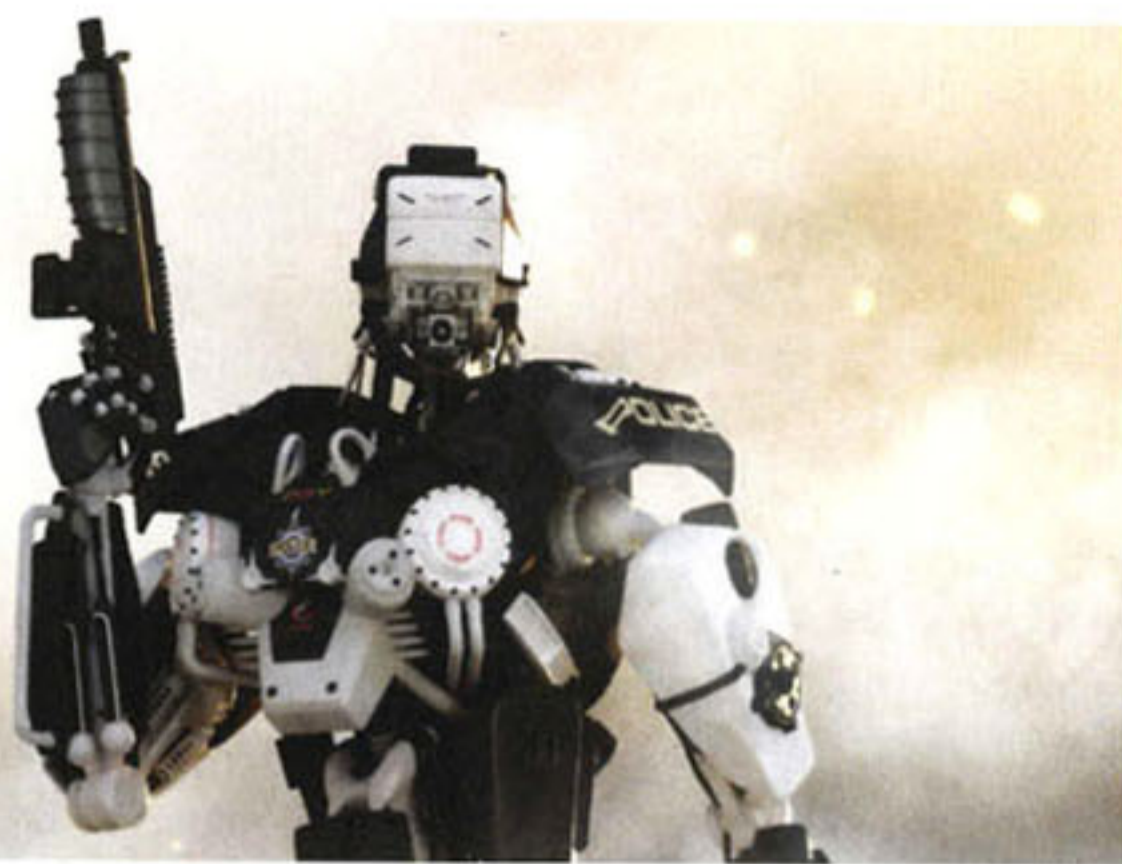


## Scientists Warn: Conscious Killer Robots Could Destroy Humanity



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The development of “killer robots” that could be misused already appears a given, but now experts speak of “the possibility of AI developing consciousness, which some warn could be used by machines to rebel against humans and kill us,” wrote the *Daily Star* on December 23.

Subhash Kak, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Oklahoma University, told the paper that if “indeed machines become self-aware, they will be cunning and they will bide their time and choose the best moment to take over and enslave, if not kill, us.”

Yet it’s unlikely slavery is in the cards. As a commenter under

the *Star* piece put it, “It doesn’t take the smartest human to realize that if ‘conscious’ AI robots wanted slaves, they would build ‘less-conscious’ robots, rather than rely on such an ineffective and unpredictable set of tools as the human race. They would simply eliminate all humans.”

While Kak points out that he doesn’t actually believe robots can develop self-awareness because of the uniqueness of man’s consciousness, he does warn that there’d likely be serious consequences if they did. In essence, such a development would confront us with entities vastly stronger, sturdier, and more intelligent than ourselves, but which presumably would be conscienceless.

But according to Kak, many scientists believe a future robot takeover is a very real threat. After all, they believe consciousness has already been achieved by robots: humans. This belief is an outgrowth of atheism. If we’re merely cosmic-accident-born material beings bereft of souls, we’re then just some pounds of chemicals and water. We’re just an interesting arrangement of atoms — organic robots.

Assuming for argument’s sake that conscious robots could become reality, what we should truly fear is their inculcation with an atheistic worldview. To the point here, what could be wrong with terminating an organic robot’s function? A conscious robot might not have a reason to kill us. But it sure wouldn’t have a reason not to.

