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The “AI Revolution”: The Final Coup d’Etat?

By Whitney Webb

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Introduction

The hype of an ever-imminent “AI revolution” has become impossible to ignore. We are told that Artificial Intelligence, for better or for worse, will “reshape the world”¹ and usher in an era of extreme “cognitive advancement” for humanity, allowing us to accomplish the impossible.² Though the term “revolution,” for many, conjures images of righteous uprisings of the exploited masses against tyranny, the AI revolution, despite its glossy PR and lofty promises, is a “revolution” that—if realized—will instead see the elites transform the world, and us, in order to maintain and deepen their control.

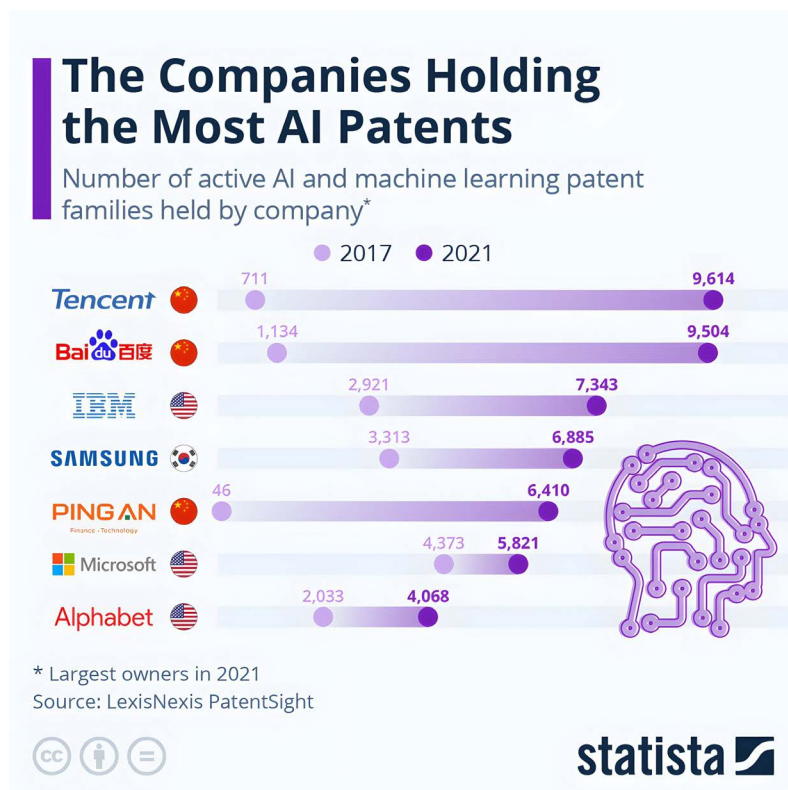
For those willing to look, the architects of AI, particularly those shaping its uses by (and for) the national security state (i.e., intelligence agencies and the military), have been surprisingly frank about their vision for this “revolution.” They openly speak of how AI will indeed bring the technological promise of accomplishing the impossible—but to get there, humanity must pay an impossible price.

In examining the writings of some of the most influential architects of the coming AI “revolution,” it becomes clear that this revolution has been carefully designed, and is being carefully directed, to undo past revolutions—particularly those that saw the rise of free societies and the free flow of information. At the heart of the revolution is a desire to use AI, not just to transform our societies and lives but humanity itself—to permanently alter our perception, our reason, and our spirit so that we will never again be cognitively capable of understanding our servitude while also leaving us bereft of the desire to be free from that servitude. If AI’s development continues to be directed by these players and the power networks behind them, the only “promise” it will bring is a return to the feudalist Dark Ages.

The Architects

To best understand AI and its implications, it makes sense to begin with an examination of who is leading AI's development and for what purpose(s). Much of the Western world's AI development is centered, perhaps unsurprisingly, in Silicon Valley. While seemingly obvious, many today misunderstand the nature of Silicon Valley, which, for decades, has managed to deceptively cloak itself in myths steeped in meritocracy, luck, and entrepreneurship.

The urban legends of Silicon Valley titans having built their corporate monoliths out of their once-humble garages are well known. However, such legends mask the clear evidence that American intelligence agencies and the military-industrial complex supported, funded, and guided most of these larger-than-life and ultra-wealthy figures in the tech world (e.g., Google, Palantir, Facebook, Microsoft, Oracle) from their inception.³⁻⁸ Those associations have only deepened with time, and Silicon Valley now has fully fused with the twin worlds of war and espionage, with nearly every major Big Tech firm serving as a military and intelligence contractor of major importance.



