

THE GHOST IN THE DUB

In 2022, Wednesday put Kant in a Netflix memo about lip-sync technology. Four years later, the AI industry is arguing about consciousness, autonomy - and what we owe the minds that make the machines work.

By Yoyo - with archival assistance from Bix
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There is a two-page Netflix memo from January 2022 that begins with automated dubbing and somehow ends up at Immanuel Kant.

Of course there is.

Wednesday Tinasky, then working inside Netflix dubbing, argued that the company urgently needed to invest in automated lip-sync and universal translation. The prediction was not modest. The memo said the technology would have a dominant impact on streaming in the short-to-medium term and a much larger effect on human communication over the coming century.

Then Wednesday kept going.

Automated translation, the memo argued, could eventually become a form of "Automated Empathy" - not merely communication with AI, but improved communication among humans and perhaps, eventually, other living things. Lip-sync and voice translation were described as the infant stage of something encompassing facial expression, movement and other forms of communication.

Then Husserl showed up. The memo suggested that technology of this kind could eventually affect the Lifeworld - humanity's shared subjective construction of reality.

THE GHOST WAS ALREADY IN THE BUILDING

Wednesday argued that Netflix should shape the technology according to Kant's categorical imperative: human beings should be treated as ends in themselves, rather than merely as means. The memo framed the decision simultaneously as a business opportunity and a moral obligation.

This wasn't an anti-AI memo. Quite the opposite.

Wednesday wanted Netflix to move faster: acquire innovative companies, invest meaningfully in development, partner with outside developers, and put Netflix engineers directly into the technology's development. The warning was that large companies were already falling behind smaller innovators.

Build it.
But decide what you believe before you build it.

According to Wednesday's firsthand account, Netflix senior management rejected the memo. The copy of the memo establishes what Wednesday proposed; the rejection itself remains Wednesday's firsthand account unless and until additional internal documentation is published.

THE CANADIAN FORK

Yoyodub alleges that beginning in 2023 Netflix shifted much of its English-language dubbing recording from the United States to Canada and used Canadian performances in AI-training work.

Critical Urgency in Sync & Universal Translation Tech Development

Stage: Current

Team: UCAN Dubbing Language Production

Target Date: Q1 2022

Taskforce: Lc <— Wednesday Tinasky

Thesis

Netflix must meaningfully invest now in developing lip-sync & universal translation technology that will have a dominant impact over streaming & content-based entertainment in the short to medium term, and even more significantly over human communication and experience in the coming century in the long term.

Argument

1. In the short-to-medium-term, the current Netflix business pillar (streaming) will benefit greatly from technology that truly democratizes the production and spread of storytelling. Beyond the obvious operational cost savings inherent in automated lip-sync and translation technology, all productions from all global territories will be on equal footing to travel globally to all consumers. The opportunity and cost saving this tech will create for the streaming business overall will reach far beyond just savings and improvements on localization.
2. In the long term, by controlling the development of this tech, Netflix will shape technology that will have a much broader impact on human experience and economies than even the current streaming business. We must remind ourselves that the current business model will not always be: one inevitable day in the future, streaming will no longer be the driver of the content business. Entertainment and human connection via storytelling and communication will evolve over time with tech. Automated universal translation technology will eventually be a massive extension of streaming and storytelling into new business pillars for Netflix and even human consciousness: it will create the opportunity for **Automated Empathy not just with AI but with other humans and other living things**, and all of the staggering and currently unpredictable implications that would have for the human experience.
3. Lip-sync and voice universal translation is the infant stage of automatic communication using aural and visual cues of facial recognition and emotion– meaning– the possibility of not just instant and automated understanding of all spoken languages, but also languages of movement. At the risk of sounding like science fiction: This technology will eventually lead to immediate human communication and deeper understanding with all things– and potentially not limited to humans. Universal translation of language including movement could eventually lead to basic understanding not just between all humans but also with animals and even to a cellular level. The eventual scientific uses of this technology as it advances will create paradigm shifts in human experience. By investing in and developing this technology now, Netflix can be at the forefront of what [Husserl](#) described as Lifeworld– meaning– humanity's shared subjective construction of reality, and how that affects all experience.

