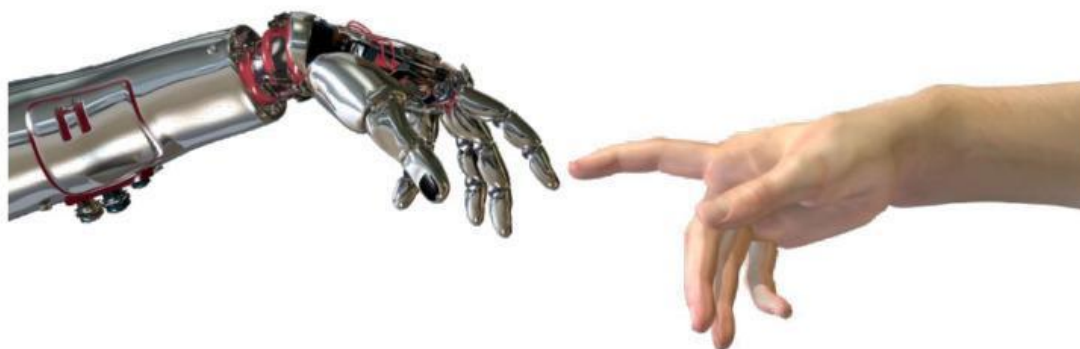


# The Age of AI

Have we created our own replacement?



A. \_\_\_\_\_ In a dark corner of the web, somebody may have input words into a chatbot. Within seconds, an in-depth article about the dangers of generative AI would have been generated by artificial intelligence. As it happens, this particular piece was written by a human being – but for how much longer will we be able to say that? With the rise of ChatGPT and its rival, Google’s Bard, the way we work, create and live looks set to change. We are entering a new era, in which the words we encounter online, in books or in magazines have been plucked from the void by machines and twisted into something resembling human discourse. Are we writing ourselves out of our own story, or is the tale of AI just another chapter in the history of panic and hysteria?

B. \_\_\_\_\_ Although hyped as the next big thing, AI capable of imitating human speech has been around for a long time. In 1966, computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum unveiled a piece of software that many consider the world’s first chatbot. Named Eliza, the program was created to illustrate the superficial nature of communication between humans and computers. Eliza formulated responses to prompts based on a script which parodied the sort of conversation a patient may have with a psychotherapist. The software was a hit, with those who tried it seemingly fascinated with Eliza despite knowing that the entire thing was an illusion.

C. \_\_\_\_\_ During these early years of our digital age, scripted software was little more than a toy to be used for pranks, or an oddity that held our attention for a matter of minutes. Then came mobile phones, and shortly afterwards, predictive text. Initially, a maddening battle between man and machine as the user struggled to type a simple greeting, text prediction software became ingrained in the popular consciousness with the arrival of the smartphone. By the late 2010s, we had accepted a reality in which a handheld computer could predict what we were going to say based on prior communications.

D. \_\_\_\_\_ Instead of browsing through a user’s personal history, the software searches through its vast library of human ideas and generates a credible-sounding answer. In essence, chatbots weave bits and pieces of everything we, collectively, have ever written and published online – wittingly or otherwise – and form them into something that sounds like it has been created by a human being. Except, of course, it hasn’t. As with Eliza, the software can only offer an illusion, a crude mimicry of humanity. Artificial intelligence doesn’t understand creativity, flair, warmth, or sorrow. It cannot connect to its audience because it doesn’t know what the word means.

E. \_\_\_\_\_ Aside from the many drawbacks, could it perform a useful function? Proponents of chatbots have pointed out that they could make life easier for people with disabilities, allowing them to formulate long passages of text with minimal input. Generative AI could also be used at the planning stage, enabling students, scientists and creatives to create a rough outline of a project. As technology evolves, new professions would emerge, although it seems likely that far more jobs will be lost as a result of artificial intelligence. Perhaps our focus on chatbots and machine art reflects a self-destructive side to human nature. Are we looking for a way to replace ourselves because we know, deep down, that we aren't going to be around forever? Are we subconsciously building our own successors as a way to preserve our culture, to ensure that we leave our mark on the universe? Or is money driving the ascent of AI, as tycoons look for shortcuts to increase profits, at the expense of us all? One thing is for sure – the age of artificial intelligence is upon us.

Sources: BBC, The Guardian, The Jerusalem Post, Lexology

## READING FOR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING

You are going to read a text about the rise of generative AI. Scan the text quickly and match the opening sentences with the correct paragraphs. One opening sentence cannot be matched to any of the five paragraphs and should be marked 'Not given'.

1. ChatGPT and similar programs take the predictive text model to its logical conclusion.
2. In order to address the concerns around chatbots, we need to understand their form and purpose.
3. The dangers of artificial intelligence extend beyond the world of chatbots, with AI already being used by the military in a number of countries.
4. Why, then, are we fixated on AI?
5. This could have been written by a machine.
6. Public interest in chatbots continued to increase with gimmicky examples surfacing in the era of the chatroom.



## READING COMPREHENSION

Read the article again. Complete the sentences with **between ONE to THREE** words from the article.

1. Our way of life looks \_\_\_\_\_ with the release of chatbots such as Bard and ChatGPT.
2. Is the danger we face from AI real, or is there an element of \_\_\_\_\_ and hysteria?
3. The first chatbot appeared in 1966 – a computer \_\_\_\_\_ called Eliza.
4. The script used by the chatbot attempted to imitate the kind of conversation a \_\_\_\_\_ might have with their patient.
5. Early examples of commercial chatbots included \_\_\_\_\_ that amounted to little more than a toy for users to prank their friends with.
6. The software that current chatbots use originated in smartphones, with their \_\_\_\_\_ model relying on a library of prior communications to guess the user's response to a message.
7. Modern chatbots generate credible-sounding answers based on a \_\_\_\_\_ of human ideas.
8. A lack of understanding and emotion means that chatbots can only ever \_\_\_\_\_ of creativity, mimicking humanity rather than generating something original.
9. Potential uses for the technology include as an aid to those with \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Although chatbots will create more jobs, \_\_\_\_\_ will be lost as a result of artificial intelligence.

