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Ethics Meets Nano-Business

Nanotechnology has become a new buzzword describing scientific research conducted on a level in which the particle sizes range from 1 nanometer until 100 nanometers, involving manipulation of matter creating novel properties. In funding applications and investment research reports, the prefix “nano-” is now popular, even though it may be unclear whether the specific research actually falls under the category of nanotechnology (for example, the researched particle sizes may be over 100 nanometers etc). In any case, nanotechnology has a great capacity to attract public and private investments, already billions of dollars worldwide. In my presentation I will first describe recent developments in the field of nanotechnology, in order to show the type of research having most potential to create serious socio-ethical concerns. Second, I will briefly note the influence that non-scientific notions and futuristic visions have had on the research of nanotechnology. I will end with some remarks on how the research of this field may be able to alter the human condition for good.