

GNITN

#802

The Rise Of The Machines

Tech Already Dominates Our Lives

Unless you are fanatically dedicated to living off the proverbial grid, technology is already a huge part of your life. You wear a smartwatch, you carry a cell phone with you everywhere and to some, you'd be lost without it. Even the oldest among us now uses technology with emergency devices that call 911 when we fall down suddenly. If we take into account how much we depend on the Internet for information and then the explosion of wireless access to just about everything it is amazing. According to some [stats](#), almost all Americans have broadband access: *Many more people are online today than they were at the start of the millennium. Looking at broadband access, in 2000, just half of Americans had broadband access at home. Today, that number sits at more than 90%. More than half the world's population has internet access today* The same article extrapolated that out to the world:

This broadband expansion was certainly not just an American phenomenon. Similar growth can be seen on a global scale; while less than 7% of the world was online in 2000, today over half the global population has access to the internet.

Similar trends can be seen in cellphone use. At the start of the 2000s, there were 740 million cell phone subscriptions worldwide. Two decades later, that number has surpassed 8 billion, meaning there are now more cellphones in the world than people.

We Are More Connected

Yes, not all of this technology is good, but for the most part it is. In the healthcare industry the potential to diagnose and hopefully cure diseases and ailments that human doctors can't even see is amazing all by itself. And the connection between ourselves is also something that is hard to avoid. We can talk to relatives, friends, co-workers in seconds virtually anywhere in the world. And social media can turn a teenager in their room into a global star overnight. Fame can come so quickly that many aren't prepared for it. Now just about everyone is a podcaster, myself included. If you want information on how to do something you don't look for a written manual, you search for an instructional video and watch about it. But all this instant information does come with a price. How can we know what we're being told is accurate or true? While we have a vast amount of information at our fingertips there is the chance that what we're ingesting could be wrong and such knowledge could, in some cases, be hurtful, and harmful. Whoever controls the information must be verified as much as the information they provide. That is the price of admission as they say.

Artificial Intelligence

The boogeyman of many a fiction story is the specter of machines taking over the world. We don't have to look very far to find examples, chief of these are the various iterations of the Terminator movies, the first of which was made all the way back in 1984. The [plot](#) is pretty basic:

A cyborg assassin dubbed "The Terminator" is sent back in time from 2029 to 1984 Los Angeles. It resembles a human male and is programmed to hunt and assassinate a woman named Sarah Connor. Separately, a human soldier named Kyle Reese simultaneously arrives, intent on stopping the Terminator.

The limitation of these futuristic movie plots is just how far into the future do you put the apocalypse? In this case the year 2029 is now only five years away. I'm sure the authors felt that a 45 year buffer was safe, but was it enough for the technology to allow fully developed cyborg assassins who could time travel? As it turns out some of the elements aren't that far fetched. The one element of the movie that is the closest to happening is actually the rise of the machines as they become the masters of their creators when they can think for themselves. Such a takeover is just on the horizon in the minds of people who are very, very smart. We even have a term for that moment when Artificial General Intelligence overtakes human intelligence and takes on a life of its own. They call it simply the singularity. Here is how one [article](#) explains it:

The technological singularity is a theoretical scenario where technological growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, culminating in profound and unpredictable changes to human civilization...The theory suggests that such advancements could evolve at a pace so rapid that humans would be unable to foresee, mitigate or halt the process. This rapid evolution could give rise to synthetic intelligences that are not only autonomous but also capable of innovations that are beyond human comprehension or control. The possibility that machines might create even more advanced versions of themselves could shift humanity into a new reality where humans are no longer the most capable entities. The implications of reaching this singularity point could be good for the human race or catastrophic. For now, the concept is relegated to science fiction, but nonetheless, it can be valuable to contemplate what such a future might look like, so that humanity might steer AI development in such a way as to promote its civilizational interests.

But How Close Are We?

