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第一篇：ChatGPT——可怕的人类模仿者

Probably the best software program for impersonating humans ever released to the public is ChatGPT. Such is its appeal that within days of its launch last week, the boss of the artificial intelligence company behind the chatbot, OpenAI, tweeted that 1 million people had logged on. Facebook and Spotify took months to attract that level of engagement. Its allure is obvious: ChatGPT can generate jokes, craft undergraduate essays and create computer code from a short writing prompt.

There's nothing new in software that produces fluent and coherent prose. ChatGPT's predecessor, the Generative Pretrained Transformer 3 (GPT-3), could do that. Both were trained on an unimaginably large amount of data to answer questions in a believable way. But ChatGPT has been fine-tuned by being fed the data on human "conversations", which significantly increased the truthfulness and informativeness of its answers.

Even so, ChatGPT still produces what its makers admit will be "plausible-sounding but incorrect or nonsensical answers". This might be a big problem on the internet, as many web platforms don't have the tools needed to protect themselves against a flood of AI-generated content. Stack Overflow, a website where users can find answers to programming questions, banned ChatGPT-produced posts, as its human moderators could not deal with the volume of believable but wrong replies. Dangers lurk in giving out tools that could be used to mass produce fake news and "trolling and griefing" messages.

Letting loose ChatGPT raises the question of whether content produced after December 2022 can be truly trusted. A human author is liable for their work in a way AI is not. Artificial intelligence is not artificial consciousness. ChatGPT does not know what it is doing; it is unable to say how or why it produced a response; it has no grasp of human experience; and cannot tell if it is making sense or nonsense. While OpenAI has safeguards to refuse inappropriate requests, such as to tell users how to commit crimes, these can be evaded. AI's potential for harm should not be underestimated. In the wrong hands, it could be a weapon of mass destruction.

GPT-3 could reproduce lines of code but OpenAI improved it to create Codex, a program that could write software. When computer scientists entered Codex into exams alongside first-year students, the software outperformed most of its human peers. "Human oversight and alertness is required," OpenAI's researchers have warned. That injunction should also apply to ChatGPT. The EU has gone a long way to provide protections for citizens from potentially harmful uses of AI. Britain's approach, so far, offers little – a worry as science fiction becomes science fact.

ChatGPT 可能是迄今为止面向公众发布的最好的拟人软件程序。它的吸引力如此之大，以至于上周上线后的几天内，开发这一聊天机器人的人工智能公司 OpenAI 的老板就发推特称，已有 100 万人登录了该程序。脸书和 Spotify 花了数月才吸引到了这个数量级的用户。ChatGPT 的诱人之处是显而易见的：它能生成笑话，能创作本科生论文，还能根据一小段文字提示编写计算机代码。

软件能生成流畅且连贯的大白话已经不是新鲜事了。ChatGPT 的前身，生成性预训练转换器 3（GPT-3）就能做到这一点。二者都通过多到难以想象的数据进行训练，以求能针对各种问题给出可信的回答。但开发者通过向 ChatGPT 灌输人类的“对话”数据对其进行了微调，这种做法显著增加了其回答的可信度和信息量。

即便如此，ChatGPT 仍然会生成“听上去合理但其实不正确或没道理的答案”，这一点连其开发者都承认。这在互联网上可能会造成大问题，因为很多互联网平台没有所需工具来保护自己免受海量的人工智能生成内容的影响。Stack Overflow，一个用户可以找到编程问题答案的网站，禁止了由 ChatGPT 生成的帖子，因为该网站的人类审核员无力处理过多的可信却错误的回复。向大众提供可被用于大量产生虚假新闻以及“钓鱼”和引战”信息的工具是有潜在危险的。

放任 ChatGPT 的使用会引发 2022 年 12 月之后发布的内容是否真的可以被信任的问题。一位人类作家可以为其作品负责，但人工智能做不到这一点。人工智能并非人工意识。ChatGPT 并不知道自己在做什么；它无法说清楚自己是如何以及为什么给出某个回答的；它无法理解人类的经验；也无法分辨自己说的话有没有道理。虽然 OpenAI 设计了安全机制来拒绝一些不恰当的请求，比如告诉用户如何犯罪，但这些机制是可以被规避的。我们不该低估人工智能造成伤害的潜力。如果落入坏人之手，它可能会成为大规模杀伤性武器。

GPT-3 可以写出几行代码，但 OpenAI 对其进行了改进，从而创造出了 Codex，一个能编写软件的程序。当计算机科学家们让 Codex 和大学一年级学生一同参加考试时，该软件的表现超过了大部分人类考生。OpenAI 的研发人员已经警告称，该软件需要人类的监督和警戒。这一警告也应该适用于 ChatGPT。在保护公民免受人工智能应用带来的潜在伤害这方面，欧盟已经取得了很大进步。截至目前，英国采取的措施则非常有限——随着科幻小说里的内容逐渐变成科学事实，这着实令人担忧。

第二篇：英国王室的过渡期

These are brutal reputational days for the House of Windsor, and they are potentially threatening for the constitutional monarchy of Britain's increasingly disunited kingdom too. Prince Harry's memoir, due for publication on Tuesday, is already the most discussed – though not yet the most widely bought or read – book of 2023.

In the court of public opinion, the monarchy has survived the Sussexes' campaign thus far. Polling suggests the institution retains majority support and that more disapprove of Prince Harry's campaign than sympathise with it. Republicanism is not surging. But this is an institution, a system and a culture crying out for some new thinking and reform. Only a fool would be complacent.

