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“AI and I” How people collaborate with AI -- evolutionary perspective

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The talk “AI and I” explored how human–AI collaboration can be understood through an evolutionary and biological lens, pointing out how our brains adapt to new modes of interaction with intelligent systems. The presentation drew parallels between natural processes, such as the evolution of genomes and animal communication, and the development of artificial intelligence, arguing that AI represents a new form of co-evolution between humans and machines.

A central theme was the concept of diversity, both in biological systems and in data. Just as diverse genomes strengthen species’ adaptability, diverse datasets empower AI systems to generalize and perform more robustly. The speaker illustrated this with examples such as large-scale genomic analyses and the use of whale songs as datasets for training AI models, highlighting how natural patterns of communication can inspire more organic approaches to machine learning.

The talk also delved into the therapeutic potential of AI, comparing it to therapy dogs used in cancer treatment. In both cases, the goal is not to replace human care or intuition but to provide new forms of emotional and cognitive support. AI, the speaker suggested, can stimulate the human brain in novel ways, eliciting curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving behaviors. This concept was linked to the placebo effect, proposing that belief and perception play crucial roles in how humans engage with technology and experience its benefits.

Another key idea was that humans are evolutionarily predisposed to work with “black boxes.” Much like trusting our own brains, whose inner workings we do not consciously access, we can comfortably collaborate with AI systems whose decision-making processes remain opaque, as long as we perceive consistent and meaningful outcomes. This acceptance enables a more intuitive partnership between people and AI, where understanding emerges from interaction rather than full transparency.

Ultimately, the session framed AI not merely as a computational tool but as a cognitive partner in human evolution. By stimulating our brains and expanding our interpretive capacities, AI challenges us to rethink creativity, trust, and intelligence itself.