



Stanford eCorner

The Duty of Digital Leaders

Toni Townes-Whitley, *Microsoft*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/5422/The-Duty-of-Digital-Leaders>

Microsoft's Toni Townes-Whitley, Corporate Vice President of Worldwide Public Sector and Industry, describes how the core of what she calls "digital leadership" involves the obligation to consider ethical issues of fairness and privacy, while navigating across all sectors of society and regions of the planet. "This digital leadership conversation says there's something beyond building cool stuff," she explains.



Transcript

there's something beyond building cool stuff. There's something about, that goes beyond the responsibility of what we build to how we build and implement. There's something about digital responsibility that's part of this equation and there's also something about inclusion. There's something about who we build it for. So the what, I came out of the generation of the what, what can we build? What's the design, what's the use case? Let's build, let's build. What's the model? But you're in a generation quite frankly and we have to as a globe, as leaders, as entrepreneurs, have to start to define this more broadly, have to define it with responsible digital leadership, being willing to take on the rule of law, of policy, to take on even your own department of justice if you disagree with their perspective on privacy and privacy of data. The willingness to take on the less sexy stuff of how do you handle cross-border data, how do you handle privacy in the EU? What does it look like? What does AI really look like in terms of equity? How you handle digital equity? And then inclusion, who's benefiting from all the stuff, this cool stuff we're building? That's the conversation that we're calling and I'm starting to quite frankly index on this conversation of digital leadership and it's not just about how pervasive the technology is. It's about the reach that you have to have. A day in the life has to be able to start with a minister of finance in Botswana, move to the head of Rockwell Automation on a manufacturing plant floor, move to Cleveland Clinic in Abu Dhabi and talk about the future of the healthcare continuum, move quickly to JPMorgan Chase and talk about blockchain technologies and move very quickly, very quickly into the CityNext conversation that's happening all around the world particularly in Singapore and India and different parts of the world. That's what a day in the life of digital leadership looks like and there is not one skill set.

There is a multitude of skill sets that are needed to operate in this space.