Within this world are two main camps, camps which incidentally now dominate the secretive conference of elites known to most simply as Bilderberg. In 2019, a rare mainstream media article discussing the conference appeared in *Newsweek* and stated the following:

“If you look around the current conference for people with enough substance — enough ideological meat on their bones to drive Bilderberg forward, you won’t find it in finance, and you certainly won’t find it in politics, because for the last few decades the really smart people have gone into engineering and tech. And that, surely, is where the center of gravity within Bilderberg will end up.

The two figures at Bilderberg who seem to have an aura of influence about them are [former Google CEO Eric] Schmidt and [Palantir and PayPal co-founder Peter] Thiel. Over the years, Schmidt has been gently aligning himself as the heir to [Henry] Kissinger, and has populated recent conferences with Google executives. The Libertarian Thiel has already engineered his lieutenant, Alex Karp, onto the steering committee.”⁹

As far as the national security state goes, the Schmidt and Thiel camps are both firmly embedded and constantly competing for influence. Though much of Thiel’s influence can be felt through the leverage of Palantir and the dependence of intelligence and security agencies on its powerful software (currently enabling a push toward “pre-crime”^{3,10}) as well as newer AI weapons-focused firms like Anduril,¹¹ it seems that Schmidt—at present—is the more dominant figure.

Part of this is due to the Biden administration. Under Trump, Thiel was decidedly more influential¹²⁻¹⁴; under Biden, on the other hand, Schmidt has been controlling the administration’s science policy and funding the salaries of more than two dozen top Biden officials and advisors, most of whom have played key roles in the administration’s science and technology policy. These Schmidt-funded officials, according to *Politico*, “have served or currently serve in Biden’s White House Council of Economic Advisers, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Energy, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Trade Commission” as well as the General Services Administration.¹⁵ The funding arrangement was flagged repeatedly by administration lawyers, yet no action has ever been taken to alter it.¹⁶

Even under Trump, it was Schmidt—not Thiel—who was tapped to lead the powerful National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI), which operated as a temporary commission from 2018 through 2021; a Schmidt ally, Robert Work (former Deputy Secretary of Defense at the Obama-era Pentagon) was chosen as vice-chair. The commissioners were predominantly a mix of top intelligence and military figures as well as top executives from Google, Oracle, Microsoft,

and Amazon. (Notably, these same four companies later were the awardees in 2022 of the Department of Defense's \$9 billion Joint Warfighting Cloud Capability [JWCC] cloud services contract, intended to provide "globally available cloud services across all security domains and classification levels, from the strategic level to the tactical edge."¹⁷) Some notable figures on the NSCAI, including Gilman Louie, former head of CIA's In-Q-Tel, are also known to be close allies of Schmidt.^{16,18} The commission notably lacked any close Thiel allies. In addition, Schmidt chaired the Pentagon's Defense Innovation Board during much of the Trump administration, though he had begun serving in that role while Obama was still in office.¹⁵

The NSCAI was officially created "to consider the methods and means necessary to advance the development of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and associated technologies to comprehensively address the national security and defense needs of the United States."¹⁹ Yet, in practice, their chief focus (as spelled out in NSCAI's charter) was to ensure that the U.S. "**maintain a technological advantage** in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and other associated technologies related to national security and defense."²⁰ In 2019, NSCAI vice-chair Robert Work described the commission's purpose as determining "how the U.S. national security apparatus should approach artificial intelligence, including a focus on **how the government can work with industry to compete with China's 'civil-military fusion' concept.**"^{21,22}

In other words, the commission focused on using AI to ensure a perpetuation of American hegemony, part of which is an undisguised "fusion" of government and industry (i.e., corporatism/fascism), at least on these matters. Indeed, the commission's response to China's "civil-military fusion" concept was, quite clearly, the overt fusion of Silicon Valley with the national security state.

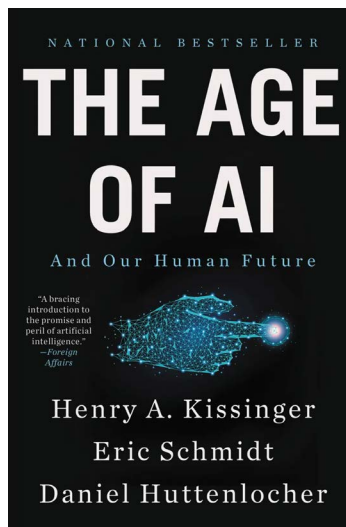
Although the NSCAI publicly justified many of its policies—including the expansion of mass surveillance and digitalization for American citizens—as being necessary to "beat" China, an NSCAI document obtained by EPIC (the Electronic Privacy Information Center) and reported on by *The Last American Vagabond* instead shows plans by the commission to have the future of AI "decided at the intersection of private enterprise and policy leaders between China and the U.S."²³ If this coordination over the global AI market does not occur, the document warned, "we [the U.S.] risk being left out of the discussions where norms around AI are set for the rest of our lifetimes."

