**INSTRUCTIONS**

Please watch the YouTube video "Google Has A Problem" linked to above.

\*\* Drawing on the assigned readings, post a thread to Discussion Forum/Topic #4 in which you discuss the possible ethical concerns of Google Duplex.

* In your opinion, should we be concerned about computers that can mimic human speech so well that it is impossible to tell whether the speaker is alive or a machine?
* What other concerns--if any--do you have about the rapidly improving technological sophistication of AI (artificial intelligence)?
* you believe that innovation in AI should—or should not—be subject to greater regulation by state, federal, and even international government bodies?

**RESPONSE**

**AI – A Threat or Help to Humanity?**

"Three billion human lives ended on August 29th, 1997. Survivors of the nuclear fire called the war Judgement Day. They lived only to face a new nightmare – the war against the machines”. Over a panning shot of burnt cars and endless piles of skeletal remains, director James Cameron presents an apocalyptic vision of what might happen if artificial intelligence is created. Skynet, the Artificial Intelligence antagonist in the Terminator franchise, gains control of nuclear weapons and attacks humanity.

Is his vision justified? We are beginning to see AI systems develop out of their infancy into more sophisticated systems. Google Duplex is so convincing in its speech patterns that it is able to communicate with others to schedule appointments. In this regard, Duplex has essentially passed a blind Turing Test (a test to determine if someone is able to discern between machine and human). The ethical question concerning further development of AI is whether it would want to help or harm us.

A true AI would be like a human with respect to individual agency, but with massively-increased processing (brain) power. The ability to mimic human speech is especially concerning because a non-in-person conversation with a machine or human would be indistinguishable. Creating an AI with these capabilities would be, in my opinion, devastating to humanity. It would become the most dominant being on the planet. If humanity’s actions against nature and other less-intelligent creatures are any indication of predicting the AI’s behavior, then we would be like an ant trying to stop an incoming boot.

This is why I believe that there needs to be strict regulations on AI development. I don’t think that there should ever be a “true AI” as described above, but rather “dumb AI’s” that serve a specific administrative function with strict capability limitations in place. With regards to warfare, a machine like the T-800 in *Terminator* would be completely unethical. The Geneva Conventions were designed specifically to protect vulnerable human life in an inhuman activity. Since they only apply to humans, they wouldn’t apply to machines. Even so, the convention’s protocols remind us that warfare is brutal and to remove the human element from war with self-thinking machines would make war more prevalent.

But what about Cyberwarfare? The Cyber Attacks document explains how a virus caused actual, physical damage to the nuclear refining capabilities of Iran. How would an AI with the administrative function of conducting cyber warfare pursue it? Without strict limitations in place that clearly define the Geneva Convention articles, we could expect it to attack the most vulnerable infrastructure connected to cyberspace to cause the most damage as possible. Computers perform their functions exactly as they are programmed to, so an AI that has even a little bit of wiggle room could cause massive damage on a technicality.

But there will always be emergent technologies that advance the human race. In the ABA journal, it details on page 43 how a relatively new technology, airplanes, brought forth an entirely new and destructive style of warfare. The difference between airplanes and AI is that airplanes don’t think and still bring the human element into warfare.

So where does AI fit into an ethical future? As said before, I believe they should serve purely administrative functions for civilian application. An AI running a hospital or diagnosing a patient, for example. Should AI be used to trade stocks? I don’t believe so. This could allow a creator of such an AI to accumulate vast amounts of wealth and be used for financial warfare against competitors. Either way, the future of AI and its application is uncertain but we need to be extraordinarily mindful of the capabilities and limitations we put in place when creating one.