

IAI – Conversation Starters

The following are some conversation starters for Monday evening provided by a number of people. Some parts were written before the Talk in the Village Hall and some are reflections after it. We may not have the expertise of the Talk's speakers, but we can move the conversation on, voice hopes and fears and focus on how AI will impact us as human beings and societies.

1, AI - What is it?

Well, I do not know anything about it. Which is why I have questions about it. Did it start with Alan Turing in the 1950's, or was it Ada Lovelace from Porlock or Fibonacci in the 14C - or Archimedes - or Arabian mathematicians? Looking at the stars and writing algebraic equations. Whoever it is - it is moving fast.

2 While there will be many positive gains for humanity, unfortunately it is already weaponised by both the West and the East. One positive is that it could render Nuclear bombs obsolete - too expensive - no need to destroy the physical infrastructure of an enemy country. It does not take a great stretch of imagination to consider the uses of new and improved technology. It's great while it lasts. Hmmm, maybe.

3. The genie is out of the bottle; we cannot dis-invent AI. The challenge is how can we use it for the good of humanity rather than to its detriment.

4. Is AI intelligent or is it merely clever? 'Intelligence' suggests it can undertake activities that human beings can do. AI may be able to sift material, work out logical consequences from algorithms, propose ways forward from a numberless patterns provided for it, but can it love, hate, feel, sympathise, empathise and be counter-cultural? These latter five aspects of humanity are part and parcel of human intelligence. Some prefer the term 'Machine Learning' to AI, but this is a grey area.

5. While it can be right, AI makes mistakes and can get it wrong. This has been remarked on in many contexts and the examples drawn on last Monday revealed its unreliability in some areas.

6. People have been accused of crimes based on AI assessments and later, when details have been double-checked, have been shown to be innocent. Legal profession is exploring whether/how AI can be reliably used to help with the back-log of court cases.

7. Some newspapers are trying to catch up with their understanding of AI as some sham newspaper articles, which even the experts struggle to spot, have been generated via AI.

8. On the positive side, if AI is used intelligently, it could re-humanise society. Example from the charity sector.

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