

AI's Opportunities and Threats - Trust and Accountability - by Jeff Ulrich

Threats

Proliferation of information/misinformation: The abundance of information available on the internet and social media can lead to the spread of misinformation and a decrease in trust in sources.

If the projection that I shared is accurate (<https://lifearchitect.ai/chatgpt/>) and ChatGPT is presently generating as much information (in Words Per Minute WPM) every 14 days as the entirety of humanity produced in all published books since the invention of the printing press then what are the consequences for society? What happens when the cost of content goes to zero? We're already drinking from a firehose of content. The internet and social media have made boundless information available to anyone with a connection. This abundance has also resulted in far greater polarization and division as overwhelmed people retreat to their corner. With too much information are we learning not to trust any source? What happens when Chatbots are used to shape opinion at a mass (but personalized) scale or used by scam artists to fleece the unsuspecting? What can we trust?

The challenge of regulating AI's output lies in balancing public vs personal interests, as well as public vs commercial interests. The question of accountability remains unanswered. Who is mediating and who is representing public vs personal interests? Is this the role of government and if so, is any government entity equipped or capable of meeting this challenge? In addition to public vs personal interests, what about public versus commercial interests? Competitive forces compel private interests to make the most of whatever technology becomes available. It's not Microsoft's job to determine what is in the best interest of society. Microsoft's objective is to sustain and grow the business and maximize shareholder value. Who is the gatekeeper here? Who is accountable for what an AI produces based on a 'black box' process that the engineers themselves don't fully understand?

Ensuring that AI's output is unbiased is crucial, as AI can only be as unbiased as the data it is trained on. Bias in AI refers to the unintended influence that data and algorithms have on the output generated by AI systems. The problem of bias in AI is important to address because AI systems are being used to make decisions that affect people's lives, from determining who is eligible for a loan, predicting recidivism in a criminal context, and deciding who is a suitable candidate for a job. Bias can be introduced in AI systems in a number of ways, including through the data used to train them, the algorithms used to make decisions, and the human biases of the developers and decision-makers who create and use the systems. How can we ensure that the output of Generative AI is unbiased? Does AI have a bias? If so, in what direction?

The rise of generative AI could pose a risk to professions that have traditionally been 'gatekeepers' for a body of knowledge. Is the rise of Generative AI a risk to professions which have traditionally been gatekeepers for a 'body of knowledge'? Governing bodies of professions determine standards, define curricula, monitor compliance, enforce standards, certify, etc. The governing bodies are the final word on whether someone is allowed entry to 'the club'. They can also kick you out of the club. Does the rise of generative AI allow people to bypass what has traditionally been the role of the governing body? If, at some point in the future, anyone can access the 'correct' answer without having domain expertise then does this undermine the body responsible for managing that domain? Will they be bypassed?

Opportunities

The abundance of factual and current information provided by generative AI could free people from tedious work, allowing them to focus on more creative pursuits. At some point in the future, the information provided by Generative AI will be more factual, more current, comprehensive and unbiased. This abundance of 'good' information will free millions of people from some of the mundane tasks of information processing and content generation. The hopeful notion is the liberation of time and energy will be re-directed into more creative and fulfilling pursuits. This has also stimulated much discussion about a future need for Universal Basic Income (UBI).

Leveling the Playing Field: Generative AI could help address information and income inequality by providing millions with access to quality information. Millions more people will have access to quality information and this could 'level the playing field' and help address information and income inequality. Rather than traditional search providing a list of links and ads, Generative AI provides a natural language 'answer'. Moreover, it provides an answer that can be interrogated and refined. Because the interaction with information is so fluid and so natural, more people are likely to do it. This increased accessibility and ability to interface with information may have profound implications for 'information poor' citizens.

Improved Critical Thinking: Easier access to personalized and comprehensive information can equip people with the tools to think critically and understand complex issues. People will be better equipped to think critically and understand

through having easier access to quality information that is more accessible and personalized to their level of interest and comprehension. Generative AI models are already being incorporated into teaching practice - using AI to generate an essay or report and then engaging with students about the output. Asking and answering questions about what is correct about the response. What is incorrect? How could the response have been improved? How can a student evaluate the veracity of the generated text? These could all be powerful adjuncts to the teaching process and the development of critical thinking skills.