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Balance between technology and ethics: using ChatGPT in a responsible manner

ChatGPT has been phenomenal lately. It has great transformative potential across all sectors, changing the functioning of many sectors by revolutionizing knowledge-sharing. There is no doubt that new natural language processing tools, including ChatGPT, will mean enormous benefits for people's daily lives. But, like most other technological revolutions in human history, harnessing AI and related technological advancements like ChatGPT promise to bring about significant impacts and hazards aimed at making life easy and fulfilling.

Posing threats to international stability

Given that ChatGPT is maintained by OpenAI which is a research organization based in San Francisco (United States) lends it open to questions of its national bias regarding its text generation. The quality of ChatGPT's output directly depends on its training data, which is collected from various sources, including news articles, books, and other online content. This means that perspectives and materials may exhibit selection bias. Also, those perspectives and materials that have not yet entered cyberspace do not form part of its datasets. Therefore, the content presented by ChatGPT may not be impartial.

For any technical discoveries of the past, there is no doubt that a possibility of misuse will persist. The increasing use of ChatGPT is bound to raise questions about its potential misuse for malicious purposes such as cyber warfare, online misinformation transmission, cyber-attacks, etc. One of the main risks of using AI tools in cyber warfare is that they can be used to create highly convincing deepfakes or to mimic human behavior, making it difficult to detect and attribute attacks to their original source.

Moreover, AI-powered cyber-attacks can also target critical infrastructure and cause widespread damage and disruption, such as power grids, transportation systems, or financial institutions. This can lead to economic losses, social unrest, and even human casualties. In terms of international relations and political economy, the use of AI tools in online misinformation transmission can exacerbate existing tensions and lead to an 'escalation spiral' in which countries engage in a tit-for-tat cycle of retaliation. It may also escalate geopolitical conflicts between nation-states, potentially triggering a full-blown war, which will pose a significant threat to national security and international stability. It can challenge the traditional notions of sovereignty and accountability, as it becomes more difficult to attribute attacks to specific actors or states.

As regards the likelihood of ChatGPT being misused by the US, one cannot theoretically rule out the possibility of the US government or any other entity misusing ChatGPT to spread disinformation or manipulate narratives. ChatGPT can be used for surveillance or any other unlawful acts by anyone including its creators or regulating agencies in the US that may have influence and control over its operations.

Using technologies in ethical manner

Throughout history, technology and ethics remain closely intertwined. As technology continues to advance and unfold, ethical considerations become even more important. One way to maximize benefits from new innovations in technology is to prioritize ethical considerations throughout the entire process of conception, design and development. This means considering, from the very onset, the potential impact of technology on society, the environment, and individual rights and freedoms, rather than simply focusing on its benefits in terms of speed, accuracy, efficiency and profits for companies. To ensure a balance between ethnics and technology, all innovations must involve diverse groups of stakeholders in the development process to incorporate a wide range of perspectives from different groups in its evolution. Indeed, technology and ethics breed on each other; social ethics determines human choices about priorities in human innovations while new adaptations of technologies push ethics in further rationalizing its discourse.

Ultimately, the key to making the best use of technology is to recognize that technology is a tool and that it remains subservient to society. Its outcomes and impact on society also depend on how we choose to use technology. Human ingenuity can always find new ways to use it, but this is not important. What is important is to ensure that technology is used in ways that benefit humanity rather than jeopardize its peace and prosperity. That would depend on the way humans intervene and interface with it. It is also up to human organizations or individuals to make informed decisions about how to use ChatGPT in an ethical manner, while taking into account its potential impacts on society.

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MARCOS CORDEIRO PIRES

Information technologies should not become political weapons

Over the last three months, we have seen the rapid spread of the new artificial intelligence application known as ChatGPT. Just five days after it was publicly released in November 2022, ChatGPT crossed the one million user mark. By comparison, major apps like Facebook and Instagram took several months to reach the one million user base mark. People were impressed with the chatbot's interaction and the accuracy of its responses. Artificial intelligence applications based on Open AI "chatbots" seem to be an irreversible trend.