Forget about the outcomes of the singularity, many are asking when it could actually happen. To some, it is 12 months away, for others it could be a hundred years away. No one seems to agree. Some of the limitations are the massive amount of power needed for these machines to work. The more power they need the more heat they produce. The same article cited above explains the problem this way:

The heat issue is exacerbated by the trend of packing more transistors into ever-smaller spaces, following Moore's Law. This increased density generates more heat in a confined space, leading to a higher temperature. High temperatures can degrade a processor's performance, reduce its lifespan and cause it to fail if not adequately managed.

And then there is the energy needed in the first place:

Another formidable barrier to the technological singularity is the immense energy consumption required to train advanced AI technologies. The training of large language models, such as those underpinning the development of AGI, demands large quantities of electrical power, equivalent to the annual consumption of hundreds of homes. As these models' complexity and size grow, so does their energy footprint, potentially making the pursuit of more advanced AI prohibitively expensive and environmentally unsustainable.

This energy challenge adds a significant layer of complexity to achieving the singularity, as it necessitates a balance between technological advancement and sustainable energy use. Without breakthroughs in energy efficiency or the adoption of renewable energy sources at scale, the energy demands of training and running advanced AI could stymie the progress toward a singularity.

So should we be concerned now? Maybe.

What They Say

Are all of the challenges of heat and energy enough to tamp down the threat of the machines taking over? Not to some who think that AI control doesn't necessarily require actual robots to take over. Control of everyday devices can pull it off they say. An intelligence that works with existing technology to limit human activities can be very effective in taking over, say even the financial freedoms we have. Here is how another [article](#) sees things:

Since the arrival of the large language models (LLMs) that have now seeped into seemingly every nook and cranny of our digital lives, scientists, experts, industry leaders, and pretty much everyone else have some opinion on AI and where it's headed. Some researchers who've studied the emergence of machine intelligence think that the singularity—the theoretical point where machine surpasses man in intelligence—could occur within decades. On the other end of the prediction spectrum, there's the CEO of Anthropic, who thinks we're right on the threshold—give it about 12 more months or so... “Current surveys of AI researchers are predicting AGI around 2040,” the report states. “However, just a few years before the rapid advancements in large language models (LLMs), scientists were predicting it around 2060. Entrepreneurs are even more bullish, predicting it around ~2030.”

2030? That Terminator timeline of 2029 might not be that far off.

But God

For those of us who study Bible prophecy, we know that the best intentions of mankind eventually bow to God at some point. And we also know that the book of **Genesis** gives us the blueprint for everything in all of history. In one story in **Genesis 11** we see that man wanted to be like God. Here is how the narrative goes:

At that time all mankind spoke a single language. 2 As the population grew and spread eastward, a plain was discovered in the land of Babylon and was soon thickly populated. 3-4 The people who lived there began to talk about building a great city, with a temple-tower reaching to the skies—a proud, eternal monument to themselves.

“This will weld us together,” they said, “and keep us from scattering all over the world.” So they made great piles of hard-burned brick, and collected bitumen to use as mortar.

5 But when God came down to see the city and the tower mankind was making, 6 he said, “Look! If they are able to accomplish all this when they have just begun to exploit their linguistic and political unity, just think of what they will do later! Nothing will be unattainable for them! 7 Come, let us go down and give them different languages, so that they won't understand each other's words!”

8 So, in that way, God scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city. 9 That is why the city was called Babel (meaning “confusion”), because it was there that Jehovah confused them by giving them many languages, thus widely scattering them across the face of the earth. (Gen 11:1-9, TLB)

In some ways, Satan has always wanted to get that moment back. And in Bible prophecy he actually tries. Could he actually use Artificial intelligence to do it? Of course he will. With the LLMs language will not be a barrier at all. Just like in ***Genesis 11*** the world will have one language again. And that is only the start. Control of finances as seen in ***Revelation 13*** is already possible and with all the other ways to track our movements, control of our freedoms can happen right now. However, God won't let such control to last long. He can and will intervene. Even when the Devil has technology on his side to take away our free will, God can supernaturally give it back to us. Rest assured, He will protect us from even the most sophisticated plans of the enemy. When all seems lost, two words give us hope: but God.