Attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence

A Artificial intelligence (AI) can already predict the future. Police forces are using it to map when and where crime is likely to occur. Doctors can use it to predict when a patient is most likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Researchers are even trying to give AI imagination so it can plan for unexpected consequences.

Many decisions in our lives require a good forecast, and AI is almost always better at forecasting than we are. Yet for all these technological advances, we still seem to deeply lack confidence in AI predictions. Recent cases show that people don't like relying on AI and prefer to trust human experts, even if these experts are wrong.

If we want AI to really benefit people, we need to find a way to get people to trust it. To do that, we need to understand why people are so reluctant to trust AI in the first place.

B Take the case of Watson for Oncology, one of technology giant IBM's supercomputer programs. Their attempt to promote this program to cancer doctors was a PR disaster. The AI promised to deliver top-quality recommendations on the treatment of 12 cancers that accounted for 80% of the world's cases. But when doctors first interacted with Watson, they found themselves in a rather difficult situation. On the one hand, if Watson provided guidance about a treatment that coincided with their own opinions, physicians did not see much point in Watson's recommendations. The supercomputer was simply telling them what they already knew, and these recommendations did not change the actual treatment.

On the other hand, if Watson generated a recommendation that contradicted the experts' opinion, doctors would typically conclude that Watson wasn't competent. And the machine wouldn't be able to explain why its treatment was plausible because its machine-learning algorithms were simply too complex to be fully understood by humans. Consequently, this has caused even more suspicion and disbelief, leading many doctors to ignore the seemingly outlandish AI recommendations and stick to their own expertise.

C This is just one example of people's lack of confidence in AI and their reluctance to accept what AI has to offer. Trust in other people is often based on our understanding of how others think and having experience of their reliability. This helps create a psychological feeling of safety. AI, on the other hand, is still fairly new and unfamiliar to most people. Even if it can be technically explained (and that's not always the case), AI's decision-making process is usually too difficult for most people to comprehend. And interacting with something we don't understand can cause anxiety and give us a sense that we're losing control.

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Many people are also simply not familiar with many instances of AI actually working, because it often happens in the background. Instead, they are acutely aware of instances where AI goes wrong. Embarrassing AI failures receive a disproportionate amount of media attention, emphasising the message that we cannot rely on technology. Machine learning is not foolproof, in part because the humans who design it aren't.

D Feelings about AI run deep. In a recent experiment, people from a range of backgrounds were given various sci-fi films about AI to watch and then asked questions about automation in everyday life. It was found that, regardless of whether the film they watched depicted AI in a positive or negative light, simply watching a cinematic vision of our technological future polarised the participants' attitudes. Optimists became more extreme in their enthusiasm for AI and sceptics became even more guarded.

This suggests people use relevant evidence about AI in a biased manner to support their existing attitudes, a deep-rooted human tendency known as "confirmation bias". As AI is represented more and more in media and entertainment, it could lead to a society split between those who benefit from AI and those who reject it. More pertinently, refusing to accept the advantages offered by AI could place a large group of people at a serious disadvantage.

E Fortunately, we already have some ideas about how to improve trust in AI. Simply having previous experience with AI can significantly improve people's opinions about the technology, as was found in the study mentioned above. Evidence also suggests the more you use other technologies such as the internet, the more you trust them.

Another solution may be to reveal more about the algorithms which AI uses and the purposes they serve. Several high-profile social media companies and online marketplaces already release transparency reports about government requests and surveillance disclosures. A similar practice for AI could help people have a better understanding of the way algorithmic decisions are made.

F Research suggests that allowing people some control over AI decision-making could also improve trust and enable AI to learn from human experience. For example, one study showed that when people were allowed the freedom to slightly modify an algorithm, they felt more satisfied with its decisions, more likely to believe it was superior and more likely to use it in the future.

We don't need to understand the intricate inner workings of AI systems, but if people are given a degree of responsibility for how they are implemented, they will be more willing to accept AI into their lives.

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READING PASSAGE 3

*You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27–40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 on pages 91 and 92.*

Questions 27–32

Reading Passage 3 has six sections, **A–F**.

Choose the correct heading for each section from the list of headings below.

*Write the correct number, **i–viii**, in boxes 27–32 on your answer sheet.*

List of Headings

- **i** An increasing divergence of attitudes towards AI
- **ii** Reasons why we have more faith in human judgement than in AI
- **iii** The superiority of AI projections over those made by humans
- **iv** The process by which AI can help us make good decisions
- **v** The advantages of involving users in AI processes
- **vi** Widespread distrust of an AI innovation
- **vii** Encouraging openness about how AI functions
- **viii** A surprisingly successful AI application

27 Section **A**

28 Section **B**

29 Section **C**

30 Section **D**

31 Section **E**

32 Section **F**

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Questions 33–35

*Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.*

Write the correct letter in boxes 33–35 on your answer sheet.

33 What is the writer doing in Section A?

A providing a solution to a concern
B justifying an opinion about an issue
C highlighting the existence of a problem
D explaining the reasons for a phenomenon

34 According to Section C, why might some people be reluctant to accept AI?

A They are afraid it will replace humans in decision-making jobs.
B Its complexity makes them feel that they are at a disadvantage.
C They would rather wait for the technology to be tested over a period of time.
D Misunderstandings about how it works make it seem more challenging than it is.

35 What does the writer say about the media in Section C of the text?

A It leads the public to be mistrustful of AI.
B It devotes an excessive amount of attention to AI.
C Its reports of incidents involving AI are often inaccurate.
D It gives the impression that AI failures are due to designer error.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 36–40

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 36–40 on your answer sheet, write

YES	*if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer*
NO	*if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer*
NOT GIVEN	*if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this*

36 Subjective depictions of AI in sci-fi films make people change their opinions about automation.

37 Portrayals of AI in media and entertainment are likely to become more positive.

38 Rejection of the possibilities of AI may have a negative effect on many people's lives.

39 Familiarity with AI has very little impact on people's attitudes to the technology.

40 AI applications which users are able to modify are more likely to gain consumer approval.

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