The Windsors are not the only unhappy family in modern Britain. But they are the only one required to embody the nation as a whole. They are holding up a bleak mirror to the nation's and the world's gaze, from which no one emerges with credit. It reflects badly on Britain's institutions, from the monarchy to the media, and we all know it.

Britain has worse problems than the monarchy. But the danger to the Windsors exists. It is real and it is growing. It comes at a transitional time for the monarchy, as our oldest ever new monarch prepares for a coronation that, at least in theory, ought to celebrate and help to unify the nation.

The clearest solution would be the republican settlement we ultimately favour. In the meantime, however, an enormous chance is being missed to reshape Britain's constitutional monarchy for the post-Elizabeth age. There is responsibility to share here too. King Charles and his inward-looking circle deserve some of it. The danger is that Britain's 21st-century monarchy is being defined ad hoc by an elite consisting of a palace clique and an overly deferential governing culture.

Instead of wallowing in royal gossip or obsessed with the supposed timelessness of coronation rituals, Britain needs to decide how a system of constitutional monarchy that retains public support can be made better and reformed. The size of the royal family should be reduced, its titles reined in, some of its palaces sold off, the honours system recast, the coronation rethought and the monarch's role as head of any state other than the United Kingdom ended. Harry Windsor should be left to live his new life.

Civil society has failed to face these issues. There has been no parliamentary and scarcely any other civic examination of the modern role, powers and appropriate cost of the monarch and the royal family. Rare attempts to do so have instead been suppressed. But it is not too late to do better.

这段日子里，温莎家族的风评很差，而这对越发不团结的大英帝国的君主立宪制度也有潜在的威胁。定于周二出版的哈里王子回忆录已然是 2023 年讨论度最高的一本书——尽管其销量和阅读量目前还未登顶。

从公众意见的角度来看，王室目前已经熬过萨塞克斯公爵（即哈里王子）的风波。民调显示，当前体制仍然获得了大多数民众的支持，而在哈里王子事件上反感者则多过同情者。共和主义并未抬头。但这是一种急需一些新的思想和改革的制度、系统和文化。只有傻瓜才会安于现状。

温莎家族不是当今英国唯一一个不幸的家族。但他们是唯一一个被要求代表国家团结统一的家族。在国人和世界的注视下，他们对外展示出的形象无一不是正面的。这对英国体制造成了恶劣影响，对此我们也都心知肚明。

英国当前有比王室更严重的问题。但温莎家族正面临危险。这种危险确实存在，且正在与日俱增。它出现在王室的过渡期，正赶上我们有史以来最年长的一位新君准备加冕的时候，这理论上来说本应是一件值得庆祝并有利于国家团结全国的事情。

最显而易见的解决办法就是人们期盼已久的共和制方案。然而与此同时，我们也错失了在后伊丽莎白时期重塑英国君主立宪制度的重大机会。在这一问题上，我们也负有责任。查尔斯国王和他那封闭的圈子也负有一定的责任。危险在于，21 世纪英国的君主制度正被一群由王室团体和过分顺从的统治文化构成的精英群体所定义。

英国需要决定应该如何优化和改革一个能获得民众支持的君主立宪制度，而不是沉湎于王室八卦和永恒的加冕仪式流程。我们应该缩减英国王室的规模，收紧王室的各种头衔，出售部分宫殿，重新设计授勋制度，重新思考加冕仪式，并且不再让君主担任除英国以外任何国家的元首。哈里·温莎应该去开始一段崭新的生活。

公民社会没能直面这些问题。对于君主和王室在当代社会中的角色、权力和合理开销，一直都没有议会层面的考量，也鲜有任何其他的公民审查。少有的几次尝试反而被压制了。但现在改变还为时未晚。

第三篇：富人税与贫富分化

During the pandemic, the rich saw their ranks swell as stock markets soared – even as low-income workers returned to work and blue collar jobs were hollowed out. The upshot is that for the first time in three decades, extreme poverty and extreme wealth across the world have gone up at the same time.

This is underlined by the richest ever prime minister. Rishi Sunak is a multimillionaire, but the real money is inherited. His family's £700m fortune rests on the 1% shareholding that Mr Sunak's wife, Akshata Murty, holds in her father's IT firm Infosys. This has almost tripled in value since March 2020 and entitled her, reportedly, to £6.4m in dividend payments last year. Mr Sunak and most voters live on different planets. His rise symbolises how political influence is being concentrated in the super-rich. Sensibly, he is skipping Davos, where the wealthy and powerful meet.

Official UK statistics hide the true extent of polarisation. Figures for income inequality do not include capital gains, which make the rich considerable sums and attract lower rates of tax. While a comfortably off voter might think about this in terms of second-home sales, these were dwarfed by the sums made from selling or closing down businesses. The economists Arun Advani and Andy Summers found that by including capital gains with income, the average remuneration of the top 0.01% rose from £4.9m to £8.4m in 2017-18. They also found that the richest 5,000 people's share of total UK "wages" was 3.6% rather than the 2.2% recorded – implying that income inequality is much higher than previously thought.

The disproportionate gains justify new levies on riches. Britain has wealth taxes. But they don't work very well. Inheritance tax is avoided to such an extent that the effective average tax rate drops from a peak of 20% on estates worth £2m to 10% for estates worth more than £10m. In 2020, the Wealth Tax Commission costed a one-off wealth tax. Levied at 1% above an individual's net wealth of £10m, it would raise about £43bn from 22,000 wealthy people. The cash could, without increasing the budget deficit, be used to ease the intensifying squeeze on ordinary incomes and make up for NHS underfunding.

Britain has become a place where the rich are extraordinarily rich and the poor are very poor. It needs to be one where the rich are well off, but the poor can also enjoy a decent standard of living. The country can do better, but this will require a clear-headed analysis and bravery that have so far been lacking in political debates.

