

# Artificial Intelligence – Friend or Foe?

There are moments which are more important than others in history, but they only become pivotal with hindsight. Does Chat GPT represent one of these inflection points which will be a defining moment in our history with significant and far-reaching consequences, or is it something less sinister something that we should embrace on the technological evolutionary path?

Chat GPT searches for relevant information, and then uses a series of rules and presents the data in an intuitive format. It is and, for the near future, will remain a non-sentient tool that uses data matching to produce coherent information. The protestations about the application are reminiscent of early internet nay sayers who foretold of personal information being freely available, addiction, social isolation, intellectual property infringement and the spread of misinformation. Whilst these remain issues, the regulatory infrastructure is slowly catching up and the world has not fallen apart. We now could not imagine a world without the fingertip availability of information; it has created thousands of jobs through the ecommerce industry, enabled international research and is an integral part of our lives. Chat GPT is just another internet tool that capitalizes on the human desire to know more.

Human to human communication will flourish; there is an innate desire that has evolved over millions of years, for humans to bond with each other. As we know from the recent pandemic, distant meetings are not desirable in the long term primarily because we lose the hand gestures and body shifts that are such an important part of non-verbal communication. The objective of every communication platform is to make the interaction ‘as if you were there’. We must recognize that we have a generation that has shunned physical human communication, but has embraced virtual human communication. This trend is likely to continue and permeate business as people climb their career ladders. But in the grand scheme, this is an anomaly. As people age, they tire of the always on, virtual communication which lacks the warmth of human contact and will rekindle human conversation for friendship and most importantly for ideas, a forum to explore concepts and hone thoughts in an atmosphere that builds on one another, this sparking of one thought off another is dependent on one on one communication.

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Learning falls into two categories, gaining familiarity with a task to perform it, and the expansion of the mind, two very different types of knowledge acquisition which will utilize AI differently. Taking medicine as an example, diagnosis would lend itself well to AI, a consistent, unemotional assessment of symptoms, but medical research requires the human mind to guess, hypothesize and make leaps of thought that AI is unlikely to perform in the near future. The key is to enable AI as an effective tool to free the human mind for what it does best, think.

Critical thinking is a uniquely human characteristic and showcases the human aptitude for problem solving. It goes well beyond analysis, evaluation and inference and represents the pinnacle of the human mind, the ability to make sense of randomness. Critical thinking is about bringing order to chaos, negative entropy to entropy, something which the human brain is adept at and something which non sentient systems struggle with. The challenge for machines is the lack of rules. If there are no standards by which to resolve disorder, how can it be resolved?

We can expect to see ebbs and flows that will shape human communication, recognizing that man has an innate instinct to touch and talk to his fellow human. Learning is a little more clear-cut, AI solutions are ideal for large amounts of routine data and are an excellent tool to assist in knowledge gain, but if it needs creativity, AI is not the solution. Similarly with critical thinking, anything beyond logical deduction is the domain of the human brain. Humans have proven that when their backs are against the wall, they can become incredibly creative coming up with solutions for seemingly impossible problems. I have faith in humankind and therefore am confident that Chat GPT is another step in mankind's never ending intellectual evolution. Like any tool, it will be misused by some, but people will do the right and responsible thing and use it for the betterment of our world. Who knows where this could lead, If mankind were to perfect time travel, then apocalyptic scenarios of the far future, would disappear, every time we get close to the end of the world, we simply transport back to a safer time, in fact, we may be doing this right now.