

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL WELCOME AND CONVERSATIONS

ALEC ROSS

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ALEC ROSS

MR. ROSS: All right, good evening, everyone. My name is Alec Ross and I'm the author of a relatively recently published book called *The Industries of the Future*, that I bet you can find in a bookstore.

And after World War II, the United States made a massive investment in the K-12 education system in poor and working class communities in vocational education so that people growing up in the kind of community that I grew up in West Virginia or the kind of community that I taught in West Baltimore could get jobs in our industrial age businesses.

My big idea is that we make a similarly massive and country-wide investment in technological education.

(Applause)

MR. ROSS: The robots of the cartoons and movies from the 1970s are going to be the reality of the 2020s and powerful artificial intelligence is now allowing for labor substitution for not just the work of men with strong shoulders working in ports, factories, mines and mills doing work that is manual and routine, but also doing work that is cognitive and non-routine. And work is evolving to a point where when you go to work, either you're telling a machine what to do or a machine is telling you what to do.

And in the face of this we need to make sure that all of our young people know how to code. Computer code is the vocabulary that much of the future is going to be written in, and in a world with so much opacity about our economic future, it is one area where we do know that there's going to be job growth.

We've learned the hard way that humans are not as easy to upgrade as software, so we need to start early and we need to start young. Thank you.

(Applause)

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