疫情期间，富人们的财富排名随着股市水涨船高——而与此同时，低收入工作者重返就业岗位，而蓝领工作则变得空心化。其结果就是，出现了 30 年来首次全世界范围内极端贫困和极端富裕人群同时增加的情况。

这在有史以来最富有的首相身上体现得淋漓尽致。里希·苏纳克是一位大富翁，但他的实际财产都是继承得来的。苏纳克 7 亿英镑的家庭财富靠的是其妻子阿克莎塔·穆尔蒂在她父亲的 IT 公司 Infosys 内持有的 1% 的股份。这些股份的市值自 2020 年 3 月以来已经增至原来的近三倍，并且据说去年让她获得了 640 万英镑的分红收入。苏纳克先生和大部分选民生活在不同的世界里。他的发迹体现了政治影响力是如何被集中在超级富豪手上的。他很明智地没去参加达沃斯论坛这种有钱有势的人会面的活动。

英国的官方统计数据隐藏了（贫富）两极分化的真实程度。有关收入不平等的数据中并没有包含资本利得，富人们通过资本利得获得了大量的收入，交的税也更少。虽然一个家境富裕的选民想到的资本利得可能是他出售第二套房所获得的收入，但这和（富豪们）出售或关停企业赚的钱比就相形见绌了。经济学家阿伦·阿德瓦尼和安迪·萨莫斯发现，一旦把资本利得算进收入里，前 0.01% 的富人在 2017—2018 年的平均收入就从 490 万英镑上升到了 840 万英镑。他们还发现，英国最富有的 5000 人的“收入”占全英国的 3.6%，而不是官方数字中所写的 2.2%——这意味着收入的不平等程度比我们先前所想的还要高得多。

这种不成比例的收入使向富人征税正当化。英国有各种财富税。但是它们并没有很好地起作用。人们极力规避遗产税，以至于平均有效税率已经从最高时的 200 万英镑财产交 20% 的税下降到 1000 万英镑的资产只交 10% 的税。2020 年财富税委员会征收过一个一次性的财富税。对个人净资产超过 1000 万英镑的部分征收了 1% 的税，这会从 22 000 名富人那里征得大约 430 亿英镑的税收。这笔钱可以在不增加预算赤字的情况下用来减轻越发严重的财政缩减对普通收入人群的影响，并弥补英国国民医疗服务体系（NHS）资金不足的问题。

英国已经变成一个富人极端富裕而穷人极度贫穷的国度。它需要成为一个有钱人生活富裕但穷人也能享受基本的体面生活的地方。我们的国家可以做得更好，但这需要清醒的分析和勇气，而这是迄今为止的政治讨论中一直缺乏的。

第四篇：ChatGPT 搜索引擎之思

The human brain is evolving. Some scientists claim that thousands of years ago our ancestors had brains that were larger than our own. Their explanations vary; one thesis is that intelligence became increasingly collective and humans breached a population threshold that saw individuals sharing information. For his part, Prof Dennett wrote that the most remarkable expansion of human mental powers – the rise of civilisation through art and agriculture – was almost instantaneous from an evolutionary perspective.

Socialisation of synaptic thought is now being tested by a different kind of information exchange: the ability of AI to answer any prompt with human-sounding language – suggesting some sort of intent, even sentience. But this is an illusion. Computers have become more accomplished but they lack genuine comprehension, nurtured in humans by evolving as autonomous individuals embedded in a web of social practices. ChatGPT, the most human-like impersonator, can generate elegant prose. But it gets basic maths wrong. It can be racist and sexist. ChatGPT has no nostalgia, no schemes and no reflections. So why all the fuss? In short, money.

When Google's new AI-powered Google search tool, Bard, was spotted this week to have erred in a promotional video, the mistake wiped more than \$150bn off the stock price of its parent company Alphabet. Why, wondered the neural scientist Gary Marcus, was Microsoft's Bing search engine, powered by ChatGPT, and unveiled on the same day as Bard, hailed as "a revolution" despite offering a problematic service? The answer is the chance that humanity might be "Binging" rather than "Googling" the web. This does not seem unreasonable: ChatGPT has wowed millions of people since it was unveiled at the end of November.

The trouble is that this is just sensations. Chatbots sound more authoritative, but they are not more truthful. Prof Marcus points out their errors, or hallucinations, are in their "silicon blood", a byproduct of the way they compress their inputs. "Since neither company has yet subjected their products to full scientific review, it's impossible to say which is more trustworthy," he writes. "It might well turn out that Google's new product is actually more reliable."

Humans have a long track record of wishful thinking and underestimating the risks of new breakthroughs. Commercial interests push technology as a new religion whose central article of faith is that more technology is always better. Web giants want to dazzle users into overestimating their AI tools' utility, encouraging humanity to prematurely surrender authority to them far beyond their competence. Entrepreneurial attitude and scientific curiosity have produced many of the modern era's advances. But progress is not an ethical principle. The danger is not machines being treated like

humans, but humans being treated like machines.