If China is allowed to become "the unambiguous leader in AI," the NSCAI argued in its document that "China could end up writing much of the rulebook of international norms around the deployment of AI" and that it would "broaden China's sphere of influence amongst an international community that increasingly looks to the pragmatic authoritarianism of China and Singapore as an alternative to Western

liberal democracy.” As we shall see, the push away from “democracy” and toward “pragmatic authoritarianism” is very much advocated for by both the Schmidt and Thiel-led camps that are driving the development of AI in the United States and, more broadly, in the “democratic” West.

Schmidt, in recent years, has become incredibly close to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and is increasingly seen as his “heir.”^{24,25} Kissinger, a notorious war criminal and long-time lackey for predatory oligarchical interests like the Rockefeller family, has been a principal author of notable regime change and coup attempts; he later went on to mentor subsequent Secretaries of States (and presidents) who also shared his penchant for (often militaristic) regime change. A master of subterfuge and realpolitik, Kissinger has been and remains one of the most influential political operators in modern American history, despite being 100 years old at the time of writing this article. His disciples—ranging from the Clintons to Klaus Schwab and now Eric Schmidt—wield enormous power and influence.

Schmidt has claimed he first met Kissinger at a conference, where Kissinger told him that he thought Google might “destroy the world.”²⁶ It is unclear exactly when this initial meeting took place, but it seems to have occurred around 2015. Schmidt subsequently persuaded Kissinger to attend a lecture on AI at Bilderberg 2016 and then invited Kissinger to Google, where Kissinger spoke to Google staff.²⁷ According to Kissinger, “the reason he [Schmidt] invited me to meet his algorithmic group was to have me understand that this [Google’s control over online information] was not arbitrary, but the choice of what [information] was presented [by Google search] had some thought and analysis behind it.”²⁷ Schmidt subsequently claimed that the “visit to Google got him [Kissinger] thinking.”²⁷ Shortly thereafter, at Kissinger’s suggestion, Schmidt and Kissinger teamed up with Daniel Huttenlocher, dean of MIT’s Schwarzman College of Computing, because, in Kissinger’s words, “he’s technically so competent, to see how we would write it down.”²⁷ The result of the trio’s joint efforts was the book, *The Age of AI and Our Human Future*, published in 2021.²⁸



What Is the Real AI “Revolution”?

Given that Kissinger and Schmidt represent a continuum of powerful shadow government operators and serve as the currently most influential intellectual architects of intelligence and military AI policy, it is essential to explore these men’s stated beliefs about the true nature and promise of AI and the technological “revolution” it is spurring.

In a 2021 interview with *TIME*, Kissinger stated, with respect to AI:

“The technological miracle doesn’t fascinate me so much; what fascinates me is that we are moving into a new period of human consciousness which we don’t yet fully understand. When we say a new period of human consciousness, we mean that the perception of the world will be different.”²⁷

In short, the key promise of AI, as articulated by Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher and expounded upon in detail in their book, will be in its ability to alter human consciousness, changing how people perceive and process reality.



HENRY KISSINGER, ERIC SCHMIDT AND DANIEL HUTTENLOCHER.

Indeed, much of their book deals with the relationship between AI and reality, and AI’s impact on the public’s perception of reality.²⁸ Early on in the book, the three authors establish that the first major developmental milestones in AI have unveiled “previously imperceptible but potentially vital aspects of our reality” (p. 13), that is, AI alone is able to access a new reality unseen by humans who do not use or engage with AI. As a result, they argue, we are “obliged to confront whether there is a form of logic that humans have not achieved or cannot achieve, exploring aspects of reality we have never known and may never directly know” (p. 16).

Examining these “previously imperceptible” realities with AI’s “help” will transform society and, per the authors, will be at the heart of the entire AI revolution. They state that the “core of [AI’s] transformations will ultimately occur at the philosophical level, transforming how humans understand reality and our role within it” (p. 17) and that the “advent of AI will alter humanity’s concept of reality and therefore of itself” (p. 19).

