

14 Ways AI Will Benefit Or Harm Society



Forbes Technology Council CommunityVoice

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is on the rise both in business and in the world in general. How beneficial is it really to your business in the long run? Sure, it can take over those time-consuming and mundane tasks that are bogging your employees down, but at what cost?

With AI spending expected to reach \$46 billion by 2020, according to an [IDC report](#), there's no sign of the technology slowing down. Adding AI to your business may be the next step as

you look for ways to advance your operations and increase your performance.

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To understand how AI will impact your business going forward, 14 members of [Forbes Technology Council](#) weigh in on the concerns about artificial intelligence and provide reasons why AI is either a detriment or a benefit to society. Here is what they had to say:

1. Enhances Efficiency And Throughput

Concerns about disruptive technologies are common. A recent example is automobiles -- it took years to develop regulation around the industry to make it safe. That said, AI today is a huge benefit to society because it enhances our efficiency and throughput, while creating new opportunities for revenue generation, cost savings and job creation. - [Anand Sampat, Datmo](#)

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2. Frees Up Humans To Do What They Do Best

Humans are not best served by doing tedious tasks. Machines can do that, so this is where AI can provide a true benefit. This allows us to do the more interpersonal and creative aspects of work.

- [Chalmers Brown](#), [Due](#)

3. Adds Jobs, Strengthens The Economy

We all see the headlines: Robots and AI will destroy jobs. This is fiction rather than fact. AI encourages a gradual evolution in the job market which, with the right preparation, will be positive. People will still work, but they'll work better with the help of AI. The unparalleled combination of human and machine will become the new normal in the workforce of the future. - [Matthew Lieberman](#), [PwC](#)

4. Leads To Loss Of Control

If machines do get smarter than humans, there could be a loss of control that can be a detriment. Whether that happens or whether certain controls can be put in place remains to be seen.

- [Muhammed Othman](#), [Calendar](#)

5. Enhances Our Lifestyle

The rise of AI in our society will enhance our lifestyle and create more efficient businesses. Some of the mundane tasks like answering emails and data entry will be done by intelligent

assistants. Smart homes will also reduce energy usage and provide better security, marketing will be more targeted and we will get better health care thanks to better diagnoses. - [Naresh Soni, Tsunami ARVR](#)

6. Supervises Learning For Telemedicine

AI is a technology that can be used for both good and nefarious purposes, so there is a need to be vigilant. The latest technologies seem typically applied towards the wealthiest among us, but AI has the potential to extend knowledge and understanding to a broader population -- e.g. image-based AI diagnoses of medical conditions could allow for a more comprehensive deployment of telemedicine. - [Harald Quintus-Bosz, Cooper Perkins, Inc.](#)

7. Creates Unintended And Unforeseen Consequences

While fears about killer robots grab headlines, unintended and unforeseen consequences of artificial intelligence need attention today, as we're already living with them. For example, it is believed that Facebook's newsfeed algorithm influenced an election outcome that affected geopolitics. How can we better anticipate and address such possible outcomes in future? - [Simon Smith, BenchSci](#)

8. Increases Automation

There will be economic consequences to the widespread adoption of machine learning and other AI technologies. AI is capable of performing tasks that would once have required intensive human labor or not have been possible at all. The major benefit for business will be a reduction in operational costs brought about by AI automation -- whether that's a net positive for society remains to be seen. - [Vik Patel, Nexcess](#)

9. Elevates The Condition Of Mankind

The ability for technology to solve more problems, answer more questions and innovate with a number of inputs beyond the capacity of the human brain can certainly be used for good or ill. If history is any guide, the improvement of technology tends to elevate the condition of mankind and allow us to focus on higher order functions and an improved quality of life. - [Wade Burgess, Shiftgig](#)

10. Solves Complex Social Problems

Much of the fear with AI is due to the misunderstanding of what it is and how it should be applied. Although AI has promise for solving complex social problems, there are ethical issues and biases we must still explore. We are just beginning to understand how AI can be applied to meaningful problems. As our use of AI matures, we will find it to be a clear benefit in our lives. - [Mark Benson, Exosite, LLC](#)

11. Improves Demand Side Management

AI is a benefit to society because machines can become smarter over time and increase efficiencies. Additionally, computers are not susceptible to the same probability of errors as human beings are. From an energy standpoint, AI can be used to analyze and research historical data to determine how to most efficiently distribute energy loads from a grid perspective. - [Greg Sarich, CLEAResult](#)

12. Benefits Multiple Industries

Society has and will continue to benefit from AI based on character/facial recognition, digital content analysis and accuracy in identifying patterns, whether they are used for health sciences, academic research or technology applications. AI risks are real if we don't understand the quality of the incoming data and set AI rules which are making granular trade-off decisions at increasing computing speeds. - [Mark Butler, Qualys.com](#)

13. Absolves Humans Of All Responsibility

It is one thing to use machine learning to predict and help solve problems; it is quite another to use these systems to purposely control and act in ways that will make people unnecessary. When machine intelligence exceeds our ability to understand it, or it becomes superior intelligence, we should take care to not blindly follow its recommendation and absolve ourselves of all responsibility. - [Chris Kirby, Voices.com](#)

14. Extends And Expands Creativity

AI intelligence is the biggest opportunity of our lifetime to extend and expand human creativity and ingenuity. The two main concerns that the fear-mongers raise are around AI leading to job losses in the society and AI going rogue and taking control of the human race. I believe that both these concerns raised by critics are moot or solvable. - [Ganesh Padmanabhan, CognitiveScale, Inc](#)