



Stanford eCorner

The Duality of Disruption

Tim Kentley-Klay, Zoox

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Tim Kentley-Klay, co-founder and CEO at autonomous-vehicle startup Zoox, discusses the costs and benefits of industry disruption. While job losses and business closures get a lot of attention, not as much is paid to the resulting emergence of new ecosystems, according to Kentley-Klay, an animator, filmmaker and serial entrepreneur who has founded three design and technology-driven companies.



Transcript

about the technology. Otherwise, I wouldn't be doing it. It is true that the car was seen as clean in solving the problem of a lot of horse pollution that was happening in towns because so many horses, you know, but this is one of the reasons some of our competitors, for example, are fielding vehicles that have internal combustion engines. I mean, we're pure EV. For us, in our most dense urban areas, and the United Nations predicts that in 2050, 75% of the world's population, they're gonna live in dense urban areas. And so we want that to be safe. We want it to be clean. We want people to be able to jog and not be getting tailpipe emissions, right? And we want it to be access for the whole community, low cost, and we want it to be a wonderful product experience. Which is something we're very passionate about at Zoox, as well. And so I think, for us, there's a lot of positives.

I think some of the negatives are, as you said, there's always a yin and yang to life, right? And so when you have a new technology it is gonna displace some other incumbent industries. And in Silicon Valley, I'd be looking at 2-1/2 years, it's called disruptive technologies, right? But I kind of react against that term, because I'm like, I'm not really creating an instructive company. I'm creating a constructive company. For a new business to get up in the marketplace, I think there has to be an order of magnitude, at least better and ahead of the competition, right? And so you're actually making things better but there's also loss in that. And so you might have some unemployment from professional drivers, like taxis and this sort of thing, but you need to look at the entire system of the city, for example. If you're able to make that city drive more efficiently, be more safe, and a better service for a city of four million people, then that's a win. And by creating that technology, you create new stratas of jobs. And this is something that people often don't see is they just see the jobs are being lost, they don't see the jobs that are being created. I mean when was the personal computer invented? - [Colleague] 1976. - 1976, right? And we employ probably 100 computer scientists.

Those jobs didn't exist when that thing was invented. And so you also need to look at, there will be displacement, but there'll be new economies created. They'll be cottage industries of people cleaning these vehicles, recharging them, right? And even though they're more utilized, you're gonna be making more of them. There's a lot more cars made today than horses and carriages were ever built. And it will be the same with these robotic systems, they will increase the size of the market.