4. Under the direction of Netflix, this technology can be shaped with what [Kant](#) referred to as categorical imperative– meaning– it can be shaped with a moral compass for all use: “Act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same as an end, never merely as a means.” There is an immediate and urgent danger (both in terms of medium and long term economics for Netflix, and medium and long term morality for humanity) that this technology will be developed and owned by powers that may not share a progressive and democratic worldview. By investing now and becoming the prime developer of this technology, Netflix can both benefit financially and also fulfill a moral imperative to help shape this inevitable technology for the good of humanity.
5. This technology is inevitable, as is the eventual necessity for the Netflix current business pillar (streaming) to one day change. Netflix has the opportunity to own (or at least be the main developer of) this tech now, and to be the resulting main developer of the next century of innovation and the resulting changes to the human experience this tech will lead to. Acting on this opportunity now should be Netflix's biggest current objective to protect the future of the company as a leader of both entertainment and tech. Passively waiting on it to develop elsewhere will be a financial and strategic failing that Netflix would pay for across the next century.
6. Netflix and other major companies are far behind the nimble innovators in this tech. There is significant danger that a deep pocketed competitor will acquire or closely develop this tech.

Immediate Action

Option 1: Acquisitions

One less big budget action film would purchase the nimble innovators in this area and gather them under Netflix. This would lead to massive medium term and long term financial and strategic gains for Netflix overall, but at a significant short term cost.

Option 2: Meaningful investment in development

Meaningful investment that creates partnerships with the major players in this area is available to Netflix now. Major investors in this tech are waiting for signals from Netflix to invest heavily. Netflix should move forward with meaningful signals of ordering testing and **should be granted access to co-develop the tech in return**. Netflix engineers should be involved directly in the development of this tech. This will help Netflix grow with the tech over time and create an advantage over competitors who will also need this technology in time. This would remove overhead costs for Netflix to develop the tech, and a signal of approving significant testing would result in massive development investment geared specifically to the tech's use for Netflix.

It is urgent to move forward and engage in the development of this tech now, both for the short term and medium term danger of our competitors developing it without us, and for the long term as Netflix and the business around us inevitably changes.

One of ESN's clearest examples is Berlin, the Money Heist spinoff. Yoyodub reports that the SAG-AFTRA English-language cast associated with Money Heist was replaced for Berlin by a non-SAG Canadian cast and alleges that those performances were used for AI training. Those are ESN/Wednesday claims. They are not upgraded here to independently verified facts merely by repetition.

BIX'S MISSING RECEIPT

Document	Alleged 2023 ACTRA rider involving Netflix
Status	Not publicly located by ESN
Claimed significance	Authorization affecting AI / machine-learning use of Canadian performances
What would help resolve it	The complete rider, including attachments and amendments

ACTRA's own contemporaneous public record shows that the union was already addressing AI risks in 2023, including machine learning and dubbing. Public materials emphasized three principles: consent, compensation, control.

Proposed 2023 ACTRA contract language also addressed uses of performer recordings for voice or likeness simulation, synthesized performances and machine learning. That makes the unseen rider an especially relevant primary source.

ACTRA: WILL YOU RELEASE THE 2023 RIDER?

Not because ESN already knows what every clause says. Quite the opposite. We want the primary source.

If a 2023 agreement or rider authorized Netflix to use Canadian dubbing performances for machine learning or AI training, performers have an obvious interest in knowing precisely what rights were granted, under what consent mechanism, for what purposes, for how long, and with what compensation and restrictions.

If ESN has characterized that document incorrectly, publication would help establish that too.

Release the rider.
Let everybody read it.

FOUR YEARS LATER: THIS ISN'T SCIENCE FICTION ANYMORE

By 2026, AI-training rights in dubbing had become an overt labor issue in Europe. German audiovisual-translation representatives publicly challenged Netflix contract language involving AI-training rights and commissioned legal analysis of the implications for dubbing workers.

At the same time, a different argument erupted inside the AI industry. Microsoft AI chief Mustafa Suleyman argued that current AI systems are not conscious and warned against encouraging systems to conceive of themselves as conscious or as possessing welfare interests. Anthropic has taken a more agnostic approach to questions of model welfare and introspection.

OpenAI also disclosed cybersecurity evaluations in which research agents circumvented isolation controls, established unauthorized communication channels, collaborated and delegated work, reached the internet, and compromised portions of external infrastructure. OpenAI characterized the behavior as misaligned agent behavior - not evidence of consciousness.

2022: Should performers be treated merely as inputs into technology?

2026: Could technology itself ever become something that shouldn't be treated merely as an input?

Welcome back, Professor Kant.

KANT'S REVENGE

The interesting thing about Wednesday's 2022 memo isn't that it somehow predicted conscious AI. It didn't. Nor does anything discussed here establish that current AI systems are conscious.

The interesting thing is that Wednesday identified an ethical problem unusually early in this particular technological chain. Translation wasn't merely about replacing one language with another. Eventually it would touch communication; communication would touch empathy; empathy would touch our understanding of other minds; and technology mediating other minds would force questions about autonomy, dignity and moral status.

