

## HOW TO STAY HUMAN IN A ROBOT SOCIETY

### THINK, COLLABORATE AND CREATE BETTER TO IMPROVE THE WORLD!

#### Introduction

There is a fair share of anxiety and excitement around Artificial Intelligence (AI) all over the globe. The **optimists** are excited about the technology, its potential and how it can be used to change lives. They believe that AI can unburden human-beings with all the unproductive and value-less activities that boggle our lives, allowing us to use our time more meaningfully and effectively. They think that AI can be used to complement our weaknesses, enhance our strengths and enable the human race to do things we could previously not do. The **pessimists** feel that AI is letting technology *loose*, which will eventually lead to a robot take-over and the doom of humanity as we know it. They believe that AI gives computers the ability and power to be human-like and will eventually overtake the human species as the most dominant specie on planet earth. But the most common fear is mostly around employment – there is general fear that AI will replace human beings as labourers and lead to increased unemployment, globally. The **realists** are curious and cautious – they want to know how it can be used to change lives, what the risks are and how they can be mitigated. They acknowledge that everything has advantages and disadvantages and know that the best way to manage it is to utilise the advantages and mitigate the disadvantages. The **reality** is that artificial intelligence is here to stay. It is evolving and expanding and we need to understand it, its impact and how to best use it.

#### What is Artificial Intelligence?

Technopedia defined AI as “an area of computer science that emphasizes the creation of intelligent machines that work and react like humans”<sup>1</sup>. SAS states that “the goal of AI is to provide software that can reason on input and explain on output. AI will provide human-like interactions with software and offer decision support for specific tasks, but it’s not a replacement for humans – and won’t be anytime soon”<sup>2</sup>.

There are numerous definitions of AI, most are similar but the distinction lies with its abilities and inabilities. Whilst others limit AI to being able to collect and decipher data or observe and imitate human behaviour, others believe that AI will be able to

<sup>1</sup> Technopedia. (2018). Artificial Intelligence (AI). Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai>.

<sup>2</sup> SAS. (2018). Artificial Intelligence: What it is and why it matters. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from [https://www.sas.com/en\\_za/insights/analytics/what-is-artificial-intelligence.html](https://www.sas.com/en_za/insights/analytics/what-is-artificial-intelligence.html).

have a life of its own and based on the data it collects and behaviours it observes – it will be able to create. The debate around the humanness of AI is quickly being determined as the abilities of AI become clearer and more evident.

There are fears around the ability of AI to replicate human interactions. The fears are around the economic implications of these abilities – people are worried about AI technology being able to do their jobs and therefore being utilised by corporations in the place of people. Although these fears are legitimate, people still ignore the fact that the designs, development, build and monitoring of AI technology has created a gap of new skills and knowledge that is now required in the job market. The risks associated with AI technology are also going to need new skills and knowledge to be managed and dealt with – creating another employment gap. AI technology has created a completely new value chain that needs to be facilitated - holistically.

### **Will the human still be in the centre?**

AI is a social ecology, it is a value chain created and facilitated by people. AI is essentially an organisation that was created by humans who were seeking “human achievement, human growth and human fulfilment” and continuous evolvement of AI proves this.<sup>3</sup> AI technology is knowledge driven, people who work with it are therefore knowledge workers. According to Peter Drucker the best way for people (knowledge workers) to play a role in the AI value chain is to try and make the most impactful contribution by upskilling themselves. By adding value Drucker believes that, that is how people will make a contribution and stay relevant.

Chinese entrepreneur Jack Ma believes that people’s worries “about the future, about technology replacing humans, eliminating jobs and widening the gap between the rich and the poor”<sup>4</sup> are empty worries. Ma believes that technology exists for people, it is there to make people’s lives easier and better and that it will never bypass people. Ma reiterates that people have wisdom, which machines will never have and that is how humans will always be at the front of technology.

Technology entrepreneur Elon Musk on the other hand believes that technology and people will merge. He thinks that eventually biological intelligence and digital intelligence will interlink, work together and become one.<sup>5</sup> According to Musk it is

---

3 Drucker, P. F. (1993). *The Ecological Vision: Reflections on the American Condition*. London: Transaction Publishers.

4 Driscoll, S. (2017). The simple reason technology will never replace humans, according to Jack Ma. South China Morning Post. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <http://www.scmp.com/tech/leaders-founders/article/2115033/simple-reason-technology-will-never-replace-humans-according>.

5 Kharpal, A. (2018). A.I. will be 'billions of times' smarter than humans and man needs to merge with it, expert says. CNBC. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/13/a-i-will-be-billions-of-times-smarter-than-humans-man-and-machine-need-to-merge.html>.