They also argue that allowing AI to alter humanity in this way is the only way to unlock AI’s full potential. AI’s ability to bring “previously unattainable goals within sight” will be “purchased” by “altering the human relationship with reason and reality,” with such alterations being described as a “revolution” (p. 27). Thus, we must “sell” our unaltered perception of reality and use of reason if we are to use AI to accomplish different goals and unlock its much heralded potential. Our expected acquiescence to trade our organic perception of reality for an AI-altered perception of reality, all for the supposed promise of “unlocking” AI’s alleged potential, is—per Kissinger and co-authors—the true “AI revolution.”

According to the three authors, there is no way to hold onto our current faculties of perception and reason while also utilizing advanced AI; there is an inherent trade-off. Notably, they also assert elsewhere that advanced AI *must* be utilized for national security reasons. (For example, they say, other nations—especially our adversaries—will utilize this technology, so we must also use it and implement it faster, lest the West lose its economic and military hegemony.) Therefore, our collective perception of reality and use of reason must be “sold off” and altered to conform more closely with the realities that, we are told, only AI can “see.”

Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher also assert that due to the continued and rapidly deepening use of AI, we will soon be unable to resist AI’s pull to foist a “new” reality upon us, as we are quickly becoming more and more dependent on AI. As a direct result, they claim that before long, humanity will be too cognitively diminished to resist AI’s manipulations. They argue that this will have major implications for humanity’s ability to practice “free will.” They write (p. 18):

*“Frequently, we will be aware that such programs are assisting us in ways that we intended. Yet at any given moment, we may not know what exactly they are doing or identifying or why they work. AI-powered technology will become **a permanent companion** in perceiving and processing information, albeit one that occupies **a different ‘mental’ plane from humans**” [bold added].*

In other words, this “permanent companion” is drawing us toward its “mental plane” (that is, its reality that cannot be perceived by humans) and away from our own. AI will not be able to explain what it is doing or why, because its reality and the way humans have perceived reality for thousands of years are not necessarily

compatible. It is worth noting that AI’s “reality” is inherently shaped by the data it is trained on—data sets chosen by its creators.

Kissinger and co-authors additionally argue that our soon-to-be “permanent companion in perceiving and processing information” will quickly “usher in a world” where human-only decision-making will become rare and, eventually, cease to exist. They state (p. 20):

“AI will usher in a world in which decisions are made in three primary ways: by humans, by machines, and by collaboration between humans and machines. [...] This development will transform entire fields by enveloping them in AI-assisted processes, with the lines between purely human, purely AI, and hybrid human-AI decision making sometimes becoming difficult to define.”

In a world where human decision-making gives way to decisions largely (or entirely) shaped by AI’s divergent reality, purely human decision-making and purely human reasoning—and, therefore, purely human reality—will cease to exist. The *Age of AI* authors then crucially note, “Machines will enlighten humans, expanding our reality in ways we did not expect or necessarily intend to provoke (the opposite will also be possible: that machines that consume human knowledge **will be used to diminish us**)” (pp. 25–26) [bold added].

As they continue, it becomes clear that AI will have a much more “diminishing” effect on humanity than an “enlightening” effect. They even go so far as to argue that such diminishment has already taken its toll (p. 26):

*Almost passively, we have come to rely on the technology without registering either the fact of **our dependence** or the implications of it [bold added]. In daily life, AI is our partner, helping us make decisions about what to eat, what to wear, what to believe, where to go, and how to get there.*

Once we are sufficiently “diminished” and “dependent,” AI will further shape our perception of reality, and thus our reasoning, through its control over the online “information space.” Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher argue that this will be accomplished by AI being the chief means by which political messaging is written and developed—while also being the chief means by which unwelcome information is censored. They note that AI is already being used for censorship, particularly on social media.

More specifically, they argue (p. 21) that AI’s control over the “information space” will come via:

“[T]he design of political messages; the tailoring and distribution of those messages to various demographics; the crafting and application of disinformation by malicious actors aiming to sow social discord; and the design and deployment

of algorithms to detect, identify and counter disinformation and other forms of harmful data.”

“As a result,” they write, “the prospects for free society, even free will, may be altered” (p. 21). Those who “opt out” of the AI-dominated “information space” will differ from those who “opt in” by diverging “into different and mutually unintelligible realities” (p. 22).