人类的大脑正在进化。一些科学家声称，数千年前我们祖先的大脑比我们现在的还要大。他们对此的解释不一；其中一种理论认为人类智力变得越发集体化，而人类突破了一个人口阈值，这使得个体之间开始分享信息。在丹尼特教授看来，人类脑力最重大的飞跃——艺术和农业造就的文明崛起——从进化的角度来看几乎是在瞬间完成的。

突触式思维的社会化现在正通过一种不同的信息交换形式被加以测试：人工智能用人声回应任何提示的能力——表明某种意图，甚至是道理。但这只是一种幻想。计算机已经变得越发先进，但是它们缺乏真正的理解力，对人类而言这种理解力是将自主的个体嵌于社会网络中通过实践进化而培养出来的。ChatGPT 这个目前最接近人类的模仿者可以生成优雅的语言。但它会算错基础的数学题。它可能会带有种族和性别偏见。ChatGPT 不会怀旧，没有计谋，也不会反思。那它为什么会这么轰动？简而言之，钱。

本周，谷歌由人工智能驱动的新搜索引擎 Bard 被发现在一段推广视频中出现错误，这个错误致使其母公司字母表的股票市值蒸发逾 1500 亿美元。神经科学家加里·马库斯想不明白，在 Bard 发布的同一天，微软发布的由 ChatGPT 驱动的必应搜索引擎提供的服务明明也有问题，为何却被人们赞扬为“一次革新”呢？答案在于人们在网上“必应一下”而非“谷歌一下”的概率不同。这并非不合理：ChatGPT 自去年十一月底发布以来已经惊艳了数百万人。

问题在于，这只是一种感觉。聊天机器人听起来更权威，但它们并没有因此而更具真实性。马库斯教授指出，这种错误或错觉是根植在其“硅血统”里的，是他们压缩其输入信息的方式的副产物“因为两家公司目前都没有让其产品接受充分的科学评审，所以我们无法判断到底谁家的产品更可信。”他写道。“很有可能最后发现谷歌的新产品实际上更可靠。”

人类一直以来都有一厢情愿和低估新突破的风险的毛病。技术在商业利益的推动下成为一种新型宗教，其核心信条是技术越多越好。互联网巨头们想蛊惑用户高估其人工智能工具的实用性，鼓励人类在条件尚不成熟的情况下将决定权交给能力远不胜任的人工智能。企业家精神和科学上的好奇心带来了当代科技的进步。但进步并不是一种道德准则。机器被当成人类来对待并不危险，危险的是人类被当成机器对待。

第五篇：英国移民政策之罪

Over the last decade, the immigration system has sought to make life nearly impossible for many seeking a better future in Britain. The rationale has been that it diminishes hostility to refugees and migrants. If people aren't allowed to claim benefits, they can't be accused of being a burden. If they're forced to wait years before gaining permission to remain, many will leave of their own accord. If the system is harsh, it will function as a deterrent.

Yet, as a recent paper from the Institute for Public Policy Research makes clear, these punitive and complex rules create hardship and prevent people from contributing to society. The 10-year route to residency, which allows those with family connections to apply for leave to remain after spending a decade in the country, is a particularly cruel example. Around 170,000 people in Britain have permission to remain on this route. Many are women and people from black and south Asian backgrounds; many are in low-paid work. More than half are unable to meet the basic costs of living. The design of the route means people easily fall foul of it. Making a mistake on a form, or being unable to afford the £2,404 fee at the end of the process, can be enough to lose your immigration status and face the full force of the hostile environment.

The 10-year route, like many of Britain's immigration rules, effectively functions as a cash cow for the Home Office. Every 30 months, people must reapply for a visa, which costs £2,608 for adults and £2,223 for children. One investigation found that the department makes an 800% profit on some visa applications. The Home Office is captured by a fear that apparent concessions could be perceived as weaknesses. Forcing applicants who are already struggling with money to pay excessive fees seems like a ruthless attempt to prove that migrants are no cost to the taxpayer. These fees should be limited to administrative costs. Low-paid workers should not be a money-making scheme.

This is not only a question of fairness. The 10-year route treats people who have lived and worked in the UK for years, many in understaffed sectors such as health and social care, as a problem. On this and other policies, the Home Office functions at cross-purposes to departments such as the Treasury and health. The route prevents people from accessing student loans that would allow them to study, and traps them in low-paid jobs because employers are reluctant to hire those on short-term visas. It reduces people's earning potential and future tax contributions, and all but guarantees that they live in poverty. It does not have to be this way.

在过去的十年里，移民系统一直在致力于断绝很多想在英国寻求美好未来的人的生路。根本原因在于，它减轻了（国民）对难民和移民的敌意。如果人们被禁止申请救济金，那他们就不会被视为社会的负担。如果被迫在获得居住许可前等待多年，那很多人就会自行离开。如果移民系统很严苛，那么它就会起到抑制移民的作用。

然而，正如公共政策研究所最近的一篇文章所示，这些惩罚性的复杂规则给人们创造了困境，进而阻碍人们对社会做出贡献。十年居留权制度就是一个非常残酷的例子，它允许那些有亲人在英国的人们在本国停留十年后获得永居权利。英国大约有 17 万人通过这一途径得到了居留权。他们其中很多是妇女、黑人或南亚人；很多人都从事着低薪工作。这其中超过一半的人负担不起生活的基本开支。这个途径的设计方式意味着人们会很容易违反其规定。填写表格时的错误，或在整个流程的最后无力支付 2 404 英镑的费用就足以让你失去移民资格，到时候整个社会环境对你的敌意也将火力全开。

和很多英国移民规则一样，十年（居留权）制度对内政部来说，有效地发挥了其“现金牛”的职能。每 30 个月，人们就必须重新申请一次签证，成人要为此支付 2 608 英镑，儿童则是 2 223 英镑。一项调查发现，该部门在一些签证申请项目上赚取了 800% 的利润。内政部总是担心明显的让步会被视为软弱。强制那些本就快无力支付过高费用的申请人的做法像是在以一种无情的方式试图证明移民并不会对纳税人构成负担。这些费用应该被限制在管理成本范围内。低收入工作者们不该成为（政府）赚钱的对象。

