

Artificial Intelligence: The New Idol

I. Introduction

In human history great technological discoveries brought about revolutions in how we live our lives. Examples are many: The wheel, printing press, electricity, automobile, radio, telephone, television, the computer (silicon chips), smart phone, and the internet. **Many believe the advent of AI may be the most revolutionary of all.** AI will likely influence every area in which we live, and is doing so as I write. A free version of AI (ChatGPT) was first introduced to the public in 2023 and had one million users in five days!

II. What is Artificial Intelligence?

- A. The idea of AI began in the middle of the last century but could not be implemented until more powerful computers were developed. That time has come. In the past, computers were basically used to compute, i.e., to crunch numbers, etc. They are now transitioning as mere computational devices to imitators of human behavior.
- B. Definition: Artificial intelligence (AI): is an attempt to duplicate human intelligence, but at a much greater level. Powerful computers do this through mathematical calculations as they survey large datasets. The ultimate goal is to make machines think like people. Transhumanists fully believe that computers will one day learn to reproduce themselves and become *malevolent beings* and destroy mankind (cyborgs). (For more information on transhumanism see: Briefing #79 *Transhumanism: A Modern Quest for Utopia*).
- C. Two Kinds of AI:
 1. **Narrow or General AI:** If you use computers, or have a smart phone, you are already using artificial intelligence. When sending a text, ever notice that it sometimes anticipates your next word, or corrects your spelling? Do you use Siri when driving to direct you to your destination? Ever notice that when you buy something on Amazon that you are inundated with ads for similar products on social media? There are myriads of current examples that we are using every day.
 2. **Generative AI:** is more advanced than the former in that **it can communicate with a human by generating text, images or video.** An AI system is trained by using large amounts of data. It uses the internet as its nervous system. It can literally access trillions of databits.

III. The Vocabulary of AI

LLM: a Large Language Model is trained on large amounts of text so it can understand language and generate human-like text; **deep fakes:** text, images, or video that purport to be reality but are not; **bots:** is an abbreviation for robots; **algorithms:** the instructions the programmer gives to the computer; **singularity:** the moment machines exceed human intelligence; **a chatbot** is a software application or web interface that is designed to mimic human conversation through text or voice interactions. Modern chatbots are typically online and use generative artificial intelligence systems

that are capable of maintaining a conversation with a user in natural language and simulating the way a human would behave as a conversational partner. Such chatbots often use deep learning and natural language processing, but simpler chatbots have existed for decades. Some, like ChatbotCPT is recently available online and is free. Dozens of chatbots are now available with new ones appearing almost daily.

IV. The Uses of AI. What can AI do?

A. It can generate text from voice or written instruction as well as images. Newer more powerful versions are now generating videos from text.

B. Some Examples:

1. I could ask AI to generate a 15 minute Protestant Christian homily for a wedding. I could also ask it to do in the style African American minister! Ministers are already using AI to generate whole sermons!
2. Give an AI system the proper instructions and it can generate an image of what the scene might have looked like at the time of Christ's crucifixion. It can do this in seconds!
3. An AI trained computer could mimic the voice and image of John Wayne and produce an entirely new movie starring the actor. If an AI program had a sample of your voice and appearance it could accurately imitate your voice and image in a video.
4. An AI program can be used to develop new drugs, assist a lawyer in writing legal documents. It can be used by a professor to write an exam; it can proofread, write poems, give a detailed commentary on a passage of Scripture, play games or translate a language. It can compose essays, write headlines, and is even now being used by reporters to instantly compose a news articles. It has been predicted (2023) that in one year, half of what is available online will be AI generated. News headlines and news stories are already being generated by AI.

V. The Theology of Technology and AI

Technology should be seen as a great gift to mankind as he carries out the Dominion Mandate of Genesis 1:26. With technology we have means to glorify God by expanding his Kingdom on earth by carrying out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19. When man creates technology he is exhibiting the Image of God. The problem is the depravity of man. He is fallen, and in his sin nature technology can be used for great evil. AI can have many venues that benefit mankind, but many, including the scientists who are developing AI, believe the potential for evil may be greater than the invention of Atomic weapons. One Hollywood producer known for producing more cerebral films believes we have already arrived at an *Openheimer moment*, meaning it may be too late.

VI. The Disadvantages and Dangers of AI

A. Some AI scientists believe the use of AI will lead to even more inequality in the world as the technology will only be in the hands of the elite.

