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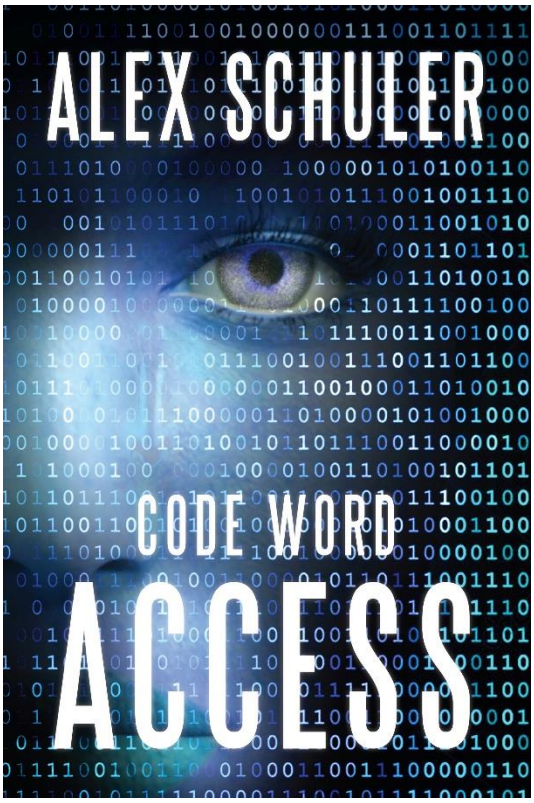

Alex Schuler Gives Audiences a Case of Future Shock

Technothriller Explores the Advancement of Ethics Within Artificial Intelligence.

JAMUL, CA (July 2020)—Technology has evolved swiftly in the last few decades. Many embrace these advancements; others have a profound case of "future shock." A term coined back in the 1970s by author Alvin Toffler, future shock is a sickness where people are unable to cope with rapid technological and sociological change. Artificial intelligence has become the most feared advancement of all. Even Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, has said "AI is a fundamental risk to the existence of human civilization." While it progresses humanity, it *lacks* humanity.

Most don't realize it, but AI is already everywhere. It lives in the background, correcting grammatical errors, autofilling internet searches, suggesting ads based on historical interests. It is replacing jobs in factories. Self-driving cars share the roads. Social media, Amazon, Google, all run with artificial intelligence. Yet people fear AI, because while it reacts like a human, it is still very much a machine. But what if we could program in traits that are uniquely human? Can humanity even be programmed, and if so, what could go wrong? What happens when you try to give a ubiquitous AI system an "ethical code"?

Alex Schuler explores these very questions with the thrilling debut novel **Code Word Access.**

The year is 2050, and the world is dominated by artificial intelligence. The Net delivers information and entertainment directly to consumers' brains. America's leading scientist, Shawn Muller, a young prodigy, is tasked to upgrade the AI that controls the military drones and defense grid. But when he installs the new "ethics core" into the system, the algorithm determines that *Shawn* is a threat to mankind. He must run to escape execution.

Off the grid and forced to experience life without the aid of technology for the first time ever, Shawn discovers a whole society that has rejected the technological invasion. He connects with an outlawed organization called the Organites, led by a mysterious woman named Destiny. The group has targeted Shawn as the enemy because of his profession. Yet Shawn and Destiny find that their survival is inextricably linked, and the unlikely pair sets off on a journey to bring down the very system that Shawn helped put in place. In a world that has lost all distinction between reality and cyberspace, **Code Word Access** probes the limits of humanity.

Code Word Access is a technothriller that keeps readers on the edge of their seats. Shawn's algorithm is exactly what Elon Musk warns us about; it's what fuels our future shock. Schuler introduces an exciting world that feels like a prospective reality.

"This is not a run-of-the-mill when-machines-become-smarter-than-man story. It is clever, unique, and extremely well-executed." –*Screencraft*

Alex Schuler began developing artificial intelligence software for the commercial and defense sectors following a career as a pilot in the U.S. Navy. At the same time, he delved into writing books that explore the ethical and philosophical implications of technology, through engaging science fiction and thoughtful examinations of the people behind today's most sophisticated—and potentially dangerous—breakthroughs.

Originally founded in 2006 with a focus on poetry, Level 4 Press has won nine literary gold medals and 24 finalist awards, including Forward Magazine Audiobook of the Year; Poetry Foundation Best Verse Drama; Bill Fisher Award for Best New Fiction; USA Book News Best Audiobook; Indie Excellence Awards for Best Poetry and Best Current Events Book; and Forward Magazine Book of the Year finalist.

Interview Questions:

- What do you view as the pros and cons of artificial intelligence?
- This was clearly written by someone with military experience; can you tell us your background? How did you first connect with AI?
- The story takes place in the year 2050, only 30 years from now. Why so soon?
- This story is visually driven, from the landscapes to the new technology; are you seeking to see this book on the silver screen?

If you would like more information or to interview Alex Schuler, please contact Alyssia Gonzalez at alyssia@level4press.com