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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: WHAT'S NEXT?

Technology is always changing. And the rate at which it changes is always speeding up. Because of this exponential change, we can barely imagine what will happen next. But many scientists believe that soon computers will achieve artificial intelligence or AI. Computers can already solve difficult problems and complete complex processes - like driving a car or playing the game of chess. But intelligence includes much more than this. Intelligent beings know they are alive, they understand emotion and they are able to be creative. Many scientists believe computers will achieve this level of intelligence and more!

Considering the above, the **aim** of this article is to analyze the notion of Artificial Intelligence from the point of view of its benefits and threats.

Scientists believe that the intelligence of computers will soon become even greater than the intelligence of humans. No one knows when or how it will happen. But some of those who study the future of technology call this possible event – 'The Singularity.' A key part of achieving 'The Singularity' is the ability to create! Scientists believe that after singularity, computers will begin to design other new and more complex computers.

Many people question if this could ever happen. But Stephen Hawking, internationally famous scientist said: "Very complex chemical molecules operate in humans to make them intelligent. So it seems to me that equally complex electronic processes can also make computers act in an intelligent way. And if they are intelligent, they may be able to design computers that have even greater complexity and intelligence." [1, c.208]

Some of the scientists call this process the "Intelligence Explosion." They believe AI computers will design more complex computers - at an increasing rate of speed. Many universities and scientists are studying this possibility. Organizations such as Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute are trying to prepare humans for it. Scientists do not know what an intelligence explosion could look like. But many of them agree that the future of the human race will change - in ways we do not yet understand. [2]

At a scientific conference in 2006, scientist, Eli Yudkowsky, spoke about the huge effect of this change. He said: "Over and over again, intelligence has achieved things that once seemed impossible and even strange. And we are not talking about a jump like the one from hunting and gathering to the Internet. The intelligence explosion would be a much bigger jump. It could and probably will re-shape the whole world." [3]

Researchers believe this future change will be positive. They say that computers will be able to solve problems that humans have never been able to solve - like poverty and disease. Many suppose that humans will combine their bodies with computers to achieve greater abilities or longer life. Some even believe that people could defeat death by putting their brain and genetic information into a computer.

The other scientists are concerned about the negative effects of the "Intelligence Explosion." They worry about the danger of computer designed weapons. Computer expert and scientist Bill Joy wrote a story for Wired magazine about AI. In it, he

explained that many nations already have weapons of mass destruction that can kill large groups of people. But he believes it will be even more dangerous after the “Intelligence Explosion.” He wrote: "I think it is fair to say that we are on the edge of perfecting extreme evil. This evil could spread past the possibilities of weapons of mass destruction."[4]

Other scientists think that it is not computer-designed weapons that are the main danger. They think the danger is the computers themselves. Many films in popular culture present this idea. They tell stories in which computers take over the world and destroy human life. This is an idea that many scientists take seriously. Daniel Dewey studies at Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute. He told Motherboard, an online magazine: "Artificial intelligence could lead to the end of humanity, the continuous unequal treatment of humans, or other risks... If we understand the risks better, we can make better decisions to avoid them or decrease the damage."[5]

Many of them argue on what the future of AI could look like. But some agree that AI is quite possible. They believe computers can achieve human intelligence because as they stress, humans are completely physical beings. Hawking supposed that human brains and computers work in basically the same way. But can this be true? Are humans just the total of their molecular parts? And is brain power the only thing that defines human nature? John Searle would say no!

Searle is a professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkley. He often argues with scientists about artificial intelligence. Searle assures that computers can never achieve human consciousness. He states that humans know they are alive in a way that computers will never be able to. Scientists may create computers with programs that model consciousness. But Searle does not think this is the same thing as true consciousness [6].

Many people would agree with Searle. They argue that there is something more to humans that cannot be re-produced. Many philosophies and religions teach that humans are both physical and spiritual beings. And it is this spiritual component that many people believe computers will never achieve, because of the Christian story of creation: "Then God formed a person from the dust of the ground. He breathed into him the breath of life, so that he became a living being."

So, as we can conclude from the studied sources, the notion of Artificial Intelligence is quite disputable, but nevertheless it is already on its way to change the world. And now it is only the humanity that is to ensure its responsible promotion.

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