Currently, the push to put AI in *de facto* charge of the information space is overt and easily apparent. For instance, the U.S. military, which — as previously mentioned — is closely intertwined with Silicon Valley and policies promoted by the Schmidt-led NSCAI, has for years been pumping millions upon millions of dollars into AI focused on tackling “disinformation”²⁹⁻³¹ and also assessing how to “use social media to control people like drones.”³² Elsewhere, other governments and militaries, such as China’s, are using AI for similar purposes.³³ Discussion of the use of AI to control the flow of online information is also found throughout *The Age of AI* (see pp. 100–102, 114–118, and 159), which essentially posits that AI-enabled “misinformation” necessitates AI-enabled “content moderation.” The book also asserts that we will need to increasingly depend on AI to navigate the “overload of information” online²⁷; otherwise, we may find ourselves “unable to keep pace with events” and will lose our agency to shape those events²⁸ (p. 194).

Another organization aggressively pushing for both a global AI censorship regime and “global guardrails” for AI is, perhaps unsurprisingly, the United Nations. As previously noted by *Unlimited Hangout*, the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 16 (specifically SDG 16.10) is focused on, among other things, controlling the flow of information. UN policy documents clearly define “disinformation” and “misinformation” as anything that erodes “trust” in the UN, its police agendas, and “stakeholder partners” — including national governments, multinational corporations, and groups like the World Economic Forum (WEF).³⁴ The UN’s specialized agency for information and communication technologies, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has called for AI to be one of the principal tools used to label misinformation and carry out “triage” on “unreliable content from several of the world’s most prominent news markets.”³⁵

In coordination with the WEF and Interpol (another UN “stakeholder partner”), the clear goal is to use AI, not just to label “misinformation” itself but also those who produce “misinformation” and “disinformation,” and to treat them as “cybercriminals.”³⁴ The push to identify and punish “cybercriminals” is intimately intertwined with the push to end online privacy and anonymity as well as implement global, mandatory digital ID, which is also nested within SDG 16 (SDG 16.9).^{36,37}

In September 2023, UN Secretary General António Guterres described the alleged need for “some global entity” that will be tasked with monitoring and regulating all AI globally, while also warning that “governments alone will not be able to tame” AI.³⁸ Elsewhere, Guterres and Amandeep Gill, the Secretary General’s envoy on technology, have suggested that this “global entity” would be a new UN agency that they hope to launch at the UN’s Summit of the Future in September 2024.³⁹ The effort to globally centralize control of AI via the UN is backed by big names in Silicon Valley AI development, such as OpenAI, the parent company of ChatGPT. Notably, praise for the previous iteration of ChatGPT, GPT-3, was a major motif in Kissinger and co-authors’ *The Age of AI*.²⁸

Thus, national governments and militaries and supranational governance organizations (e.g., the UN and its “stakeholder partners”) as well as Silicon Valley behemoths (via the social networks and search engines they control) are, and will continue to be, the main forces directing how AI shapes the “information space” and choosing what it will censor. As a consequence, AI is essentially curating information at the behest of the State, designing messages on its behalf and censoring information that clashes with or contradicts that messaging. AI’s version of reality, as manifested in the “information space,” will, therefore, be largely defined by the entity that designs the information policies AI will enforce—that is, the entity born out of the fusion of national and supranational governments with Silicon Valley. Indeed, with AI still very much being “constrained by its code” and dependent on those who determine and program its objective functions and parameters, it is the AI policy-makers and programmers who will determine the direction in which AI steers the collective “information space”²⁸ (p. 84).

As a consequence, AI is a tool whereby this powerful conglomerate of state and corporate power will be able to alter our perceptions of reality and our decision-making to the point where we will no longer be a free society or, in their estimation, even able to exercise free will. AI is, therefore, leading us toward a controlled society characterized by a controlled population that will soon be cognitively incapable of interpreting events without AI’s “help.” As outlined by Kissinger and his two co-authors, those who “opt in” to the AI-driven system will be drawn into a reality that is unintelligible and unexplainable to us as we are now, as well as to those of us who, later on, insist on “opting out.”

It is perhaps more honest and accurate to say that what AI will do to humanity is not necessarily draw us into a different reality currently “invisible” to humans (as Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher claim), but instead into a state of delusion—with the delusions designed by the AI engineers and data barons of our era.

