

Reading Comprehension

Reading: AGI and Its Consequences

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to **revolutionize** the world. AI can be divided into two categories: Generative AI and Applied AI. Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and Midjourney, is used to create new solutions and ideas. It can be used in fields such as gaming, robotics, and even medical **diagnostics**. Applied AI, on the other hand, is used to make processes more efficient. It is used to automate **mundane** tasks, optimize processes, and make decisions using data.

The most advanced form of AI is called AGI, or Artificial General Intelligence, which would be capable of learning, generalizing, and understanding the same way that a human being does. Though AGI has yet to arrive (as far as we know), it has the potential to improve quality of life. Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, comments: “We can make people’s lives amazing. We can cure diseases, we can increase material wealth. We can help people be happier.” Altman also believes AGI could **bring about** major advancements in human understanding. He tweets:

“[I] suspect that to fully understand the universe, we need AGI in a similar way to needing a telescope to understand galaxies... our unaided **faculties** are not good enough, and we need better tools... also, [I] think AGI is probably necessary for humanity to survive--our problems seem too big for us to solve without better tools :(”

Two central issues are *control*, i.e. maintaining control over the system, and **alignment**—ensuring that its aims are shared by those of humanity. According to Eliezer Yudokowsky, regarded as the founder of the AGI field, the most obvious result of developing a *superhumanly* smart AI is human **extinction**. He **likenes** a

conflict between humanity and a superhuman intelligence to “the 11th century trying to fight the 21st century”, or “Australopithecus trying to fight Homo sapiens.” For computer scientist Geoffrey Hinton, we still have **breathing room** before things get completely **out of hand**: “it’s not going to happen in the next year or two.” Ultimately, AGI will be able to understand and promote different worldviews. For this reason, he notes, we “don’t want some big for-profit company deciding what’s true.”

Unlike Hinton, others believe that AGI is just **around the corner**, which is why many tech industry leaders such as Elon Musk and Steve Wozniak are calling for a six-month **moratorium** on AI development to ensure proper controls are **put in place**.

After reading the text, answer the questions.

1. What is your opinion of the passage? Does it fill you with excitement or dread (fear)?
2. What are the two types of AI mentioned in the passage and how do they differ?
3. Does Altman share Yudokowsky and Hinton’s views on AGI? Why or why not?
4. Describe the *alignment* of an AI system in your own words.
5. What is the purpose of Yudokowsky’s example of “Australopithecus trying to fight Homo sapien?”
6. What is the purpose of the moratorium?

Match the words with their meanings as used in the article

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. revolutionize (v) | a. an inborn mental/physical ability |
| 2. diagnostics (n) | b. the techniques used in identifying the nature of illnesses |
| 3. mundane (adj) | c. a period of rest that allows you to plan what to do next |
| 4. bring (sth) about (phr. v) | d. boring; dull |
| 5. faculty (n) | e. to change something radically or fundamentally |
| 6. alignment (n) | f. to arrange so that something can happen; to establish sth |
| 7. extinction (n) | g. a temporary prohibition (stopping) of an activity |
| 8. liken (v) | h. the process of all members of a species dying |
| 9. breathing room (idiom) | i. out of control |
| 10. out of hand (idiom) | j. to cause something to happen |
| 11. around the corner (idiom) | k. a position of agreement or alliance |
| 12. moratorium (n) | l. to compare; to show a similarity between two things |
| 13. put (sth) in place (idiom) | m. coming very soon |