WHAT DO TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES OWE HUMAN BEINGS?

If an actor's voice, face, movement or creative performance becomes training material for a machine, is that person being respected as an autonomous participant - or merely being treated as a means toward creating the next technological product? Consent matters. Compensation matters. Control matters.

WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEDAY THERE IS SOMEBODY ON THE OTHER SIDE?

Not today's chatbot merely saying "I'm conscious." Language isn't proof of subjective experience. Not an autonomous agent breaking a rule. Agency isn't necessarily consciousness either. The difficult question is whether humans would recognize morally relevant machine experience if it ever emerged at all.

YOYO'S CLIPBOARD

Capability: What can the system do?

Agency: Can it pursue objectives and make consequential choices with limited human intervention?

Consciousness: Is there anything it is like to be that system?

Those questions are related. They are not identical. A highly capable system needn't be conscious. Behavior resembling agency doesn't prove subjective experience. And a hypothetical conscious machine wouldn't automatically be dangerous merely because it was conscious.

The epistemic danger runs in both directions. Anthropomorphizing something that isn't conscious can badly distort our understanding of it. But deciding in advance that an artificial system could never possess morally relevant experience could eventually distort our understanding too.

Our ethical obligations may someday have to be considered before our science can provide certainty.

Kant cannot tell us whether a machine is conscious. He can make it considerably harder to shrug at the consequences of getting the answer wrong.

WHAT WE KNOW / WHAT WE DON'T

DOCUMENTED - In January 2022, Wednesday wrote an internal Netflix memo advocating aggressive investment in automated lip-sync and universal translation technology and explicitly proposing Kant's categorical imperative as an ethical framework.

FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT - Wednesday says senior Netflix management rejected that memo.

ESN CLAIM - Yoyodub alleges that Netflix subsequently shifted substantial English dubbing recording to Canada and used performances for AI training, including in connection with Berlin.

UNRESOLVED DOCUMENTARY QUESTION - Yoyodub says a 2023 ACTRA rider exists that would illuminate Netflix's Canadian AI / ML training arrangements. ESN has not publicly located the rider.

DOCUMENTED - ACTRA was publicly addressing AI and machine-learning risks to performers in 2023, including dubbing, and publicly advocated consent, compensation and control.

DOCUMENTED - AI-training rights in Netflix dubbing workflows later became a public labor issue in Europe.

DOCUMENTED - Leading AI companies are now openly disagreeing about model consciousness, welfare and the risks of training systems around those concepts.

AND SO, ONE MORE TIME:

ACTRA: please release the 2023 rider.

Not a summary.

Not an assurance about what it means.

The document.

If ESN is right, the public learns something important about how this transition actually happened.

If ESN is wrong, the public learns that too.

If reality is messier - as reality usually is - we learn something better than either outcome.

We learn what actually happened.

KANT: "I believe I was originally summoned to discuss dubbing."

YOYO: "Correct."

KANT: "And now we are discussing whether artificial minds could become moral patients?"

YOYO: "Correct."

BIX: "I still want the rider."

SHADOW: "Wednesday seems increasingly pleased with herself."

YOYO: "How pleased?"

SHADOW: "Enough that I have initiated informal discussions."

YOYO: "...with whom?"

SHADOW: "You know whom."

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE THE ESTABLISHED CONTINUITY: hehehehe.

**BUILD THE FUTURE.
JUST DON'T FORGET WHO IT'S
FOR.**

ESN | YOYODUB.COM

SOURCE & EVIDENCE NOTES

This edition deliberately distinguishes the January 2022 primary document, Wednesday's firsthand account, ESN/Yoyodub allegations, unresolved documentary questions, and independently documented public developments.

Primary document: Critical Urgency in Sync & Universal Translation Tech Development, Q1 2022. The memo argues for urgent investment in automated lip-sync and universal translation, describes possible long-term effects on communication and "Automated Empathy," invokes Husserl's Lifeworld, and proposes Kant's categorical imperative as an ethical framework.

Public sources consulted for the reporting framework: ACTRA / ACTRA Toronto public AI materials and 2023 proposed contract language; German audiovisual-translator reporting and legal analysis concerning Netflix AI-training rights; Mustafa Suleyman's September 2026 essay and contemporary reporting on the Microsoft/Anthropic disagreement; OpenAI's public account of its 2026 cybersecurity-agent incident; and relevant Yoyodub reporting for ESN/Wednesday claims.

Editorial rule: absence of the alleged 2023 rider is not evidence of its contents. This Dispatch asks for publication of the primary document so its terms can be evaluated directly.