这不光是一个公平问题。这些人多年来一直在英国生活和工作，其中一些人还任职于医疗和社会保障这种人手不足的行业，但十年（居留权）制度把他们当作问题去对待。在这一政策和其他政策上，内政部起到的作用与财政部和卫生部等部门截然相反。十年（居留权）制度阻止人们获得学习所需的学生贷款，并且将他们困在低收入岗位中，因为雇主们不愿意招聘那些持有短期签证的人。它降低了人们的收入潜能和未来的税收贡献，并几乎使得这些人过着贫困的生活。这其实大可不必。

第六篇：反思碳中和模式

The strong reaction to *the Guardian's* joint investigation into carbon offsetting shows how much is at stake when the effectiveness of market mechanisms in combating global heating is challenged. Verra, the Washington-based non-profit at the centre of the story, is the world's leading carbon standard, certifying the credits that companies use to make claims about their environmental impact. It is a blow to anyone committed to the idea that emissions trading can help the world to reach net zero, to learn that 90% of the rainforest credits analysed are unlikely to represent genuine carbon reductions.

The problem, which was uncovered by journalists working alongside experts using satellite images, is the methodology used by Verra to certify its credits. While Verra disputes the findings, and is due to publish its own assessment, the researchers found that the evidence used to calculate offsets was flawed. Predictions of what would have happened in the absence of credits were unreliable, and benefits were overstated.

Given Verra's importance, the significance of the findings goes beyond a single organisation. What happens next is crucial, and will be closely watched by governments and businesses around the world. The question is: can existing processes be improved? Here, academics and environmental campaigners are divided. Carbon markets have long been controversial, with some arguing that any attempt to protect nature by assigning it monetary value is doomed. According to this view, the focus on nature conservation and restoration of recent years has been co-opted and corrupted by corporate interests, including fossil fuel producers who are among the biggest purchasers of carbon credits.

Defenders of emissions trading, however, insist that while such greenwashing must be called out, carbon markets have a role to play. Governments will not provide the necessary funds to protect the world's rainforests. Therefore there is no alternative but to direct private capital towards them and other carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots. If the existing ways of doing this don't work, better ones must be developed.

Shell is planning a massive expansion of its offsetting operations. And there is no question that an emissions trading system in which big oil is the largest customer has gone horribly wrong. If carbon credits are to be more than a dangerous distraction from the task of ending our dependence on fossil fuels, they must not be treated as licenses to pollute. Instead they should be viewed as a last resort, and companies should only be able to access them as part of an overall net zero strategy. Schemes that charge individuals fees to cancel out emissions from flights or other high-carbon activities should be ended. They do more harm than good by encouraging the idea that lifestyles don't need to change.

《卫报》对碳中和机制发起的联合调查引起了强烈反应，这证明当应对全球气候变暖的市场机制的有效性受到质疑时，会牵扯到多么巨大的利益。故事的主角是总部设在华盛顿的非营利组织 Verra，它是世界领先的碳标准制定者，负责认证各公司抵消其造成的环境影响所需要的碳信用额度。对于任何一个深信碳排放交易机制可以帮助全世界实现净零排放的人而言，得知 90% 的雨林碳信用额度很可能都无法带来真实的碳减排是一种巨大的冲击。

通过卫星成像技术，记者和专家们发现问题出在 Verra 用于认证其碳信用额度的方法上。虽然 Verra 对此持有异议，并将发布自己的评估报告，但研究人员发现用于计算碳中和量的证据是有问题的。Verra 对于不购买碳信用额度造成的后果的预测是不可靠的，而购买碳信用额度带来的好处则被夸大了。

考虑到 Verra 的重要性，上述发现的意义绝不限于某一个组织。接下来的事态发展尤为关键，也将受到全世界各国政府和企业的密切关注。问题在于：现存的流程可以被完善吗？在这一问题上，学者和环保人士有不同意见。碳交易市场一直以来都备受争议，一些人认为，任何试图将自然保护与金钱价值挂钩的做法都必然会失败。按照这种说法，近年来人们在自然保护与恢复上的努力已经被企业利益集团拉拢和腐蚀，其中的一些化石燃料生产商本身就是碳信用额度的最大买家。

然而，碳排放交易机制的捍卫者们坚持认为，虽然这类漂绿行为必须被叫停，但碳交易市场仍然有其正面作用。各国政府无法提供保护全世界热带雨林所必需的资金。因此我们别无选择，只能将私人资本导向热带雨林和其他碳汇以及生态多样性热点地区。如果现有的办法行不通，就必须想出更好的解决方案。

壳牌公司正准备大规模增加其碳中和操作。毫无疑问，一个由石油巨头充当最大买家的碳排放交易系统是有重大问题的。如果碳信用额度真正想要起到停止人们对化石燃料的依赖的作用，而不是减少人们对这一问题的关注的话，那它们就不能被当作一种排污许可证。相反，碳信用额度应该被当成一种不得已而为之的终极手段，也只能作为整体的净零排放策略的一个组成部分而为企业所用。向个人收费来抵消其乘坐飞机或进行其他高碳活动的影响的做法应该停止。这些做法弊大于利，因为它们让人们以为自己的生活方式不需要改变。

第七篇：地方新闻衰退之危害

There are probably fewer local newspapers in Britain now than at any time since the 18th century. More people get local news and information – or misinformation – from social media. A long-term decline has accelerated: more than 320 local titles closed between 2009 and 2019 as advertising revenues fell by about 70%. The pandemic was another blow. At least as serious as these disappearances is the hollowing out of titles that have seen staffing, resources and pages slashed, and coverage thus diminished.

