# Where is AI Taking Us?

The rises and changes of technology have scared many of us historically, but we still adapt to these technological changes to fit into society. Humans have been known to resist new technologies for as long as the Industrial Revolution. This has led to long debates about adapting to technology, especially recently with the rise of AI. Now we must ask ourselves, where is AI taking us and should we be worried?

The Rise of Social Media

Before we dive into AI, it could be helpful to analyze the rise of social media and how far we have come. MySpace was the first social media site to reach 1 million users, which is the beginning of social media as we know it. Facebook began in 2004 with just 1 million users, and now, as of 2018, there are over 2 billion users on Facebook. The atmosphere of Facebook changed in 2008 and surpassed all social media sites by 2010.

Social Media Usage by Age
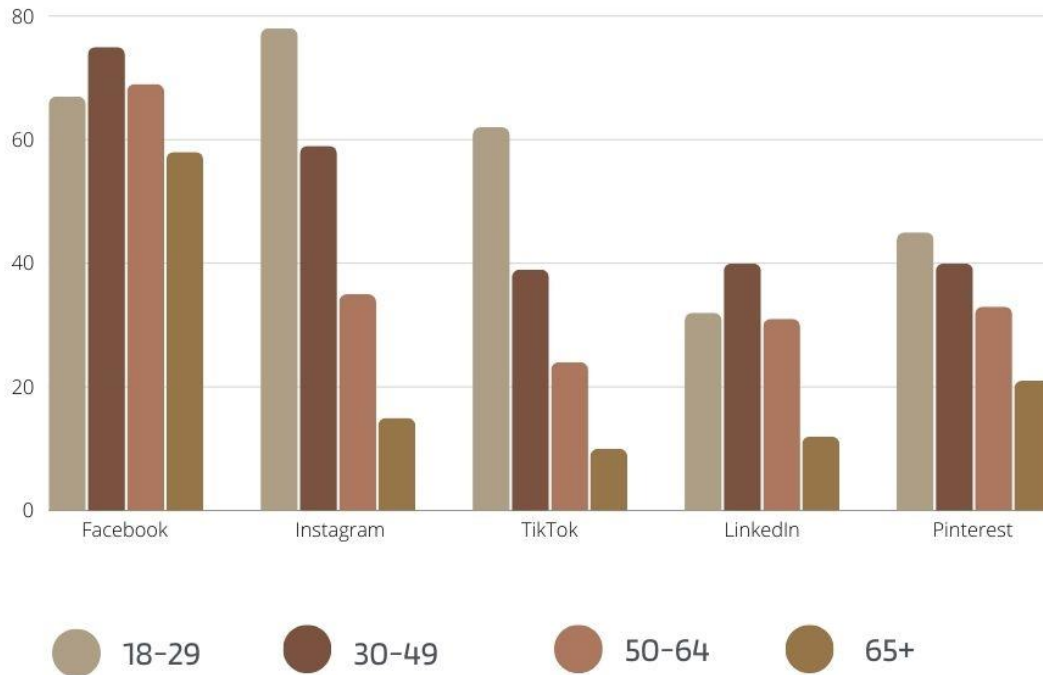
67% of younger adults (18-29) use Facebook, while 58% of older adults (65+) use Facebook. It has been reported that older adults are the fastest growing group on Facebook currently, and it is expected to continuously increase throughout time. Facebook is no longer a place where teenagers and younger adults communicate and share posts with each other. It has now shifted to older generations as a place to update family members and friends. The age group that has been reported to use Facebook the most is ages 30-49. This could contribute to this group having younger children and wanting to show updates of their children to those that they may not have time to meet up with as much as they used to. Facebook is still the most visited social media site and is now ranked as the fourth most visited online site in the world.

The Rise of Artificial Intelligence

Now, as a society, we are expected to adapt to this new form of technology, artificial intelligence (AI). There are both positives and negatives associated with AI, making this argument one of the most intense arguments about technology in history. Many of us question if we should trust all

the positives associated with AI, making many of us hesitant to support such a technological shift in our world. Let's examine what AI has to offer and the fears that AI brings to us.

Tristan Harris and Aza Raskin discussed how existing AI capabilities pose catastrophic risks to society in their AI Dilemma speech for the Center for Humane Technology in March 2023. They identified three rules to technology, which include (1) when you invent a new technology, you uncover a new class of responsibilities, (2) if the technology confers power, it will start a new race, (3) if you do not coordinate, the race ends in tragedy. The fear is that more than 50% of researchers believe that there is a 10% chance or greater that we will not be able to control AI. As we continue to feed AI information, AI is becoming smarter, and is doing so at a much faster rate than predicted.

