AI’s role in our future society

Johan Haslum - [Jhaslum@kth.se](mailto:Jhaslum@kth.se)

The rapid advancement of technology in our modern society has changed most of the world’s standard of living for the better. The inventions and progressions in research made the last centuries have enabled us to live longer and better. However this has its drawbacks that we are on the verge of facing. The machines we have created are now polluting our environment. The longer life expectancies create a gaping hole in the western worlds workforce, how will the younger generations be able to tackle these problems? Can society tackle this problem with the help of AI?

Even though some might consider AI to be in the early stages of development is has already proven to be useful in several areas. AI helps you stay in the correct lane while driving, answers your questions through virtual assistance and recommend new movies based on what you previously watched on online streaming services. If these developments continue to go forward researches believe that AI can perform much more advanced tasks and possibly carry out most jobs and chores. Elder would no longer need humans to care for them, instead robots could help them. Furthermore AI’s could perform many of today’s jobs. However this posse several risk’s, i.e. mass unemployment or lack of emotional care for the elder, an aspect that can not be accounted for with AI care.

The possibility of mass unemployment is a real threat, when many jobs can be automated more cost efficiently with AI’s. For example the shipping industry could soon be automated with computers that do not have the drawbacks of humans. For example having rest every couple hours or run the risk of accidents because of “human error”. This poses questions about what changes AI’s will bring about in the job market. Will it open up new opportunities and create new job markets when the old cease to exist, or will humans be mass unemployed. Additionally should all jobs be performed by AI’s just because they can? How should cost efficiency be compared to loss in other factors such as social impact and emotional aspects?

These risks need to be managed otherwise the social injustices present in our current society could be multiplied when jobs requiring low or no education become automated. This would mostly affect the poor and low educated, however many of todays high status jobs are also in the risk zone. Therefore it is of utmost importance that the opportunities and wealth that AI can create is distributed intelligently between the people of the future. Governments and lawmakers will actively have to work to be at the cutting edge of technological development to be able to leverage the innovations to benefit all. Otherwise there is a large risk that the benefits and foremost the economical gain only profits the elite. Furthermore international regulations should also be formulated to prevent to creation of dangerous and non-constructive implementations of AI’s.

AI could improve the standard of living for all people and is probably the best tool there is to continue to advance society just as innovators and researches has done since before the industrial revolution. However this has to be done with caution to balance the possible social impacts.