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Robert Bond (rtjbond@icloud.com) is a compliance and ethics professional at Bond & Bond Ltd based in the United Kingdom.

Technology is both the sword and the shield

By Robert Bond

There are many wonderful quotes about the risks and rewards of technology:

“If we continue to develop our technology without wisdom or prudence, our servant may prove to be our executioner.” – *Omar Bradley (U.S. Army general)*

“The human spirit must prevail over technology.” – *Albert Einstein (scientist)*

With the power of quantum computing and the immediate impact of artificial intelligence (AI), we are experiencing advances in the value of using technology in almost all aspects of our daily lives and our organizations. However, there is an increasing realization that:

- Technology has inherent risks and biases.
- We must understand the origin of the technology we use in our products and services.
- Access to personal information and proprietary data must be carefully controlled.
- The fundamental rights of humans must be protected in the use of technology and AI.

We are now experiencing a plethora of rules and regulations being imposed by governments. The U.S. has tightened its controls over sharing of sensitive data of U.S. citizens with “countries of concern,” has new rules for export controls of technology to third countries, and has regulations on technology due diligence in supply chains.

The EU and the U.K. have implemented regulations on cyber-resilience in supply chains and connected devices, as well as export and import controls, such as the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. The directive aims to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behavior and anchor human rights and environmental considerations into companies’ operations and corporate governance. The new rules will ensure that businesses address adverse impacts of their actions, including in their value chains inside and outside Europe.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recently agreed on the need for policies to foster the development and adaptation of technologies such as neurotechnology, synthetic biology, and quantum technology. Ministers and high-level representatives from OECD countries, the EU, and partner economies welcomed a new OECD “Framework for Anticipatory Governance of Emerging Technologies” that promotes responsible innovation and offers tools to help governments identify and address the ethical, social,

and legal implications for technological developments before they become entrenched.^[1]

Organizations need to keep on top of the emerging laws and develop suitable compliance policies to tackle these technology and AI risks. They should also consider controls to minimize risks while protecting human rights, the environment, and security, and at the same time keep businesses moving in the right direction. Tough call!

¹ OECD, "Framework for Anticipatory Governance of Emerging Technologies," *OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers*, no. 165 (2024), https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/framework-for-anticipatory-governance-of-emerging-technologies_0248ead5-en.

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