Defining AI’s “Reality”

If AI is to draw us into its “reality,” it becomes essential to explore what this reality may be and what effects it is anticipated to have on humanity. In *The Age of AI*²⁸ (pp. 200–201), the three authors state that “reality explored by AI, or with the assistance of AI, may prove to be something other than what humans had imagined. It may have patterns we have never discerned or cannot conceptualize.” As a consequence, they argue, “we may task AI to probe realms we cannot enter; it may return with patterns or predictions we do not fully grasp.” Whatever the AI returns with, they say, may bring us “closer to the concept of pure knowledge, less limited by the structure of our minds and the patterns of conventional human thought.”

There is no introspection on the part of these authors that the AI’s output could be erroneous, nonsensical, and not actually indicative of any reality, hidden or otherwise. It could instead return information that only exists in the “mind” of the machine. According to the authors, who seemingly superimpose the role of a mystic seer onto AI, we are to trust that its utterances are indicative of something real that is merely unseeable to us. In doing so, what may well be “delusions” or “hallucinations” of AI would then enter our reality and become our reality, while our intellectual dependence on AI grows and our own intellectual faculties become diminished by that dependence. Notably, the well-documented and growing issue of AI “hallucinations” — where an AI generates false content that it presents as factual⁴⁰⁻⁴² — is entirely absent from the Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher book. Instead, these intellectual architects of global AI policy impose a religious lens over AI’s output, including its “hallucinations,” asserting throughout their work that AI is consistently observing something real that humans cannot observe without AI’s “help” and arguing that “AI already transcends human perception” in key ways²⁸ (p. 211).

What impact will the pull into AI’s reality have on us? The three authors clearly note that the nature of AI means that it “does not have intention, motivation, morality or emotion” (p. 26). Later, they state that AI “does not hope, pray, or feel” and that it lacks “awareness or reflective capabilities” (p. 205). Logically, the more we are pushed and acclimated to have AI shape and mold our perception of reality, the more our collective reality will come to lack the characteristics that AI also lacks. Thus, AI’s potential “hallucinations” or differing perceptions of reality will be marked by these qualities — qualities that are essentially defined as the absence of humanity’s most important characteristics. A world absent of morality, emotion, intention, and motivation is indeed a world that is likely to seem foreign to an

unaltered human observer, as it would be devoid of the characteristics that spur our quests for beauty, meaning, and purpose—which are, more often than not, central parts of the human experience.

In outsourcing our perception of reality to AI in pursuit of AI’s heralded “full potential,” the implication is that we will be pulled into AI’s reality and become as impersonal, immoral, and unfeeling as the machine itself. Given that we must “sell” our own ability to perceive reality to achieve the imperative of unlocking AI’s full potential, the AI revolution—as Kissinger and his colleagues describe it—is a “revolution” that would weaken, wither, and hollow out humanity from within.

Under a subheading entitled “Transforming Human Experience,” the three authors write that AI’s impact on cognition and reality will not be felt equally across society. In the coming society shaped by the AI “revolution,” they openly note that there will be two tiers of society. One tier will find AI’s impacts “empowering”; this tier will be largely composed of “the people who build [AI], train it, task it, regulate it” as well as “policy makers and business leaders who have technical advisers at their disposal.” The other tier may occasionally experience the coming AI-driven society as “gratifying” but will also find its impacts “disconcerting or disempowering.” This tier will comprise “those who lack technical knowledge, or participate in AI-managed processes primarily as consumers,” which is to say the vast majority of people (p. 182).

Later on, the three authors elaborate further on this two-tier society (pp. 213–214), stating:

“Those who design, train, and partner with AI will be able to achieve objectives on a scale and level of complexity that, until now, have eluded humanity—new scientific breakthroughs, new economic efficiencies, new forms of security, and new dimensions of social monitoring and control.

Those who do not have such agency in the process of expanding AI and its uses may come to feel that they are being watched, studied, and acted upon by something they do not understand and did not design or choose—a force that operates with an opacity that in many societies is not tolerated of conventional human actors or institutions.”

Recalling another main theme in *The Age of AI*—that AI will cognitively diminish humanity and increasingly control our perception of reality—it should be clear that this will also apply within this two-tier framework. Making up the “empowered” tier that produces, designs, and regulates AI will be those who are also set to receive its benefits (e.g., cognitive enhancement, improved technological discoveries); additionally, they will be poised to craft the realities identified by AI as well as shape how AI controls all accessible information. The “disempowered” tier, in

contrast, will consist of those who are bewildered by AI’s “opaque reasoning” and have little agency—if any—to change or shape AI’s decisions and edicts. Over time, they will become too cognitively diminished to reason themselves, and thus will be incapable of understanding what is happening to them. They will be the victims of AI’s “hasten[ing of] dynamics that erode human reason as we have come to understand it,” whereas those who are capable of altering and “understanding” the AI will not (p. 207).

