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Editorial

Dear Reader,

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," begins Charles Dickens' novel, "A Tale of Two Cities," capturing the stark dichotomy of the human experience. In these words, Dickens encapsulates the tumultuous nature of life, where joy and despair often coexist in precarious balance. Within the intricate tapestry of societal upheaval and personal turmoil, the novel unfolds against the backdrop of the French Revolution, a time of great change and upheaval. Through vivid imagery and compelling characters, Dickens explores the contrasting realities of hope and despair, love and sacrifice, weaving a timeless tale that resonates with readers across generations.

As illustrated by the papers in this journal edition, the phrase "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times" also often epitomizes the dual nature of progress. On one hand, it heralds unprecedented advancements that have transformed how we live, work, and communicate. Breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and predictive modelling promise to alleviate longstanding challenges and enhance the quality of life for millions. Yet, amidst these triumphs, a darker side is marked by ethical dilemmas, privacy concerns, and the growth of deep fake applications. The rapid pace of innovation often outstrips our ability to fully comprehend its implications, leading to unintended consequences and unforeseen risks.

In the UK, in recent weeks, most newspapers have given significant coverage to what has been termed the British Post Office scandal, also known as the Horizon IT scandal, which stemmed from faulty software by Fujitsu, causing false shortfalls in the financial accounts managed by postal workers. Described as a major miscarriage of justice, over 900 postal workers were wrongly convicted of theft, fraud, and false accounting. The fallout included court battles, imprisonments, loss of homes, debts, and bankruptcies, leading to stress, illness, family breakdown, and at least four suicides.

While emerging computing technologies hold immense promise for the future, they also demand careful stewardship to navigate the complexities of an increasingly interconnected world.

Professor Andrew Ware,
On behalf of the Editorial Board,
Annals of Emerging Technologies in Computing (AETiC).