Publications are less and less likely to be owned by proprietors with a stake in their communities, and more and more by big conglomerates prioritising the extraction of cash. More than two-thirds of UK titles are held by the three largest publishers, leaving about 400 independents. Now production costs are rocketing and businesses are cutting back further on advertising. While individual reporters and organisations still do remarkable work, they do it against the odds.

This is a global problem. Newspapers in the US are closing at the rate of two a week. Local newspapers were never perfect: they could reflect community prejudices, or cosy up to authorities and businesses they should have challenged. But the social costs of losing coverage genuinely rooted in communities is profound.

Local news organisations encourage people to use businesses, go to theatres or join campaigning groups. They inform people about rights and services. They promote accountability and democratic oversight – even more important when power is devolved. But they also sustain communities in less tangible ways. They make people feel part of society. They allow them to assess what they read in the context of their own experience, and encourage them to see news as a source of practical and helpful information, rather than a matter of theoretical discussion and emotional reaction. Margaret Sullivan, the US media critic warns that their erosion is a danger to democracy itself. It allows disinformation and emotional political rhetoric detached from fact to flourish.

There is plenty of evidence that people value local news and its many benefits. There is less evidence that they will pay enough to make it sustainable. The government's new tech regulator, the Digital Markets Unit, should make sure that small publishers are fairly paid by the big digital platforms. And the pilot news information fund set up after the 2019 review of the sustainability of journalism should be much expanded and made permanent. There is no single easy fix. But public funding is a crucial part of the mix.

英国的地方报纸数量现在很可能已经降到 18 世纪以来的最低水平。越来越多的人通过社交媒体来获得当地的新闻和信息，或虚假信息。（报业的）长期衰退已经加速：从 2009 年到 2019 年，有超过 320 家地方报刊关停，原因是广告收入下降了约 70%。疫情的出现无疑是雪上加霜。比这些关停问题还要糟糕的是报刊的空心化，这些报刊经历了员工、资源和页数的削减，其新闻覆盖面也因此减小了。

由在当地社区有利益关系的业主所开办的出版物正逐渐减少，归只想获利的大集团所有的出版物则与日俱增。超过三分之二的英国报刊由三大出版商控制，除此之外只剩约 400 个独立报刊。现今生产成本正在暴涨，企业则在进一步削减其广告投入。虽然个体记者和组织仍然做着卓著的新闻工作，但他们是在迎难而上。

这是一个全球性问题。美国的报社正在以每周两家的速度关停。地方报纸从来都不是完美的：它们可能会带有社区的偏见，或迎合其本该质疑的权威人士和企业。但失去这些真正扎根于社区的新闻报道所带来的社会影响是非常重大的。

地方性新闻组织鼓励人们使用企业提供的商品，去剧院看戏或加入活动组织。它们会告知人们其享有的权利和服务。它们会促进责任的落实以及民主监督——这在权力下放时尤为重要。但它们也会以相对不太直观的方式维系社区。它们让人们感到自己是社会的一部分。它们让他们可以结合自身的实际经验去评估自己所读到的新闻内容，并鼓励他们 will 新闻报道看作一种实用且有用的信息，而非一种理论上的探讨和情绪反应。美国媒体评论家玛格丽特·沙利文警告称，地方新闻的衰退危及民主本身。这会使得虚假信息和脱离事实而诉诸情绪的政治辞令大行其道。

有充分的证据表明人们很重视地方新闻及其带来的诸多好处。（然而，能证明）人们愿意花足够的钱来维持地方报业的证据就少多了。政府新成立的科技监管部门，即数字市场部，应该确保小出版商能得到大数字平台的合理报酬。在 2019 年新闻业可持续发展回顾活动后成立的试点性新闻信息基金应该大幅扩张规模并常态化。这一问题无法通过某一个简单的办法来解决。但政府的资助一定是解决方案中至关重要的一部分。

第八篇：艺术教育与创造力危机

English state schools are facing a creativity crisis. Since 2010, enrolment in arts GCSEs has fallen by 40% and the number of arts teachers has fallen by 23%. This shift is most pronounced among state schools in deprived areas, where pupils are far less likely to sing in a choir or play in an orchestra. Meanwhile, private schools have invested substantial resources in art and music provision, according to research from Warwick University. This depressing trend is part of a wider and self-reinforcing pattern. As fewer state students have the opportunity to engage with arts or music, fewer go on to study these subjects at A-level or university. The risk is that arts subjects will be restricted to a privileged few, shrinking the cultural horizons of everyone but the elite.

Art makes a person broader-minded and more imaginative. Yet the government's bleakly utilitarian attitude to education has narrowed the opportunities available to state school students. Artists and teachers have long railed against the English baccalaureate, the system introduced without consultation under the former education secretary Michael Gove in 2010. The Ebacc excludes all arts subjects. It is also the bedrock on which a school's Progress 8 score is based, which determines its place in performance tables. This gives schools an incentive to focus on "core" subjects – English, maths and sciences. Independent schools are not bound by these rules or performance tables, and are free to do what they deem best for their pupils.

Cuts have made this picture worse. In the 10 years after 2009, spending per pupil in England fell by nearly 10% in real terms. As support staff have been cut, overstretched teachers have less capacity to run choirs or put on school plays. Although the government announced an additional £2.3bn in school funding in last year's autumn statement, most of this will be eaten up by the growth in school costs. Because arts subjects require space and resources, they are often most vulnerable to budget cuts.

The investment that private schools have made in arts provision refutes the notion, favoured by Conservative ministers, that education is simply a training ground for the labour market. But even on a purely economic basis, the government's approach to arts education is self-defeating. In a recent speech, the chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, noted that the cultural industries had grown at twice the rate of the UK's economy over the last decade. Tackling the creativity crisis in state schools is a matter of urgency, both for pupils and for the country as a whole.

