



A Humanistic Perspective on Artificial Intelligence

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The paradox of technology is stark: the more it connects humanity, the greater its potential to sow chaos. From stone tools to social media, every innovation has carried this dual edge. Now, artificial intelligence (AI) continues this pattern, evoking both awe and fear. For many, the term “AI” triggers unease, like the ominous Jaws theme, signalling something vast, mysterious, and potentially dangerous lurking beneath the surface.

The Fear Factor

The dread surrounding AI often stems from its portrayal as a runaway force driven by profit-hungry businesses, tech giants, or political powers with little regard for ethics or humanity. Fears of job displacement, depersonalised healthcare, disrupted food systems, or amplified terrorism loom large. Without a shift in perspective, AI risks becoming a tool for chaos rather than progress.

A Humanistic Approach

To counter this, we must view AI through a humanistic lens, prioritising its role in serving humanity rather than dominating it. I consulted two humanities scholars to explore this perspective.



Dr. Lindsey Cormack, a political science professor at Stevens Institute of Technology and author of the forthcoming book *How to Raise a Citizen, And Why It's Up to You To Do So*, dismisses dystopian fears. “AI can’t replicate the essence of human connection,” she says. “It doesn’t understand what it means to be human among humans.”

Dr. Nick Byrd, a philosophy professor at the same institution, echoes this sentiment, noting that AI’s “intelligence” is a misnomer. “It’s remarkable how a fundamentally simple system can produce seemingly intelligent outputs,” he explains. AI doesn’t think; it predicts the next word in a sequence using vast data sets, operating at lightning speed. This process, while impressive, lacks the depth of human cognition.

What AI Can’t Do

Human traits like empathy, joy, intuition, humour, and originality remain beyond AI’s reach. To test this, I asked AI to create an original cat joke (as a cat lover of 45 years, I’m familiar with the genre). It delivered a tired, recycled line: “Why did the cat sit on the computer? To keep an eye on the mouse.” Not only was it unoriginal—contrary to my request—but it highlighted AI’s tendency to “hallucinate,” or generate misleading outputs.

This exposes both a limitation and a caution. As Byrd warns, we must approach AI with discernment, recognizing its potential to deceive. However, he sees promise in AI as an assistant, enhancing human reasoning and intuition when used thoughtfully. Cormack adds that AI excels at handling mundane tasks, freeing humans from drudgery. “Those who master AI’s query systems and develop related skills will gain a significant advantage in their careers,” she advises.

The Bigger Picture

AI is not inherently good or evil—it’s a tool shaped by human decisions. History shows that every invention, from fire to the internet, has been wielded both constructively and



destructively. AI represents a transformative inflection point, perhaps the most significant yet. To harness it wisely, we must consider the consequences of our choices before acting.

The lesson is clear: we are not punished for our mistakes but by them. By embracing a humanistic approach to AI—using it to augment rather than replace human potential—we can steer this powerful technology toward progress, not chaos. The responsibility lies with us, as it always has.

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