

Viewpoint: 3 reasons we should be concerned about artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence will in time bring extraordinary benefits to medical science, clean-energy provision, environmental issues, and many other areas. But precisely because AI makes judgments regarding an evolving, as-yet-undetermined future, uncertainty and ambiguity are inherent in its results. There are three areas of special concern:

First, that AI may achieve unintended results. Science fiction has imagined scenarios of AI turning on its creators. More likely is the danger that AI will misinterpret human instructions due to its inherent lack of context.

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Second, that in achieving intended goals, AI may change human thought processes and human values. AlphaGo defeated the world Go champions by making strategically unprecedented moves—moves that humans had not conceived and have not yet successfully learned to overcome. Are these moves beyond the capacity of the human brain?

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Third, that AI may reach intended goals, but be unable to explain the rationale for its conclusions. In certain fields—pattern recognition, big-data analysis, gaming—AI's capacities already may exceed those of humans.

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By treating a mathematical process as if it were a thought process, and either trying to mimic that process ourselves or merely accepting the results, we are in danger of losing the capacity that has been the essence of human cognition.

Editor's note: Henry Kissinger served as national-security adviser and secretary of state to Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford

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