Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) – 06/10/2023
This is one of a series of articles provided by the Oakmont Technology Learning Center on the use of technology by seniors.
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Ray Kurzweil wrote a book titled, "The Singularity Is Near" in 2006, and he was not writing about living without a spouse; he was writing about the day when Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) exceeds human intelligence and what that means for humans.

Singularity is when AGI achieves, and exceeds, the computational capacity of the human brain. Highly autonomous systems or machines will possess the ability to outperform humans. At the singularity, AGI systems could improve themselves, leading to exponential growth of their intelligence and capabilities.

Technology has evolved and is affecting the human condition in new and unexpected ways. The invention of the wheel was probably the first example. The invention of the printing press is a more current example of how technology radically changed our world, putting the scribe out of work. In our lifetime, we have seen dramatic technological change with the invention of the computer, which allowed us to eventually land on the moon and then later, the internet and the smartphone. This evolution has not stopped - it has accelerated into AGI.

The question before us: has singularity arrived? For most of us, the answer is no, but it is very close, maybe a matter of years. Technology is improving our lives, even though we find it hard to keep up. How soon will it be before AGI performs all of our work? AGI enables new medical improvements that can eliminate disease and reduce the effect of aging. AGI conceivably could perform most (or all) of the menial tasks that fill our day. Will our grandchildren find themselves living in a leisure class? Ultimately, AGI will improve itself, inventing new systems that have not been thought of. This causes us to consider that AGI might decide that people are no longer necessary.

In a previous article, we examined how ChatGPT, which is an early example of AGI, is used for writing articles and posts for social media. We urged you to understand what ChatGPT is and what it could mean. Unlike ChatGPT, which is designed for specific tasks, AGI will be capable of reasoning, learning from experience, and adapting to new situations.

Before ChatGPT, pundits predicted the singularity to be hundreds of years away. Now, with the surprising success of ChatGPT and the development of Google's Bard and Microsoft's Copilot, it seems that the singularity is only a few years away. What do you think this will mean to your grandchildren? Will they live longer, work less, perform jobs not even thought of today?

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