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Research Paper

AI, or artificial intelligence, is currently playing a massive role in society that most people are unaware of. Artificial Intelligence is essentially a computer program that can incorporate human behavior and decision to complete an activity or task. A great example of this is a chatbot, where online users can interact and hold a conversation with an AI. The program responds differently depending on what the user types, making it seem like an actual person communicating back. Although it does not have endless capabilities, new advancements in technology continue to improve its memory and functions. Chatbots are only the beginning, however. There is extensive use of AI in society today, and in order to gain a better understanding of its role, one must look into its types and many different uses.

AI can be split into two types: General and Narrow. Narrow AI involve programs or systems that one interacts with on a daily basis. It carries out tasks that have been learned and not specifically programmed to do. This type is seen in virtual assistants, self-driving cars, and recommendations on apps that people use. General AI is very different and technically doesn’t really exist, yet. This type stems from a form of intelligence found in humans, where a program can learn how to carry out very different tasks and use reason to discuss a variety of topics based on its learned experience. It is commonly seen in the movie industry, in films like *The Terminator* (Skynet) or HAL in *2001.* Researchers predict that this technology will come into play in the near future, and even went as far as saying that artificial “superintelligence” will form as a result.

AI plays a massive role in social media as a way to locate and communicate associates, friends, coworkers, etc. Apps like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook use these technologies to weed out racist or offensive posts, or ones that have to do with cyberbullying. AI can recognize your face in photos, filter out content that you may not like or filter in content that you may like, suggest people you might want to connect with, and much more. Tools exist today that can auto-generate content with hashtags and links automatically included. Marketers are now able to run ads that hit a specific audience due to observation of the demographic via AI technologies. Despite this load of examples, they only crack the surface of artificial intelligence’s role in social media. AI’s capabilities become much more interesting regarding its implementation into our daily activities and interactions.

In 1994, the launch of the first smartphone, IBM Simon, laid the foundation for not only modern smartphones, but digital assistance as well. When Siri was first installed onto smartphones in 2011 as the first modern digital virtual assistant, the world was forever changed. Today, there are a number of these technologies that are very similar but go under different names like Cortana, Google Now, Alexa, and more. Digital assistants are essentially computer programs that are designed to interact with input via voice, keyboard, etc. and use the information to do a job or answer questions. AI helps programs like these to learn and adapt from every single user interaction, which in turn allows digital assistants to perform a number of tasks. These tasks can range from maintaining a schedule to even sending commands to another application.

New and developing technologies like AI are becoming so common and integrated into our daily lives, we even let it take control of our safety. Self-driving and parking cars are an example of this. By using a subset version of AI, called deep learning, vehicles can analyze the environment and space around it. This creates a sort of map for the car, allowing it to recognize what’s around and make sure that it doesn’t hit pedestrians, bumps, or curbs. Before corporations became involved in automated driving in recent years, a man named Ernst Dickmanns developed the first autonomous car. In 1994, Ernst was able to get a Mercedes up to 130 km/h and have it change lanes while reacting to other cars by installing a computer system controlling the wheel, gas, and brakes.

Online shopping and services have also been vastly affected by AI. As mentioned previously, artificial intelligence is able to personalize a person’s shopping experience by suggesting new products that are similar to what he/she is looking for. This doesn’t end at online shopping, however. Music services like Apple Music and Spotify can recommend music dependent on a person’s listening habits. Google Play takes it one step further by accounting for factors of weather and time of day in order to offer music that suits the mood (soft music on a dreary day). Google Maps utilizes AI whenever someone looks up a destination by calculating construction and/or traffic that might impede the journey along the way. Commercial airline flights are also affected; A 2015 survey found that pilots only do an average of 7 minutes of actual flying, with the rest being done by AI technology.

In summation, there is no doubt that AI plays a significant role in society today. With the expansion and development of new and advanced technologies, programs like these show no signs of slowing down. Mostly every interaction that occurs today has some sort of program, whether it be AI or something else, pulling the strings to make said interaction possible. While some people may think that involvement of such programs at this high a level is arbitrary, they should have comfort in knowing that they probably have been using AI for many years already. Now, with rumors of an advanced “superintelligence” coming into play in the near future, who knows where technologies like AI will lead us.

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