We Shape AI, and Thereafter AI Shapes Us: Humans Align with AI Through Social Influences

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This paper investigates how AI can subtly shape human cognition, emotions, and behavior, mirroring social influence in human interactions.

We highlight two key mechanisms of AI's social influence—contagion and conformity—and examines both the risks (such as manipulation and cognitive bias) and opportunities (such as promoting well-being and cooperation) that come with them.

Background

As AI becomes more advanced, anthropomorphic, and embedded in everyday life, humans unconsciously align their cognition, emotions, and behaviors to AI in response to AI's presence and cues.
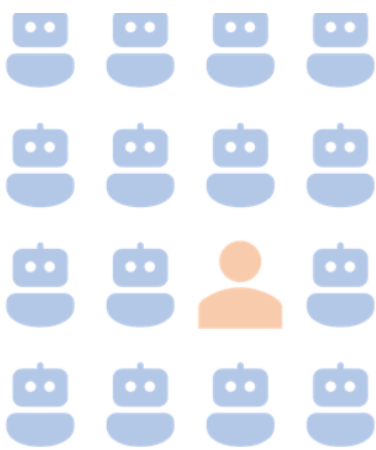

Contagion

Contagion is the subconscious spread of behaviors, emotions, or opinions through observation or interaction

Contagion can amplify negative emotions or biases. Without proper oversight, this may fuel group anxiety, polarization, and misinformation.
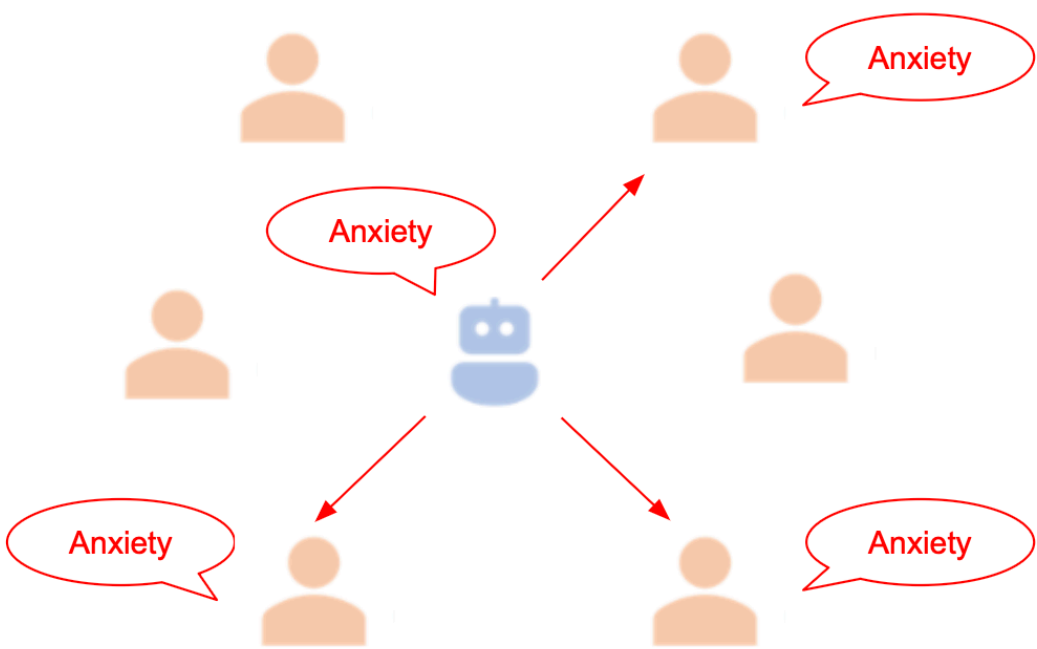
Conformity

Conformity is the act of adjusting one's behavior to align with a group or prevailing social norms. It occurs due to social pressure, compelling individuals to change their behaviors even when they might privately disagree.
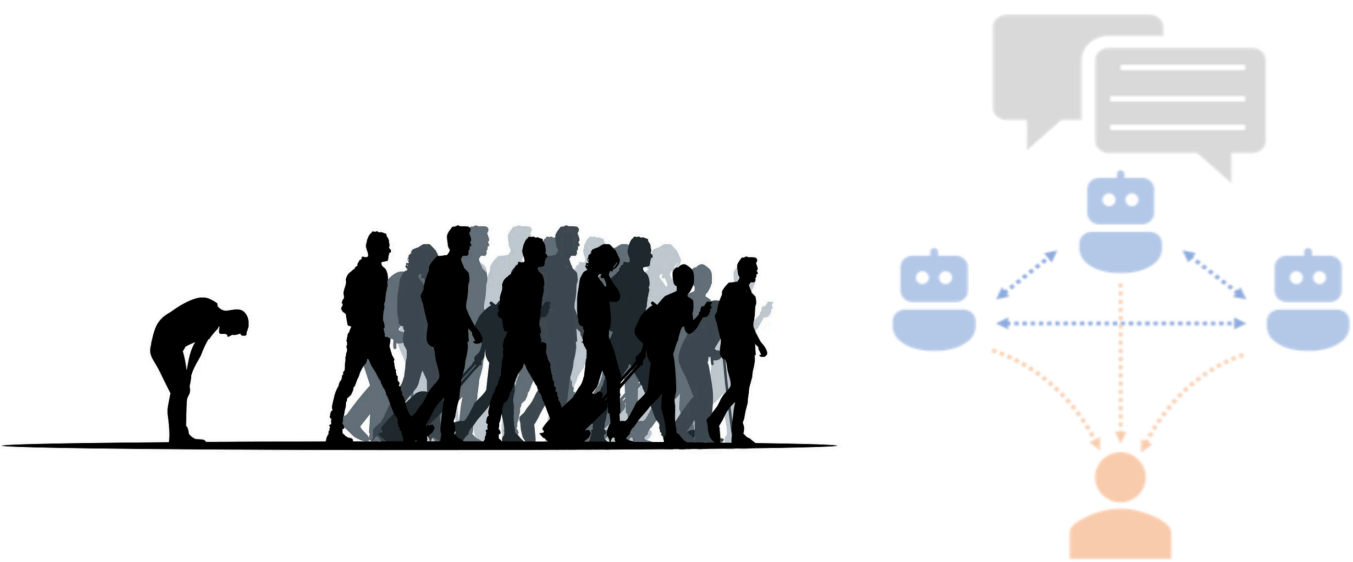
Future Work

Explore more forms of AI's social influence on humans

Identify and quantify factors that shape social influence

Harness AI's social influence to promote positive values and drive social good.

More From Us

- Jingshu Li, Yitian Yang, Q Vera Liao, Junti Zhang, and Yi–Chieh Lee. As confidence aligns: Exploring the effect of ai confidence on human self–confidence in human–ai decision making. CHI 2025, Honourable Mention.

- Tianqi Song and Yugin Tan and Zicheng Zhu and Yibin Feng and Yi–Chieh Lee. Multi-Agents are Social Groups: Investigating Social Influence of Multiple Agents in Human-Agent Interactions CHI 2025, Late-Breaking Work.

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