

THE QUEST FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE by NILS J. NILSSON

The author himself is also an influential researcher in the field of AI and wrote some other prominent textbooks as well. This book, however, more of a history book rather than a technical book.

Today, the term machine learning has become so prominent, it is used interchangeably with artificial intelligence. However, the research area called “artificial intelligence” was born in 1956. And machine learning is an approach under it that works well.

The author opens the book with the idea of AI and gives clues of the possibility of AI. The journey itself begins from 1950 with Dartmouth summer project, general problem solver and game-playing programs. This part is followed by the developments in the field of computer vision and robotics in 1960. Then, part by part it brings us to the modern world and new applications.

One thing that I didn't like about the book, there were some parts that got a bit more technical. I'm sure they are clear to anyone that studied computer sciences, but when one is an outsider like me (mechanical engineer), it is not particularly clear.

Nonetheless, it is worth the read. As I pointed out already, most people (including me) learnt about the field of AI through machine learning and doesn't know much about the past or the road that took us here. For example, today's state-of-the-art is neural networks. However, they are far from being a new technology. The foundations were laid in 1950s. In that sense, it is a great book to see the path that took us here.