

Is Artificial Intelligence (AI) a Curse or a Boon?

For many decades now, one of the best-selling storylines of fictional movies is Machines trying to take over humans. This often referred to as AI takeover which is a hypothetical scenario where AI becomes the most dominant form of intelligence on earth, with robots taking control of the planet away from humans. The most popular series with a such a storyline is Terminator series where Skynet (Fictional Artificial Intelligence-based System) decides that humans are threat to its existence and tries to wipe them out. Other popular movies and television series which follow the same theme are Westworld, Blade Runner, A space odyssey, The matrix etc. There are multiple instances from talking robots to self-driving cars where modern technology was envisioned in movies and books long before they became reality. With this being the case let's try to understand if AI takeover can also turn into reality.

Current applications of AI are Image Recognition, Speech Recognition, Chatbots, Natural Language Generation, Sentiment Analysis etc. Artificial intelligence has its applications in the fields of healthcare, education, finance, law manufacturing etc. Applications of AI are increasing day by day and so is its value. What was previously done by humans is now being done by AI operated machine.

In the long term, an important question to ask is what will happen if the quest for strong AI succeeds and an AI system becomes better than humans at all cognitive tasks. As pointed by I.J. Good in 1965, designing smarter AI systems is in itself a cognitive task. Such a system could potentially undergo recursive self-improvement, triggering an intelligence explosion leaving human intellect far behind. By inventing revolutionary new technologies, such a superintelligence might help us eradicate war, disease, and poverty, and so the creation of strong AI might be the biggest event in human history.

On the other hand, some experts have expressed concern that AI might lead to extinction of human race unless we learn to align the goals of the AI with ours before it becomes superintelligent. While some experts believe that AI can prevent war, others believe that AI would actually lead to war as AI weapon development involves autonomous weapons which can make their own decisions without human intervention.

Prof Stephen Hawking said that "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race". Prof Hawking is not alone in fearing for future, Elon Musk also has warned that AI might be "our biggest existential threat". The likes of Steve Wozniak and

Bill Gates have also expressed their concern about risks posed by AI among other big names in science and technology.

Civilization as we know today has grown to what it is because of the curiosity of humans. It began with rubbing two stones and now the same curiosity has led to creating intelligence which is arguably better than our own. Artificial Intelligence is gaining popularity at a quicker pace, influencing the way we live. Mobile phones have already become an extension of our body. While it may not be necessary to curb our curiosity towards AI, it is very much necessary to develop ethical guidelines to use a technology like AI. Only time can tell if machines will really try to take over humans, but us humans as creators should take precautions in advance to prevent any mishap.

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