英国的公立学校正面临一场创造力危机。自 2010 年以来，GCSE 艺术类课程的参与人数下降了 40%，艺术类教师的人数则下降了 23%。这一趋势在贫困

地区的公立学校里最为显著，那里的学生参加合唱团或管弦乐队的概率要小得多。与此同时，根据华威大学的研究，私立学校在艺术和音乐方面投入了大量资源。这种令人沮丧的趋势是一种更广泛的自我提升模式的一部分。随着有机会接触艺术或音乐的公立学校学生越来越少，未来选择 A-level 或大学艺术课程的学生就更少了。风险在于艺术课可能会沦为少数家境优渥的学生的专属课，这会使得除精英阶层以外所有人的文化视野变得狭隘。

艺术能让人胸怀广阔并更富想象力。然而政府对教育冷漠的实用主义态度减少了公立学校的学生接触艺术的机会。艺术家和教师长期以来都在指责前任教育部长迈克尔·戈夫未经充分商讨就在 2010 年引入的英国中学毕业会考制度。英国中学毕业会考中不包含任何艺术类学科。它还是一个学校的 Progress 8 成绩的评定依据，而后者会决定各个学校在绩效表中的排名。这驱使学校专注于“核心”学科——英语、数学和科学。私立学校则不受这些规定和绩效表的制约，可以自由地去做他们认为对学生最有利的的事情。

预算削减让这种情况变得更糟。在 2009 年之后的十年里，英国在学生身上的平均教育投入实际上下降了近 10%。随着后勤部门的员工被裁，本就在苦苦支撑的老师就更无力组织合唱团或校园演出了。虽然政府在去年秋天的声明中宣布额外给中学拨款 23 亿英镑，但这笔钱大部分都将被学校运营成本的增加耗尽。由于艺术类学科需要场地和资源，它们往往是在预算削减时最受影响的那个。

保守党大臣们认为学校教育只是劳动力市场的培训基地，而私立学校用其在艺术教育上投入的真金白银否定了这种看法。但即便是单纯从经济角度来看，政府在艺术教育上的做法也是在搬起石头砸自己的脚。在最近的一次演讲中，财政大臣杰里米·亨特指出，过去十年里文化产业的增长速度是英国经济增速的两倍。应对公立学校里的创造力危机是当务之急，对学生和整个国家而言都是如此。

第九篇：饥饿问题与生活成本危机

Food banks ought to be shocking in a country as rich as the UK, and a decade ago they were. It is a grim indictment of the policies pursued over the past 10 years that the food banks opened under austerity have not gone away, but multiplied. Currently, the UK has more than 2,500 of them. Low pay, low benefit levels and a lack of affordable housing have made it impossible for millions of people to do anything other than live hand-to-mouth. Reports of adults skipping meals, and pupils turning up at school hungry, are frequent. Now, due to a cost of living crisis, the situation has grown graver still. Nearly 10 million adults and 4 million children, including around half of all universal credit claimants, didn't have enough to eat or skipped meals.

Public awareness and distress about this domestic humanitarian crisis has focused first and foremost on children. A campaign led by the footballer Marcus Rashford in 2020 pushed the government to change its mind and offer free meals during school holidays. But this was a short-term fix to a deep and ongoing problem. The Child Poverty Action Group says that about 800,000 children living in poverty are being denied free school meals because they do not meet criteria stating that parents or carers must earn less than £7,400 a year. This means that some children are arriving at school hungry and without the prospect of a healthy lunch. As with other impacts of the cost of living crisis, those in families with three or more children are most severely affected due to benefit cuts and caps unfairly targeted at them.

Rising hunger is just one aspect of a wider inflation crisis. The package of support with fuel costs offered by the government remains in place until April, but energy, rent and other costs are all putting the poorest families under severe strain. While millions of other Britons have benefited from a decades-long property boom, which gives at least some protection from the current price shocks (especially if they are mortgage-free), those without assets have rarely been more brutally exposed.

In the decades since the postwar consensus was shattered and finance deregulated, we have become habituated to extreme wealth. Huge disparities in income and opportunities are nothing new. But a society in which such large numbers of people lack basic necessities is one in which something has gone badly wrong. Eligibility for free school meals should be expanded so that more children qualify, and benefits must be raised in line with inflation. The rise of hunger over the past decade shames not only the prime minister but also her predecessors and their party.

在一个像英国这么富裕的国家里，食物银行的存在理应是令人震惊的，10 年前也确实如此。在艰苦时期开设的食物银行现在不仅没有消失，反而在成倍增加，这一事实本身就是对过去十年政府政策的一种严厉控诉。目前，英国的食物银行数量已经超过 2 500 家。低收入、低福利水平和保障性住房的缺乏使得数百万英国人只能勉强糊口。关于成人不吃饭以及孩子们饿着肚子去上学的报道层出不穷。眼下由于生活成本带来的危机，形势变得更加严峻了。近 1 000 万成人和 400 万儿童，其中包括大约占总数一半的通用福利金申领人，都没有足够的食物或是不吃饭。

对于国内的这种人道主义危机，民众的关切和忧虑首先集中在了孩子们身上。2020 年由足球运动员马库斯·拉什福德领导的运动促使政府改变了想法，让学校在假期时提供免费的餐食。但对于一个深入骨髓且不断加剧的问题而言，这只是权宜之计。儿童贫困行动小组声称，大约有 80 万家境贫困的儿童无法在学校吃到免费的餐食，因为他们未达到其家长或看护人年薪需要少于 7 400 英镑的标准。这意味着一些孩子正饿着肚子来上学，还指望不上一顿健康的午餐。和其他生活成本危机带来的冲击一样，有三个或更多孩子的家庭受到的影响最严重，因为他们在福利削减和福利上限方面受到不公平的对待。

