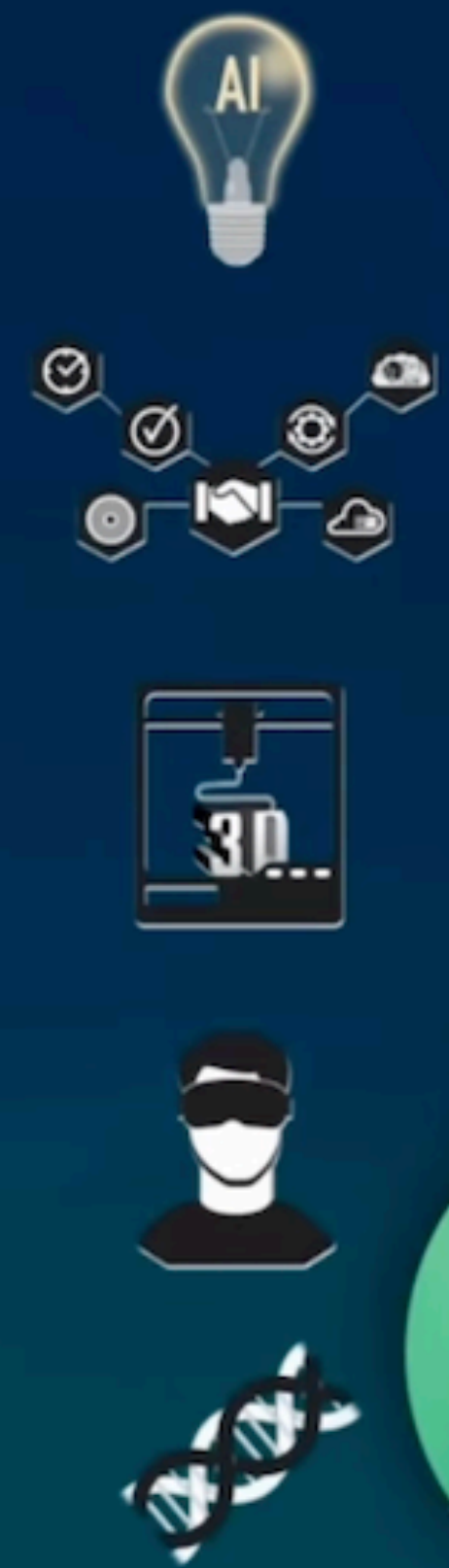
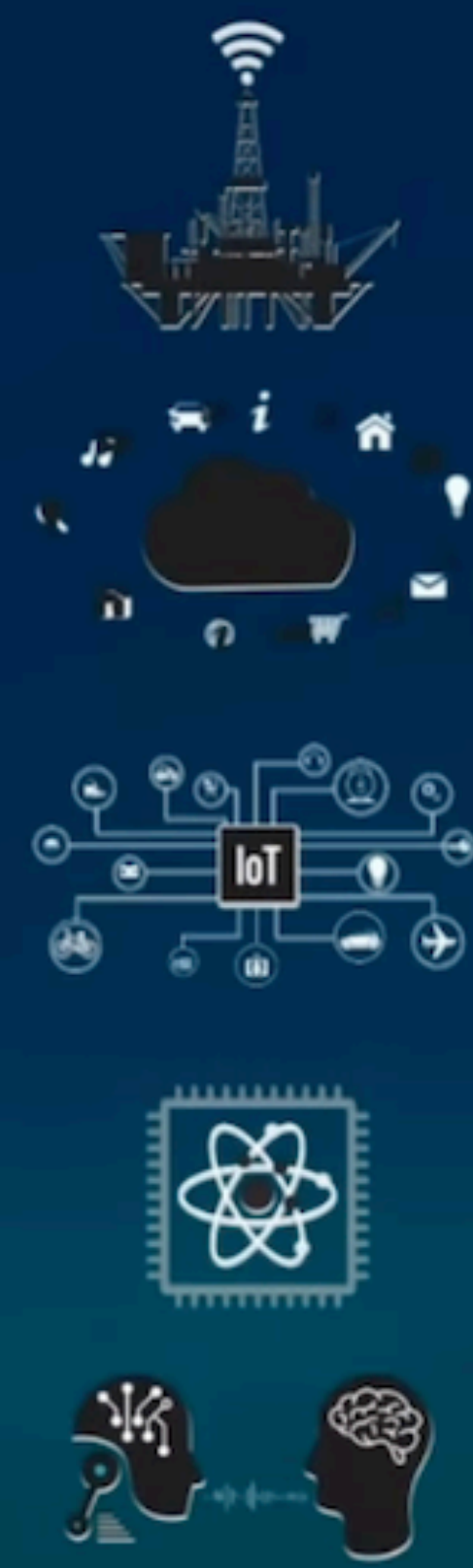