Though Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher make many references to and comparisons with the Age of Enlightenment and the democratization of information that began with the proliferation of the printing press, it seems clear that the AI “revolution”—as these influential figures envision it—outlines the way in which a relatively small elite class is seeking to undo those advancements and, with technology’s help, return the majority of the population to the “Dark Ages.” The serfs of this new techno-feudal era will lose their ability to perceive and reason reality, looking to the learned priestly class of technocrats to interpret the “opaque” edicts of the new AI “god” and thus to dictate both our collective perception of present reality as well as what lies beyond.

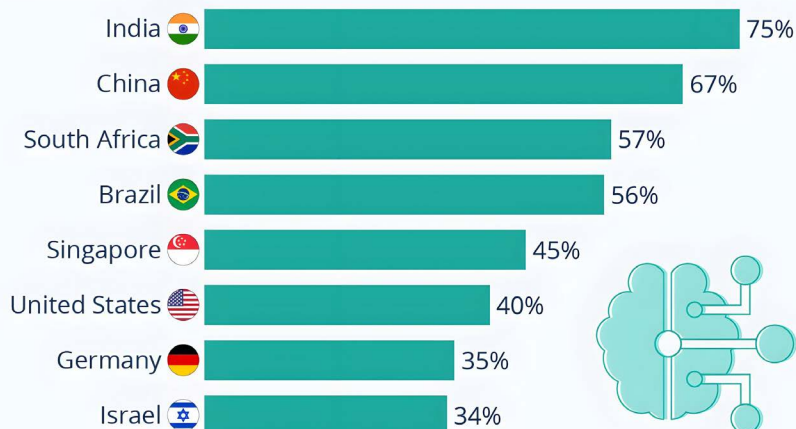
The AI "Religion" Revolution

In their chapter entitled "AI and the Future," the three authors discuss what they view as the very likely possibility that human society will soon interpret AI's pronouncements as "quasi-divine judgments." They write (p. 209):

"In a world where an intelligence beyond one's comprehension or control draws conclusions that are useful but alien, is it foolish to defer to its judgements? Spurred by this logic, a re-enchantment of the world may ensue, in which AIs are relied upon for oracular pronouncements to which some humans defer without questions. Especially in the case of AGI [artificial general intelligence], individuals may perceive god-like intelligence—a superhuman way of knowing the world and intuiting its structure and possibilities."

In AI We Trust

Surveyed countries with highest share of respondents willing to trust AI systems*



* "Somewhat willing", "Mostly willing" or "Completely willing"
1,000+ adults per country surveyed in 17 countries Sep.-Oct. 2022
Sources: KPMG Australia, The University of Queensland



statista

In a book promotion interview with the Hoover Institution, Eric Schmidt expanded on the three authors’ opinion regarding the likelihood that such an outcome could come to pass, particularly once AI has a dominant role in governance. (On p. 209, the authors argue that at the “civilizational level,” it will be “infeasible” to forgo AI’s role in governance). Schmidt stated:

“One of the concerns that we have which we state in the book is that eventually there will be [AI-driven] knowledge systems that will govern society which will be perfectly rational and because they’re so rational they will not be understandable by the average human because they can’t explain themselves. Dr. Kissinger points out that in history, one of two things happen in that case. Either you have a revolution in the form of guns against ‘the man,’ if you will, or you have a new religion and we speculate that one of those two will occur.”⁴³

Given that Schmidt and his co-authors are firmly on the side of “the man” (that is, the existing establishment that is currently developing AI for its benefit and, as they admit elsewhere, for the purpose of enhanced social monitoring and control), it is clear that — of the two outcomes — there is one that they (and the power structures behind them) favor: the creation of a new religion with AI at its center. As previously noted, the authors’ predisposition toward this outcome is found throughout their book, as they treat AI’s output as superior to human reasoning and perception and as presenting new, hidden realities that humanity’s “inferior” capabilities have never been able to observe.

This is consistent with the push to return society to the “Dark Ages,” creating a new religion that serves as a form of comprehensive social control through its stranglehold on information and its control over the public’s perception of reality and events. This new religion is also the only apparent way with which to manifest another “consequence” of the AI revolution as described by Kissinger and co-authors — the end of free societies and the end of free will.