ChatGPT used in military operations

ChatGPT is impacting education, journalism, and influencing how people think and act. Consequently, there will be a race between companies to create new applications for chatbots. One example of this is the artificial intelligence system of Tik-Tok, a social media platform created by the Chinese company ByteDance. In this regard, it is worth following the actions of leading Chinese companies such as Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba, as they are pressured to develop their chatbots.

One important factor to be considered is that to the extent that responses can be massified, so too can people can be induced to think and behave in a mass manner as well, potentially even more so than with the use of algorithms in social media platforms.

The use of information technologies as a political weapon in international relations has been intensifying in recent decades. It is worth thinking about the impacts of pre-targeted computer viruses. One such virus was the Stuxnet virus, a computer "worm" aimed initially at Iran's nuclear facilities that has since mutated and spread to other industrial and power-generating facilities. Jointly developed by the US National Security Agency, the CIA and the Israeli military, Stuxnet was first used in 2010 to damage a uranium enrichment plant in the Islamic Republic of Iran and was the first known virus capable of crippling hardware.

Other cybernetic instruments were used to organize so-called "hybrid wars" or "color revolutions" led by far-right groups or Western governments. In this case, social networks (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, etc.) were manipulated to create mass reactions for political purposes, such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the so-called "Arab Spring," Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in Brazil, the BREXIT referendum and the election of Donald Trump, among others.

Chatbots, which are currently popular, can also be programmed to spread false information or to be used for illegal purposes. In 2016, during the Brexit referendum, a chatbot called "Brexitbot" was used to spread false information about the benefits of leaving the EU and the risks of remaining. In 2017, during the French Presidential election, a chatbot called "Marinebot" was used to spread false information about Macron's policies and his personal life.

Technology be limited by ethics

A work of art reflects the characteristics of its creator. Therefore, a machine learning program trained with a massive volume of information created and disseminated in English will undoubtedly reflect the culture, thinking, and political ideas of the environment in which it was created. If there is a prejudice against other countries in American (or Western) society, it will be reflected in the responses offered by ChatGPT or any other that arise in that environment. Therefore, if there is a cold war against China, chatbots will integrate the political and military front of the hegemonic powers.

Undoubtedly, US national security systems' surveillance capabilities are highly developed, involving new applications and traditional technologies such as cell phone and email tracking. There are complex "satellite constellation" systems for conducting remote surveillance. In addition, it is necessary to consider the origin and nodes of the giant submarine internet cables, which invariably pass through countries linked to the political and military alliance of the West and are a source of capture of information that roams through them.

Internet calls for regulatory body

After a period of protection conferred by patents, innovations are widely disseminated. Those whose use goes beyond national borders, such as ocean navigation, telecommunications, civil aviation, mail, vaccines, etc., have regulations linked to the United Nations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Labor Organization (ILO). However, a technology central to today's society, such as the internet, does not have a multilateral regulatory body but only seemingly autonomous and self-regulated committees and bodies, which in practice are controlled by the US. There needs to be global governance linked to the United Nations, as is the case with civil aviation, health, telecommunications, and commerce, among others.

Currently, the US government blocks negotiations for creating international internet regulatory bodies. It is important to remember that internet regulation does not only pass through the certification of names, the physical structure, and technical programming standards. These themes are important. However, a collective administration of the internet is necessary to curb the enormous power of the big technology companies and their ability to socially, commercially, and politically manipulate citizens of different countries. The internet has become a common good of humanity, in the same way as electricity, telecommunications or vaccines. It effectively needs to be a free space to improve the living conditions of ordinary people. Nevertheless, it cannot be at the mercy of any company or country's petty interests. In this sense, creating a specific organization within the framework of the United Nations is an urgent task. It is worth remembering that innovations, once mature, become the public domain. But nobody nowadays charges royalties for this act!

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