

AI's Recent History

The Skinny on AI for Education, November 2023

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The Main Read: "Movin' on up"

The implications of the current AI hype cycle are impossible to accurately predict and quantify. Will it be AI's transformative moment, or not? And yet educators are tasked with using AI to empower themselves and students, introducing policies and practices that protect everyone from harm, and reforming teaching and assessment to better prepare people for how AI may change the world.

So what can you do? Where can you gain agency and clarity on the next steps, even if the steps after that are unclear?

My suggestion: Recognize you're not alone, take a deep breath, and leverage your own remarkable intelligence. Distinguish between the immediate, tactical actions needed to address current AI challenges and the strategic responses required to position yourself for a future where every moment isn't an AI-driven crisis.

Both approaches require gaining a basic understanding of AI's capabilities and limitations and breaking the problem into manageable pieces. For immediate actions, identify the specific AI challenge. Are you concerned about inappropriate use? If so, what type of AI, and which functions trouble you? Given the difficulty detecting AI use, how can you discourage misuse? Do users understand the AI's capabilities? Could more education help?

Once immediate actions are identified, craft your strategic response. Consider how AI could expedite or enhance your goals. Identify areas that could benefit from implementation. To do so, grasp available technologies and your team's ability to use them effectively. In essence, let's embrace the tumultuous AI landscape confidently, with understanding and a clear strategy. By doing so, we can chart a course towards a future where AI serves progress, not uncertainty.

Looking across the news more broadly (further summarised below), there is certainly some comfort to be taken from the way influencers, organisations and nations are tackling the need for AI regulation, although the shortage of AI expertise and understanding will likely lead to a bumpy path from where we are now to effective regulation. Litigation continues to chart out what is and is not legal and AI companies are starting to implement better protections for users, although this is still a work in progress. Perhaps even more encouragingly, groups such as Hollywood writers are starting to influence the agenda.

However, developments in AI are still very chaotic and confusing.. Progress is largely driven by people whose primary motivation is to make money quickly. It is a field that few truly understand and many wish did not exist. But it does, and the pressure on education to respond effectively grows.

The huge investments being made to develop AI technology and apply it in products and services, many of which will likely be targeted at or adapted for education and training, illustrates this pressure. So does the growing realisation that workplaces need more people able to safely leverage the onslaught of unregulated, poorly understood AI applications rushing towards us. The situation is uncomfortable, uncertain, and potentially problematic.

AI Regulation and Control

John Thornhill writes in the FT about the upcoming British government conference at Bletchley Park which aims to address the potential risks of artificial intelligence, and draws an analogy with Alan Turing's work to solve the Enigma code there during WWII. It highlights the way that new AI models like ChatGPT have raised concerns about risks ranging from existential threats to issues like bias and discrimination. The Bletchley conference will focus specifically on exploring the possibilities and dangers of frontier AI models expected to be released in the next 18 months. These frontier models are likely to be significantly more capable than today's models, making their impacts hard to predict. Experts warn they could empower bad actors if not properly regulated.

Some argue these powerful models should be regulated similarly to prescription drugs, to balance innovation with safety precautions. Action is needed to coordinate AI safety efforts globally. UK regulator, the Competition and Markets Authority specifies guidelines for AI regulations, with seven principles (accountability, access, diversity of business models, choice, flexibility, fair dealing, and transparency) focusing on large language models like GPT-4.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) "guide to AI ethics and governance" aligns closely with the U.S. NIST AI Risk Management Frameworks which distinguishes it from the European Union's AI Act.

A new policy introduced by Google follows earlier moves by Microsoft and Adobe to provide greater protection for its users against claims about copyright infringement.

Microsoft promises to shield users of its generative AI services against the potential risk of copyright infringement.

Interesting new report from the AI Now Institute explains the cost of the computing power we increasingly rely on and discusses some possible regulatory interventions that could reduce AI companies' reliance on a small number of computing providers.

Landmark agreement reached to restrict the use of AI to create television and movie scripts.

85% of reporters told a UK study they had experimented with Generative AI.

Authors, including John Grisham sue OpenAI for training models on their in-copyright books without permission.

There is an interesting discussion about regulation in this article from Reuters about the way that educational organisations are dealing with the challenges and possibilities of AI.

Technology News:

Amazon has cut a deal with AI startup Anthropic that means it will invest up to \$4 billion in Anthropic and in return Amazon Web Services (AWS) will become the primary platform for Claude, Claude 2 and other Anthropic's models. Claude uses a process called that critiques the output from an LLM according to a set of principles, suggesting revisions to the output to ensure that better aligns with these principles those principles that draw from the UN Declaration of Human Rights and Apple's data-privacy policy.

Multimodal ChatGPT is coming - it will be able to accept voice input and output, and accept and generate images, through being integrated with DALL·E.

Microsoft refines and adds new features to its Copilot line of chatbots, to create an "everyday AI companion."

Text-to-music generation - Stability.ai launch a tool that generates music and sound effects from text.

Generative AI on YouTube - YouTube will make AI tools available for video creators that recommend potential topics based on what the video maker has previously uploaded and trending topics; a

generator that will create images and short videos from prompts; a translator to transform spoken recordings from English into Spanish or Portuguese; a model to recommend background music based on a video's text description.

AI tools for editing photos and videos introduced to the next generation of Android phones.

The possibility of lower-priced AI enhanced tools from Microsoft as they build new large language models and reduce their use of OpenAI's models.

Chinese tech giant Baidu's new AI bot Ernie levels performance with Open AI's GPT-4 model.

More AI from Meta: a chat interface, image generator, and celebrity tie-ins for Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, and WhatsApp.

AI startup 'Likewise' launches its OpenAI based AI chatbot "Pix," for personalised recommendations for books, movies, TV shows, and podcasts.

Increased AI capabilities for Alexa to increase conversational proficiency.