“mostly about the bandwidth, the speed of the connection between your brain and the digital version of yourself, particularly output”<sup>6</sup>. Ma states that “we worry about technology because we lack confidence in ourselves, and imagination for the future”<sup>7</sup>.

AI technology forms part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution were the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Industrial Revolutions – each revolution came with its own technological advances and none of them led to the doom of humanity and extremely high unemployment rates. What simply happened is that it changed the employment landscape in the sense that new jobs were created and new skills were required – people remained the driving force behind the technology. The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial revolution provides the same opportunity.

### **What will the world of work look like?**

The role of **institutions and their management** in an AI driven world will change drastically. Institutions will play less of a facilitation, organising and delivery role and more of a regulatory role, by protecting the integrity of the data, regulating the users of the data and managing the risk and quality of the output.

**Organisations** need to ensure that they are agile and drive a responsive and collaborative **culture**, they need to create an environment that enables people with complementary and supplementary skills and knowledge to work together effortlessly to deliver on exponential solutions to complex problems.

**Leadership** needs to be redefined to self-leadership, people should work more independently with little or no leadership direction, but rather towards a shared vision with clear distinction of roles and responsibilities and how everyone fits into the delivery of the shared vision. People are looking less for a leader (but more for purpose) and are more willing to play that role themselves.

Organisations will need to upskill its people or source talent that is equip to deal with all the demands and requirements of the AI era within their organisations. They need **talent** with technical and advanced computer skills, enhanced emotional intelligence and innovative problem solving capabilities.

### **What will a technology enabled world look like?**

---

<sup>6</sup> Kharpal (2018).

<sup>7</sup> Driscoll (2017).

Technology has become a formidable enabler – it enables people and institutions to achieve so much more. Many organisations have elevated technology from being an enabling function to being a driving function with their organisations.

People have also benefitted from the perks of technology, with real time access to accurate and tons of data or information in various formats from multiple source. People are now more equip to make better informed decisions. Technology can also free up people’s time from mundane and unproductive activities and assist them focus on more meaningful and impactful activities.

Imagine a world where your digital personal assistant knows what you want before you even ask for it - understands your strengths and weaknesses based on assessments and information you have fed it and can then use this data to better organise your life. AI technology should be able to learn your habits based on behaviour and the data you input into it and shapes your day and life around your behaviour and the changes you’d like to make.

For example, if Sharon wants to lose 5kg in two months, but stops for a coffee at Seattle on her way to work every morning, where she also ends up buying a chocolate croissant and has dinner with her best friend every Monday and eats out with her partner at least three times a week at not-so-healthy restaurants. Her digital assistance can redirect Sharon to a juice and smoothie bar on her way to work instead of Seattle every morning. Her digital assistant can send her suggestions of healthy restaurants or alternative activities that she and her best friend could also enjoy in the same region where they usually meet up for dinner on Monday evening in the late afternoon - giving her enough time to make the suggestion to her best friend. It can also send a list of potential fun couples’ activities for her and her partner based on their behavioural patterns, instead of them eating out. This is how AI technology can help Sharon achieve her goal of losing 5 kg in two months.

Perhaps this is the first phase of humans interlinking with technology, prior to arriving at a stage where, according to Musk biological intelligence and digital intelligence will merge and we will have a digital version of ourselves<sup>8</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The AI era will allow humans to think better, faster with enhanced data and therefore make better informed decisions with healthier consequences. AI will better enable humans with supplementary or complementary knowledge and skills to connect and

---

<sup>8</sup> Kharpal (2018).

collaborate better, therefore leading to improved solutioning. With all the benefits of AI technology, humans will be able to make informed decisions with healthier consequences, through collaborative efforts with improved solutioning to create better and improve the world!

### **What will Drucker say when he meets his Android twin?**

*Nothing, because it will be an extended digital version of himself. It will know what he wants or needs before he even asks for it.*

### **Bibliography**

Driscoll, S. (2017). The simple reason technology will never replace humans, according to Jack Ma. South China Morning Post. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <http://www.scmp.com/tech/leaders-founders/article/2115033/simple-reason-technology-will-never-replace-humans-according>.

Drucker, P. F. (1993). The Ecological Vision: Reflections on the American Condition. London: Transaction Publishers.

Kharpal, A. (2018). A.I. will be 'billions of times' smarter than humans and man needs to merge with it, expert says. CNBC. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/13/a-i-will-be-billions-of-times-smarter-than-humans-man-and-machine-need-to-merge.html>.

SAS. (2018). Artificial Intelligence: What it is and why it matters. Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from [https://www.sas.com/en\\_za/insights/analytics/what-is-artificial-intelligence.html](https://www.sas.com/en_za/insights/analytics/what-is-artificial-intelligence.html).

Technopedia. (2018). Artificial Intelligence (AI). Retrieved on 23 June, 2018, from <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai>.