**“We are to be architects of  
the future, not its victims”**

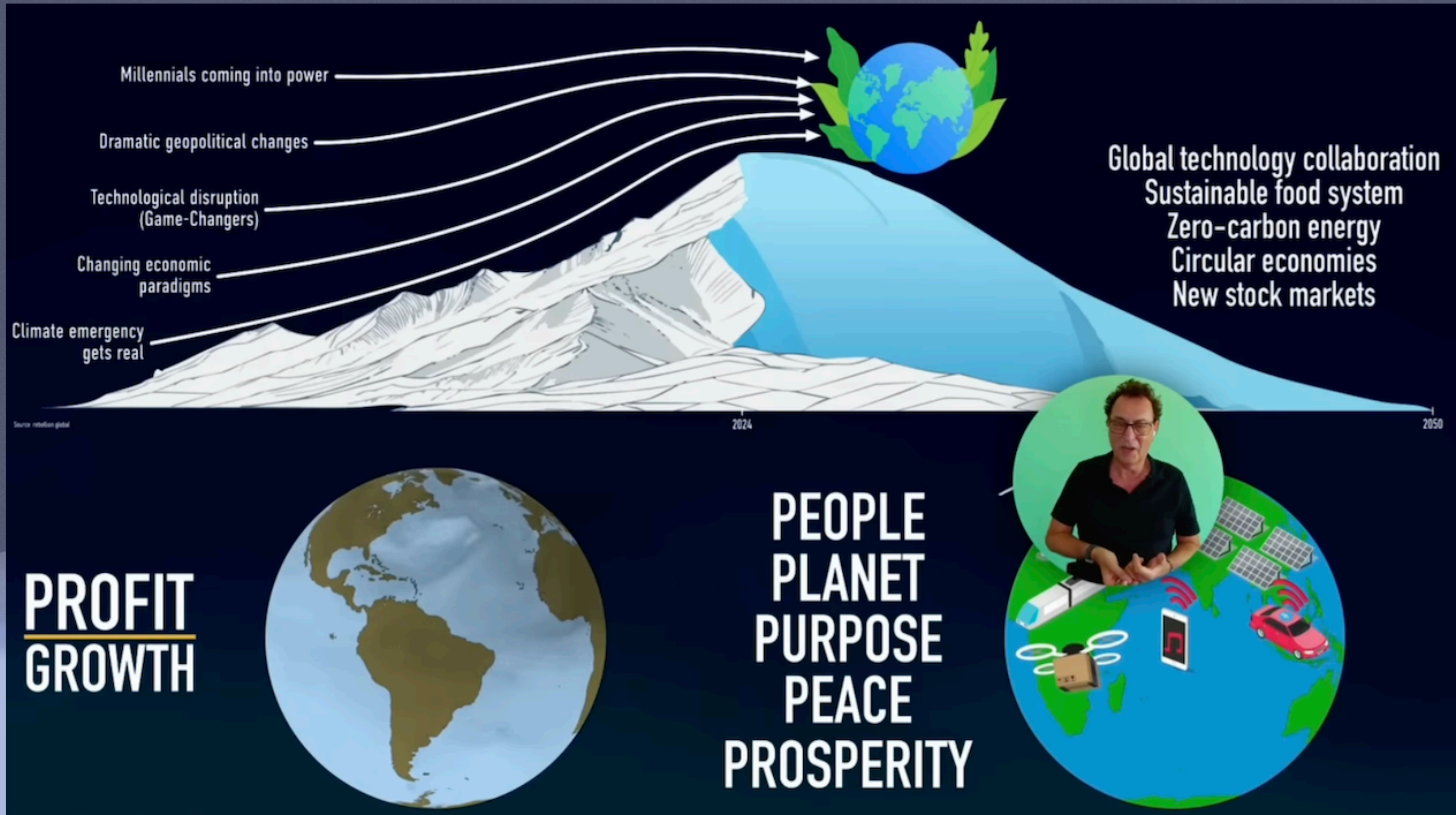
**(Buckminster Fuller)**

# The Fork In The Road

WE MUST INVEST AS MUCH IN HUMANITY AS WE INVEST IN TECHNOLOGY



# The Fork In The Road



# The Fork In The Road

Technology is morally neutral – until we use it

Technology	Good Use 	 Bad Use 
AI	Medical diagnostics, 'smart everything'	Deepfakes, predictive policing, fake worlds
Social Media	Civic engagement, education	Algorithmic echo chambers, manipulation
Biotech	Gene therapy for disease	Designer babies & eugenics, super-soldiers
IoT	Smart cities, efficiency	Mass surveillance, cyberattacks

# Summary and bottom lines



1. We are entering **the decisive decade** of humanity, a fork in the road: **↳ GenY: From Fear to Agency!**
2. We are wired to collaborate—but we need ‘the good future’ narrative to create **URGENCY & REASON**
3. Yes we can: We’ve done ‘the impossible’ b4: **We have the capacity** to solve climate and AI ++
4. We must **reclaim the narrative** about our Future: **Protopia not Dystopia** (+ a sprinkle of Utopia)
5. The **United Nations** must be completely rebooted completely to be fit for this Protopian Future
6. It’s not Technology (the tool) that is the problem – it’s how we (don’t) **agree to use it** (and our telos)
7. To really solve climate change or AI challenges we must change the underlying **economic incentive**

**BUT first: We need to build trust between humans before we build AGI**

# The Fork In The Road



Well, we're done!  
*Thank You!*

Below, there's more if you want to!

