The Realness of Real

## Podcast Points

1. **Virtual Reality** –Virtual reality environments are becoming more widely available. Examples include training for surgeons and pilots, or entertainment such as talking to others through avatars.
   1. What advantages can we expect from increased access to virtual realities.
   2. What are some disadvantages?
2. **The reality of war**. The movie “Good Kill” explores the experiences of using unmanned drones to drop bombs from a remote location. These drones provide physical protection to the pilot; however, they present other risks.
   1. What happens if warfare feels like a game, and how do pilots cope with the psychological impact of what they do?
3. **Social Media** – We design our image and life on social media by making conscious choices about what we post (or don’t post) to our audience.
   1. What effect do you think this ‘designed life experience’ is having on our perception of ourselves and others? To what extent is this gap between reality and portrayal a problem?
   2. Do you think we adjust our perceptions of others to account for their doing the same thing?
   3. What responsibility do we have as designers to protect people’s mental health on social media platforms?
4. **Robots** – In the article “Alone Together”, Turkle uses the example of taking her daughter to see two giant tortoises in the American museum of natural history. Her daughter commented that they could have displayed robots rather than capturing live turtles.
   1. As minimizing environmental impact becomes even more important, when is it better to have robots replace ‘real’ things?
   2. How might these simulated experiences change education for the next generation?
5. **Prosthetics** - In the article ‘The Uncanny Valley’, Mori describes the relationship between the human likeness of an object (like a robot) and our affinity towards it. Mori discusses the phenomenon of ‘The Uncanny Valley’ if an object is too close to life-like. For example, designers have created a prosthetic hand that is so convincing, when you realise it’s not real, you feel a sudden repulsion.
   1. Here’s a quote from the article; “I predict that it is possible to create a safe level of affinity by deliberately pursuing a nonhuman design”. What do you think, should designers design ‘fashionable’ prosthetics or more life-like replacements?
   2. What risks might fashionable prosthetics pose for people who don’t need prosthetics but might desire them as a fashion accessory?