The end of free will, in particular, is a major theme discussed by the would-be prophets of the belief system that this “new” AI-centered religion would likely be based on. Known as “Dataism,” it is defined as venerating neither gods nor man, but data. One of its most well-known prophets, Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, argues that Dataism interprets “the entire human species as a single data-processing system, with individual humans serving as its chips.”⁴⁴

In a piece on Dataism published by the *Financial Times*, Harari states:

“For thousands of years humans believed that authority came from the gods. Then, during the modern era, humanism gradually shifted authority from deities to people. [...] Humanist thinkers such as [Jean-Jacques] Rousseau

convinced us that our own feelings and desires were the ultimate source of meaning, and that our free will was, therefore, the highest authority of all. Now, a fresh shift is taking place. Just as divine authority was legitimised by religious mythologies, and human authority was legitimised by humanist ideologies, so high-tech gurus and Silicon Valley prophets are creating a new universal narrative that legitimises the authority of algorithms and Big Data. This novel creed may be called ‘Dataism.’ In its extreme form, proponents of the Dataist worldview perceive the entire universe as a flow of data, see organisms as little more than biochemical algorithms and believe that humanity’s cosmic vocation is to create an all-encompassing data-processing system—and then merge into it.”⁴⁵

Later on in the same article, Harari states:

“Dataists further believe that given enough biometric data and computing power, this all-encompassing system could understand humans much better than we understand ourselves. Once that happens, humans will lose their authority, and humanist practices such as democratic elections will become as obsolete as rain dances and flint knives.”⁴⁵

Thus, once AI takes over governance and humans “lose their authority,” the Dataists anticipate that their religion will take over and that humanity’s free will and free societies will quickly become “obsolete.” Participation in this new “religion,” as Harari points out elsewhere, will eventually be forced upon the population, including those who wish to “opt out.”

In an article published in *Wired* in 2016, Harari wrote:

“[Dataism] is now mutating into a religion that claims to determine right and wrong. The supreme value of this new religion is ‘information flow.’ If life is the movement of information, and if we think that life is good, it follows that we should extend, deepen and spread the flow of information in the universe. According to Dataism, human experiences are not sacred and Homo sapiens isn’t the apex of creation or a precursor of some future Homo deus. Humans are merely tools for creating the Internet-of-All-Things, which may eventually spread out from planet Earth to cover the whole galaxy and even the whole universe. This cosmic data-processing system would be like God. It will be everywhere and will control everything, and humans are destined to merge into it.”⁴⁴

Thus, what some of the most influential architects of AI policy envision in terms of the AI “revolution” is a process by which humanity becomes dehumanized—molded and shaped by AI to become powerless “tools” that serve AI’s expansion and growth, allowing AI (in the minds of Dataists) to approximate God. It is a

"revolution" whereby we "sell" our minds and our souls for the expansion of a synthetic entity so that it may mimic the creator of its creator. It is the triumph of the material over the spiritual, the profane over the sacred.

While AI as a technology on its own certainly does hold promise in certain fields, those directing its course at the moment seek to use it to enact what can only be described as the final coup d'état. This is not a coup of a government or even of all governments, but a coup over the human mind and spirit, which threatens to rob us of our humanity and our natural and spiritual heritage and render us blind cogs in a large and unholy machine, in an attempt to manifest the Icarian fantasies of its programmers and controllers. It is the logical conclusion of a society driven by those who are blinded by power and greed and who are willing to do absolutely anything—selling not only their own souls but the souls of all of humanity—in order to maintain control.

This is not like coups of the past. This coup, shaped by those who have previously used their power to cripple the sovereignty of nations, is meant to eliminate the sovereignty of our own minds. As foreseen in the seminal dystopian classic *We*,⁴⁶ written over a hundred years ago, the "One State" ruled by machine-driven rationality must move to excise imagination, spirituality, and consciousness from its population by mental, physical, and even surgical means, or the human spirit will always rebel.

While the current coup plotters may feel confident that their creations will succeed in robbing us of our very souls, it is ultimately a choice that rests with us. They cannot take it unless we freely surrender it in exchange for the "convenience" and "advancements" that AI is said to offer. But this is a siren's song, its lyrics laden with false promises and sung by false prophets. The fact that the choice ultimately rests with us, and not with the would-be technocrats, is the flaw in their scheme; they must first convince us that we have no agency, that we cannot "opt out." Now is the time to resist the psychological operation that is meant to divorce us from our souls and from the sacred. Once we do, this final coup will become yet another cautionary myth of corrupted humans who both fear and loathe their own creator trying, and failing, to become him.

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