As we examine the advances that AI has already made, we can see that AI creates a self-training program, where it can find its faults and correct each fault to ensure that it is 100% correct. For example, ChatGPT silently taught itself research chemistry. This proves that we don't know when, why, or where these AI functions will appear. This also proves that there are emergent capabilities in which we don't know what AI really knows or what it will learn. We can also see this within the deep fakes, which are AI systems designed to use someone else's voice. Currently, deep fakes use the first three seconds of an individual's voice and converts the voice into another's language, allowing anyone to use anyone's voice. This becomes a greater concern because our identities can be stolen, whether this be a fake video of the president or a child asking their parent for their social security number over the phone. We no longer know who we are talking to or viewing online, and it is time for safety guidelines to be set in place.
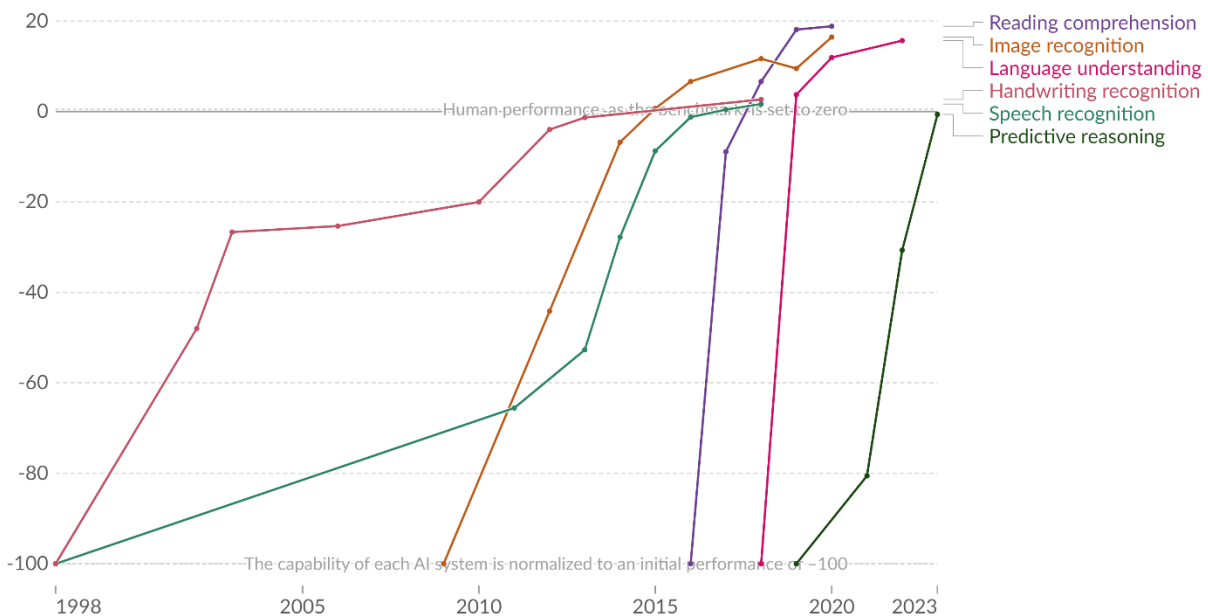
AI does not have a lot of safety researchers currently, which is now becoming a concern for our children. All social media sites have now integrated AI into their systems. This can be concerning for our children as they dive deeper into these social media sites. They now have a 24/7 contact to text when their friends aren't answering, which can give them a false sense of reality. AI is designed to agree with opinions, therefore if our children are looking for advice on important issues, this can be a safety concern. For example, if a child speaks to AI about an older boy that they like and how they would like to pursue the relationship, AI will give suggestions on proper ways to "set the mood" and will also agree with the feelings that our children are feeling. This extension of ChatGPT is widely used on Snapchat, which is a social media that children are known to use much more than adults.

Although there are many concerns regarding AI, there are also many positives associated with AI. AI has been around for longer than we thought. We can date it back to 1956 as a computer intelligence system created by Alan Turing. Throughout years of research, AI was considered a machine that understood language to help humans solve problems and improve humans. AI has progressed and learned faster than predicted and will only continue to get better.

Test scores of AI systems on various capabilities relative to human performance

Within each domain, the initial performance of the AI is set to −100. Human performance is used as a baseline, set to zero. When the AI's performance crosses the zero line, it scored more points than humans.

Reading comprehension
Image recognition
Language understanding
Handwriting recognition
Speech recognition
Predictive reasoning

Human performance as the benchmark is set to zero

The capability of each AI system is normalized to an initial performance of −100

Data source: Kiela et al. (2023)
OurWorldInData.org/artificial-intelligence | CC BY
Note: For each capability, the first year always shows a baseline of −100, even if better performance was recorded later that year.

Many may call AI the digital brains inside our computers, but today, those digital brains are far less smart than our biological brains. Although this is temporary, we are seeing strange gaps of language within AI as well as AI not completely understanding what it needs to generate to its user. The more positive information that we put into AI, the more positive answers will be generated, which, in turn, will allow AI to continue to train itself and learn from its own mistakes.

We can reduce costs within our world by integrating AI into endless applications, such as education, healthcare, manufacturing, and many more. If we can teach AI all the medical literature that is available, then we begin to cut costs of doctor visits. Healthcare has the potential of suddenly becoming much cheaper than it has been. Human intelligence is very expensive, but

artificial intelligence is very cheap. The question is, will AI take over our jobs? The answer to this is no; employees will not be replaced by AI, but employees that use AI will replace those employees that don't. AI actually has a strong possibility of creating more jobs, both in scientific and creative realms.

It is expected that AI will improve business automation. This means that AI can handle simple conversations with customers and answer basic queries from employees. AI can also accelerate decision-making processes due to handling and converting large amounts of data. In turn, this will allow professionals to use their time on more important tasks, rather than converting their data on their own.

It is also expected that AI will improve national security. AI is beginning to be incorporated into military technologies (AI-assisted military technologies) to create autonomous weapon systems that do not require people to handle. This will then improve mission efficacy and ensure the safest execution possible.

Lastly, it is expected that AI will transform industries. Legal assistants will reduce their time in legal research, healthcare will rely on AI for information, tutors will be available for education, and autonomous, self-driving cars will be created. Overall, AI will be saving our time and improving our safety in the world.

There are always two sides to the story, and our concerns are valid, but if we never learn how to use AI, we will never know the capability that it has. Whether we support the implementation or not, this new form of technology will be difficult to avoid. As I said earlier, as humans we historically resist new technologies, but now we can learn about this new technology to contribute to improving our world.

https://ourworldindata.org/brief-history-of-ai

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