

Artificial Intelligence Still Needs People

The Islamic State has been recruiting young people (as young as 12-13), people just at the stage of breaking away from their parents and looking for a group to belong to. Google recently revealed that they are allowing non-profit groups to use Google's ad targeting algorithms to provide counter views to radicalism. These non-profits found out that they can't just turn it on and let it go. They have to have people directing all the time.

In the case of counter radicalism, the problem is that we are in a constant battle. Those who want to radicalize are repeatedly changing their message. They are always looking for new slogans, new ways to present their message as one of hope, and putting

new slants on everyday events. Just like computer hackers who are persistently trying another way to attack, radicalizers are regularly reworking their pitch and thus, counter radicalism needs to always look for how to counter that.

This need for humans to direct artificial intelligent systems is universal. It will not go away. At its core, AI is always a trailing system, not a leading system. It works from past data.

In the case of businesses, we see similar issues in marketing (new avenues opening up every day), in dealing with a new customer, or in the problems that people on the production line bring to work that day. The problems of yesterday rarely are the problems we face today. We need to constantly invent the new ways of operating the business.

Such a reinvention means that any Artificial Intelligence system would need to be reinvented also.

Nearly any business computer system needs constant change. Business needs change. Businesses are bought out or merged. Divisions are bought and sold. The computer systems need to change with business changes.

Jeff Bezos is reported to have said that "if we stop trying for the future, day two is

stasis followed by irrelevance followed by excruciating painful decline followed by death." The same is true of computer systems including those built on Artificial Intelligence.

One reason we change in business is that we are constantly learning new things about the markets. We start with one set of knowledge and as we interact with customers, we learn a lot more about their needs and how they view the world. All our prior knowledge helps, but is not sufficient to fully take care of their needs. Every existing system needs tweaking to fit the new customer situation. Artificial Intelligence faces the same problem: the data that was used to train it does not include the current situation and we need to keep training it to fit.

Artificial Intelligence has the capability to do many routine tasks. However, it is best used in collaboration with creative human beings to direct it, train it to match the situation, and handle the many cases that do not match. When humans can edit the AI response, both benefit.

Artificial Intelligence is a major tool for our future. However, it is a tool, not the holographic doctor of Star Trek. The reality is that it can be very helpful but wrong at times.

We Still Need to Direct AI

What is Your Vision?

"A land flowing in milk and honey" is one description of "the promised land" – a land people yearn for. That is a description of a land covered in grasses and wild flowers. That vision is perfect for a nomadic people who raise sheep and goats. Open grasslands are a wonderful land for grazing and the many flowers give wild bees a lot of nectar. That vision does not inspire city folk. But to get to "the promised land", we need a vision of where we are going.

In business, we need to have and promote a vision of where we are going. As leaders, we may have a vision, but if it is not promoted to and shared by others, we won't get there. Much of our work is the promoting of our vision.

It can not be a vision that benefits the few. It must be a vision for the others, one that offers them a future and a hope. "Increasing revenue by 20%" might be something that you can appreciate, but if others see that as taking another 20% of their home time away from them, they will resist it. The vision has to be how all of us benefit.

The best visions are those that take 20 years to accomplish. They express a real hope of transforming the world for the better. By claiming that goal, we transform work from a job to a mission.

Developing the vision takes time and effort. Investors have one concept. The line workers have a totally different viewpoint. Sales people and engineers have very different value systems and respond differently to ideas and motivators.

Great leaders talk about the time it takes to build a common vision. It can take years to properly craft such a vision. Great leaders say it is worth it.

Risky World

A Chinese program scans many databases to check for indications of government officials acting corruptly. It has been such a success that a number of local authorities have turned it off. It was catching too many people.

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