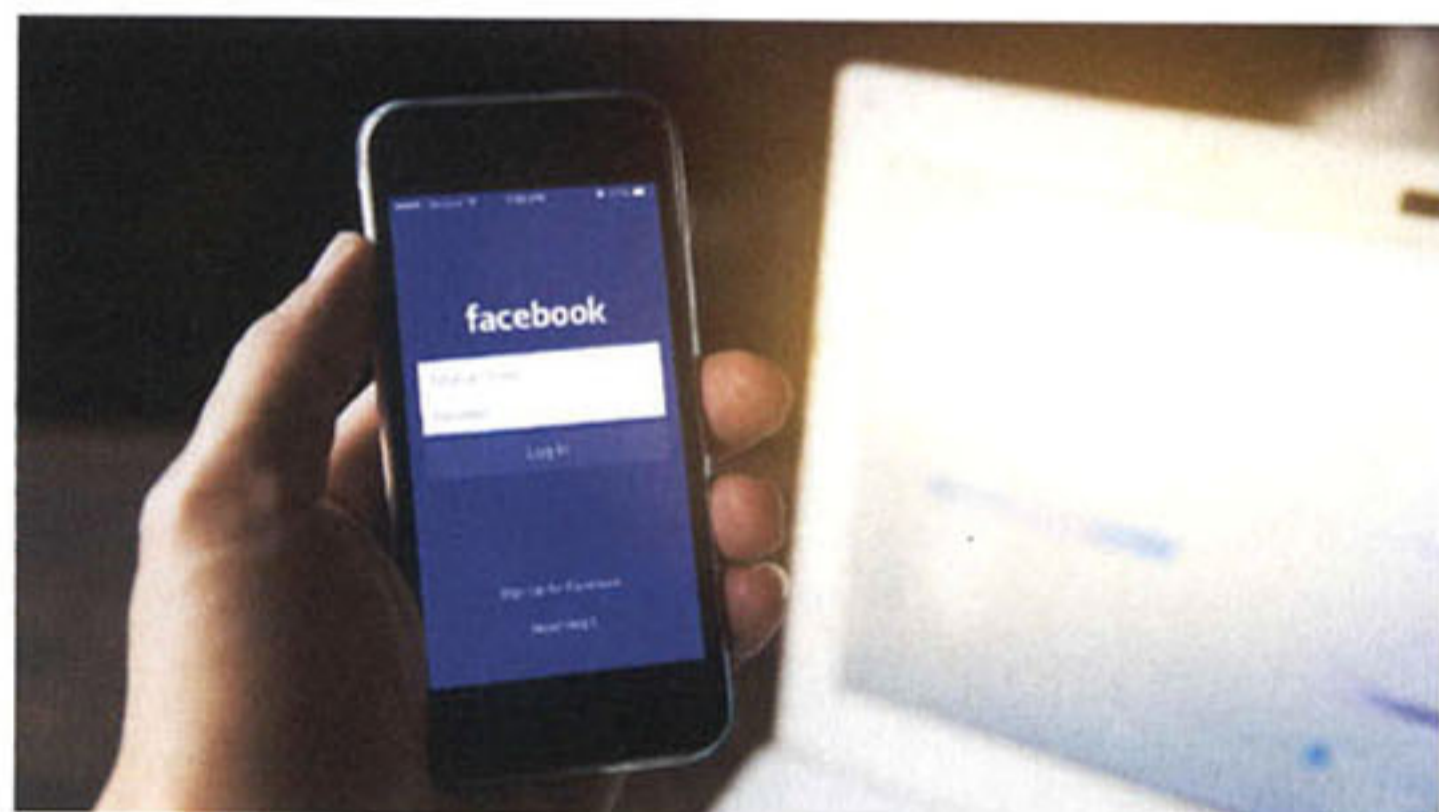
## Facebook Drops “Fake News” Red Flags

Just one year after introducing its “fake news” red flags, Facebook has discontinued the tool after having to face the fact that it just didn’t work. In fact, many users were sharing articles tagged by the social media giant as a result of their being tagged.

The “Disputed” article flagging feature — introduced in December 2016 — was designed to stop the spread of articles the leadership of Facebook considered as misinformation. Of course, Facebook — with its record of manipulating users’ newsfeeds, censoring posts expressing views different from those of its leadership, and violating users’ privacy — is not, perhaps, the best judge of what is and is not “fake news.” It is certainly not the sole arbiter of truth.

In announcing its decision to ditch the “fake news” red flags, Facebook Product Manager Tessa Lyons wrote in a December 20 blog post, “Academic research on correcting misinformation has shown that putting a strong image, like a red flag, next to an article may actually entrench deeply held beliefs — the opposite effect to what we intended.” In other words, for those already inclined to doubt the veracity of Facebook, calling an article “fake news” served more as a “hey, maybe there’s something to this” flag.

In her blog post, Lyons explained that the “Disputed” flag would be replaced with a feature that lists “related articles” next to the information that Facebook deems unreliable. This new feature is based on research conducted by Facebook that showed



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that when questionable articles had related articles next to them, users were less likely to repost them. Lyons wrote, “False news undermines the unique value that Facebook offers: the ability for you to connect with family and friends in meaningful ways. It’s why we’re investing in better technology and more people to help prevent the spread of misinformation.”

There is no question that misinformation is spread on social media. But Facebook’s attempt to “prevent the spread of misinformation” is coupled with its efforts to spread misinformation. That is a recipe for failure. The selective spread of misinformation is still misinformation.