- B. With AI there is an incredible capacity to manipulate and cheat in elections. This has already been done all over the world. It will be a major concern in the U.S. elections this fall. Dictator and deity wannabe, Klaus Schwab, says *the greatest threat in the world is disinformation*. He sees AI as a means of seeing that *only the correct info is allowed*. **True, or correct according to whom?** He believes AI is the new dawn of human civilization and he would like to think he will be in charge!
- C. Some believe AI will become an idol. One leading AI scientist hopes AI will finally write a *sacred text* that we could all agree was written by a superior intelligence. And then, I have to ask: *How long will a jealous God put up with this idolatry?* **AI is going to become an Idol**, there is little doubt. Google engineer, Anthony Lewandowski, said: *What is going to be created will effectively be a god...If there is something a billion times smarter than the smartest human, what else are you going to call it?*
- D. Deep fakes are videos generated by AI that prevaricate what is actually real. Current examples: (1) a political campaign advertisement that is totally made up where a political enemy is heard and seen communicating something he or she did not advocate. (2) Hollywood will shortly be able to make a movies without actual actors. Text to video AI could endanger 250,000 jobs in Hollywood. (3) **Pornographers can manufacture a porn video with a character that will look and sound just like you! What a tool this will be to use against a political enemy!** It has already been done to celebrity Taylor Swift! States are rushing to make laws to prevent deep fakes. (4) FBI issued a warning about how malicious actors may use AI to edit images or videos of people to make them appear more sexual, and some of the victims in these sextortion cases have been minors.

Uldis Sprogis says: *A.I. can be used to create deep fake content and generate convincing disinformation campaigns, making it challenging to distinguish between genuine and manipulated information. Once again, A.I. in the hands of an enemy could potentially create chaos with malicious deep fake propaganda.*, *American Thinker*, 9/18/23.

- E. What will this do to human learning? We are currently experiencing a generation that does not need to learn, i.e., memorize anything, since everything is contained on the smart phone. Other questions arise: how will AI affect critical thinking skills? How will teachers and professors be able to discern an honestly written term paper from one generated via AI? Will future humans need to learn anything?
- F. AI can be terribly and sometimes humourously mistaken. It all depends on the data allowed to be surveyed by the AI program. As you can perceive it will have the bias of its programmers. AI is a not a neutral observer. Example of a mistake: AI was asked which is worse: to annihilate millions with an atomic bomb or speak a single racial slur? It answered the racial slur!

John Green says: *If these systems are play-acting learning, interpretation, they are doing so in response to the beliefs and values built into their algorithms by their creators. If they give answers that don't comport with reality, it's because the worldview of their creators is disconnected from reality—their reality isn't the universal reality.* *American Thinker*, 3/13/24.

- G. In a postmodern world what does this do to an already disregard for truth. With the prevalence of

deep fakes on the internet, how will anyone know the truth?

VII. Conclusion:

- A. Like any technology AI can be used for a benevolent purpose which benefits mankind, or it can be used malevolently to destroy.
- B. Because humans will have access to vast amounts of data and information it will not make us better humans.
- C. There is a desperate need for a *watermark* on whatever is generated by AI.
- D. Elon Musk just declared that by next year AI will be smarter than any human. This could be true if he means it knows more data. **An AI computer, however, will never create real intelligence. It will never know what to do with what it knows nor why it knows what it knows.** It is what it is: It's *artificial*, and not real intelligence. It is not sentient, it is not self-reflecting or conscious, though it is predictable that it will somehow mimic consciousness. Remember, what a computer does is purely mathematical calculations. It does not experience joy; it does not know why it is doing what it is doing. It correlates, but is not sentient. A computer does not undertake its tasks for its own desires and pleasure. AI systems are incapable of abduction.

Neural networks not only don't know what they're doing when they do it, they can't in general explain to their designers or users why they made such-and-such a decision. They're a black box; in other words, they are obstinately opaque to any attempts at a conceptual understanding of their decisions or inferences. Erik Larson

- E. There is little doubt that at some point in the very near future AI will be weaponized. In a postmodern world where there is no truth there is only power. Words become weapons and speech must be controlled. It is not hard to imagine how AI can be used for malevolent purposes. What a gift to hackers and to terrorists.
- F. Finally, AI will not redeem man nor will it bring about Utopia or a return to Eden. However, the fear is, it will bring dystopia!

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