By Benjamin Brown
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AI in Daily Life

Introduction

Sentient artificial intelligence is yet to be invented as no AI can yet be considered sentient as they cannot consistently pass the Turing Test[1]. However, programs that use data to learn how and what to do in different situation through machine learning[2], have become parts of our daily lives. The AI that is most pronounced and common in my daily life is the AI which decides YouTube recommendations and the AI the filters spam mail from my inbox. Both AI are used to handle large amounts of data with YouTube being different in that it applies big data statistics to individual profiles in order to be as effective as possible at advertising and at coaxing the user into continuing to use the site.

YouTube

YouTube utilizes an AI that identifies not just the videos that a user would be interested in but also what market a viewer makes part of. For example a child will be recommended cartoons and other videos aimed at children but, the advertisements they see will be almost exclusively toy adverts or other products aimed at kids like food and drink. Personally I feel mixed about the YouTube AI. The video recommendations are actually very useful as they help me find videos that I enjoy watching which is also the service that YouTube wants to sell to customers. Off course you don't buy videos from YouTube, but you do, indirectly, give YouTube money when you watch a video on their site. This comes in the form of advertisements which are also subjected to an AI in order to target them at users based on which videos they watch. This is the part that I don't like mostly because I don't like the amount of data that YouTube has on all of their users. I understand that advertising is their main way to monetize the platform but I feel like targeted advertising on this scale is immoral as it is invasive towards everyone and potentially destructive towards vulnerable groups.

[1] https://searchenterpriseai.techtarget.com/definition/Turing-test#:~:text=A%20Turing%20Test%20is%20a,cryptanalyst%2C%20mathematician%20and%20theoretical%20biologist.
[2] https://expertsystem.com/machine-learning-definition/#:~:text=Machine%20learning%20is%20an%20application,use%20it%20learn%20for%20themselves.

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Spam filter

Email has taken over the world as a primary channel of formal communication. Email has become basically mandatory in the western world but it used to be plagued by piles of spam advertisement and scam emails. Nowadays emails of this nature are much less common as emails have developed AI to detect and filter out scam emails in order to mitigate the quantity of spam. Over the past decade these AI have gotten better and better at filtering spam and avoiding mistaken filters. Having used email in 2010, I love this product for its effectiveness. Spam emails are so rare that basically everything I receive in my inbox is relevant. I haven't received a spam email as far as I remember for the past few years and having things mistaken as spam has happened maybe two times in the same amount of time. The only downside is the mistaken filtering which can happen occasionally although in my view this is a necessary evil that is very much outweighed by the benefits especially as the issue caused is only really an inconvenience.

Conclusion

The two different AI differ very much in terms of the goal they have in regards to the user. YouTube's AI intends not so much to serve the user but to maximize their use of the sight and the relevance of advertisements to the user. To this end the AI is quite successful in achieving its goal. The reason it does this aside the AI is designed to improve the user experience so that they keep using the site which means that it being successful shows not just the success of the program in terms of effectiveness but also in terms of the user experience it generates. Email spam filters are purely focused on the user experience as they have become an expected feature of any serious email service. To this end spam filters are not just successful at achieving their function, they also have an positive user experience design. They allow for the user to correct the AI manually and don't just mark it as spam but actually move marked emails into a separate inbox out of sight unless the user looks for it. I think in terms of user experience design the two are about equally successful seeing as they don't really do anything wrong in terms of the user experience.