饥饿问题的加重只是宏观通胀危机的一个缩影。4 月份之前，政府仍会继续提供与燃料费用相关的一揽子支持，但是能源、房租和其他生活成本都在严重挤压那些最底层家庭的生活。虽然数百万英国人都从数十年来的房地产繁荣中获得了好处，这让他们面对当前的价格冲击时多了一层保护（尤其是如果他们没有房贷要还的话），但那些没有资产的人正面临此前鲜有的残酷危机。

自战后共识被打破以及金融监管放开以来的几十年里，我们对极端富裕已经见怪不怪了。收入和机会方面存在巨大的不平等并不是什么新鲜事。但如果一个社会里有如此多的人缺乏最基本的生活必需品，那这个社会一定存在严重的问题。（政府）应该扩大能得到免费校餐的资格范围以让更多的孩子能吃上饭，社会福利水平的提高也必须跟得上通胀水平。过去十年里饥饿问题的增加不光是让首相蒙羞，她的前任们及他们所属的政党都该为此感到羞耻。

第十篇：出版巨头的合并与行业多元化

Despite a rise in self-publishing, commercial publishers are still the main gatekeepers of what arrives on our bookshelves. As such, they have great cultural and – if a book takes off – economic power. A case decided in a US court this week provided an insight into just how much of that power is now concentrated in a small handful of multinational companies.

At issue was a planned merger of Simon & Schuster with Penguin Random House (PRH) – two of the so-called big five, which between them control 90% of the US publishing market, a fact not always obvious to the casual observer, as books usually carry on their spines the names of imprints, or subdivisions, of the parent company. PRH, itself the result of a mega-merger in 2013, runs about 300 imprints. Given the reach of these companies – PRH is active in more than 20 countries – the Department of Justice’s successful argument that the planned \$2.2bn deal would “exert outsized influence over which books are published in the United States and how much authors are paid for their work” applies globally.

There was relief from many in the industry, from agents to author societies to the small independent publishers who already struggle to compete. There was also a cautious satisfaction that the arguments had focused on author earnings rather than solely on consumer choice. The big five insist there is genuine competition between imprints for new properties. That may be true up to a point, but as Stephen King told the court: “You might as well say you’re going to have a husband and wife bidding against each other for the same house. It’s kind of ridiculous.” In Britain and the Commonwealth there is further concern about how many of the big five are run from the US. There is a growing sense that local taste, writers and priorities must be protected.

But consolidation also means that the practical requirements of publishing – including printing, distribution and publicity – can be rationalised in a world of battered supply chains and paper shortages. It may help to address the increasing difficulty of building interest in new books. While the argument is often made that the multinationals are too aware of their bottom lines to publish more unexpected, not obviously commercial books, it can also be argued that deep pockets mean the big five can take risks that smaller publishers cannot, for fear of going under.

There is truth in all these arguments. But a multidimensional, confident publishing industry is central to a healthy society; the more multidimensional, the more healthy it can be. In that context, this week’s decision is welcome.

尽管自行出版势头有所上升，但商业出版商仍然是出现在我们书架上的图书的主要把关系统。因此，它们拥有巨大的文化以及——如果一本书很畅销的话——经济力量。本周美国一所法院所审理的案件能让我们更好地认识到上述力量有多少现在正集中在一小撮跨国公司的手上。

该案件审议的焦点是西蒙与舒斯特和企鹅兰登书屋（PRH）的合并计划，二者都是所谓的五大出版集团中的成员，它们（五大出版集团）控制着美国 90% 的出版市场，这一事实并不容易被普通人注意到，因为图书的书脊上写的一般都是其出版商或母公司的分支的名字。PRH 运营着大约 300 家出版商，它本身就是 2013 年大并购的产物。美国司法部认为这次 22 亿美元的并购计划将会“对哪些书能在美国出版以及作者能凭其著作获得多少稿酬产生极为巨大的影响”，考虑到这些公司的势力范围——PRH 在 20 多个国家都有活跃的业务，这一判断其实在全球范围内都成立。

从经纪人到作家协会，再到已然在竞争中挣扎求生的小型独立出版商，很多业内人士都松了一口气。司法部的判断聚焦于作者的收入情况而没有单单考虑消费者的选择，一些人对此也感到欣慰。五大出版集团坚称，在面对新的出版资源时，其旗下的出版商之间是存在真正竞争的。在一定程度上这或许是真的，但正如斯蒂芬·金在法庭上所说：“你也可以说你准备让丈夫和妻子出价竞拍同一个房子。这着实有点离谱。”对英国和英联邦来说，人们还担心五大出版集团旗下有多少出版商是由美国远程运营的。越来越多的人认为，地方审美趣味、作家和知识产权必须得到保护。

但出版集团的合并也意味着出版的实际需求——包括印刷、渠道分销和宣发——可以在一个供应链受损且纸张短缺的世界里被合理地实现。这可能有助于解决人们越发难以对新书建立兴趣的问题。虽然总有人认为跨国公司太过执着于其（商业）底线，以至于不会去出版一些意料之外的、商业前景不明的图书，但我们也可以说，财力雄厚的五大出版集团可以承担一些小出版商因为害怕倒闭而承担不起的风险。

上述看法都有其正确之处。但一个多维、自信的出版行业对一个健康的社会而言至关重要；出版业越是多维化，也就越健康。从这个角度来说，我们支持本周法院的判决。