



Forget AI doomers and utopists. Keeping it real is our best bet

London, August 8, 2023

Euronews

by Fabrizio Fantini

The public simply needs to choose truth over fantasy to protect humanity and end this misinformation war on AI, Fabrizio Fantini writes.

The AI arms race is causing typical political polarisation, with both sides seeing the tech in completely different ways.

As several experts pointed out already, you're either an AI doomer or an AI utopist. Whatever team you're on, you're missing a big part of the picture.

AI won't destroy our society, but we need an unbiased understanding of it to protect ourselves and unlock its power.

Could a sea slug really end humanity?

In 2023, most people are concerned that AI will steal their job or end humanity. Polarised AI articles are responsible for this unrealistic narrative.

They manipulate humans' biological fear of the unknown. They exaggerate existing knowledge about AI developments that misrepresents the technology's capabilities.

"While generative AI has shown us its enormous possibilities, our inventions are far from perfect. That is something anyone who has played with these tools quickly understands."

The utopists think AI will solve every problem our world has while doomers think AI will rebel against us or actively intend to harm us. This is because both assume that AI is farther along than it is.

Yet, AI is still "closer to a sea slug than an all-knowing machine".

Algorithms are task-specific, which means they take a long time to create. They can't utilise random information for any task. They need more training and red team practice than many people understand.

While generative AI has shown us its enormous possibilities, our inventions are far from perfect. That is something anyone who has played with these tools quickly understands.

This is not the first major tech advance humanity had to deal with

The proliferation of nuclear weapons hasn't eradicated human life on Earth as we expected. It could have, but people implemented regulations to prevent destruction.



They educated themselves on the topic and cooperated to protect humanity. We must do the same with AI. If people have concerns as AI helps us evolve, then decision-makers and the public should voice those opinions.

The discussion has already begun, as international policymakers are rapidly designing ethical regulations to deter bad actors.

Doomers and utopists are both advocating for stronger regulations and unbiased education on how AI can further our civilisation.

AI offers endless possibilities for increasing the quality of life and efficiency of societies in every stage of development. Some reports claim that children could learn how to read in only 18 months and job seekers could find AI positions paying six figures.

With such magnificent potential, it's possible to say that people are complaining too much about the downsides of AI.

Clearly, our world needs to advance past our 2000s tech boom and find better ways of working and living.

The path to integrating AI isn't complicated either. We just have to utilise a balanced approach to dealing with present challenges and preparing for smarter applications by proactively passing legislation that will protect our future.

Fearmongering as a result of biased reporting

A part of the polarisation comes from some journalists — in the US in particular — who don't believe in telling both sides of a story equally, especially when writing about a hot topic like AI.

Biased news outlets fuel these behaviours as AI is demonised or worshipped depending on the publication's political affiliation.

In a Pew Research study, 55% of US-based journalists said that "every side does not always deserve equal coverage". For context, 76% of the public expects journalists to believe the opposite.

Despite this disparity, industry players are working hard to educate us on how to move forward with AI rather than against it.

As Meta's Global Affairs President Nick Claig said, openness toward AI is the most effective way to advance this tech, meaning that systems should be transparent, open for collaboration, and heavily investigated for flaws before release.

These house rules would allow everyone to stay safe, happy, and informed. Unfortunately, openness won't convince anyone that AI is a good thing.



Resistance to progress is futile

AI is real, but it isn't sci-fi smart yet. It needs much more time to become life-threatening.

This is why people must stop ingesting biased information and distracting themselves from the current priorities AI developers must focus on.

The future can become dystopian, but only if people continue ranting about a chatbot going rogue.

Our worries are ridiculously far-fetched and we need to get a grip on reality. We should utilise our fears as fuel to design safe and innovative machines instead.

“Resisting our civilisation’s natural path of evolution is ultimately futile. It will force society to operate with outdated systems and perspectives that no longer serve us.”

Rather than worrying about the future, we need to worry about the now – and plan for a future that prevents the worst uses of AI.

As OpenAI CEO Sam Altman explained, technology advances because possibilities expand. New inventions are also required for humanity to evolve.

Altman compared OpenAI’s mission to the Manhattan Project to draw attention to the importance of continuing development and limiting risks for the most dangerous feats.

Resisting our civilisation’s natural path of evolution is ultimately futile. It will force society to operate with outdated systems and perspectives that no longer serve us.

The public simply needs to choose truth over fantasy to protect humanity and end this misinformation war on AI.

The benefits it will bring will shift entire economies, businesses, and the personal lives of every person on the Earth.