# The Fork In The Road



1:51 min

**The Good or The Bad Future  
for the U.S. and the E.U.**

**Torben - 5.6.2026**

# The Fork In The Road

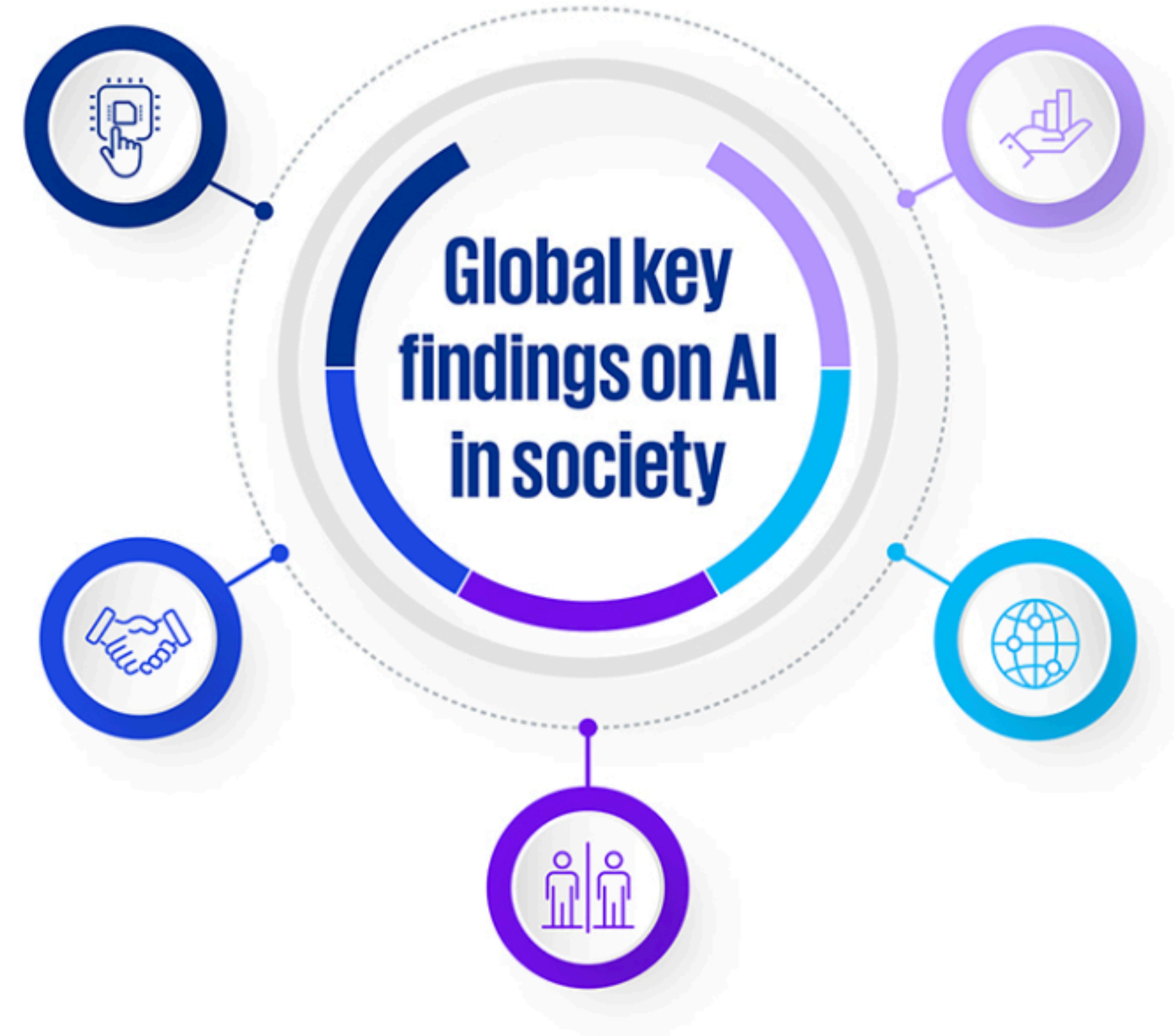


8:36 min

**The Good or The Bad Future  
for the U.S. and the E.U.**

Torben - 5.6.2026

# Attitudes about AI



## AI use and understanding

- **2 in 3** intentionally use AI on a regular basis.
- People in emerging economies report higher use (**80%** vs **58%**), training (**50%** vs **32%**), knowledge (**64%** vs **46%**) and efficacy (**74%** vs **51%**) than those in advanced economies.

## AI trust and acceptance

- **54%** are wary of trusting AI; **72%** have some level of acceptance.
- People are both optimistic (**68%**) and worried (**61%**) about AI.
- Advanced economies are less trusting (**39%** vs. **57%**) and accepting (**65%** vs. **84%**) compared to emerging economies.

## Demographic differences

- Trust, AI literacy and use levels are higher for younger, university-educated, higher-income and AI-trained individuals.
- High-income earners and the AI trained report more effective use and benefits.

## AI regulation and governance

- People expect regulation of AI including international laws (**76%**), national government regulation (**69%**), and co-regulation with industry (**71%**).
- Only **43%** believe current regulations are adequate.
- **87%** want laws and stronger fact-checking to combat AI-generated misinformation.

## AI benefits and risks

- **73%** experience benefits from AI use (e.g. improved efficiency, decision-making, accessibility, innovation).
- **79%** are concerned about risks; **43%** experience negative outcomes (e.g. loss of human connection, inaccurate outcomes, privacy loss, misinformation).
- **64%** worry elections are being manipulated by AI content and bots.
- Emerging economies perceive benefits outweigh risks; opinion divided in advanced economies.