The text CAPTCHA was the first commonly used CAPTCHA. Computer scientist, Luis von Ahn created the security tool into a service that digitalises books, newspapers, and old texts. This technology uses the text that people enter as CAPTCHA to help computers learn to recognise and transcribe scanned text. This service has now been assimilated into the ChatGPT dataset.

Highly effective when first introduced, a 2014 Google study found that humans were answering the more difficult text CAPTCHA with 33% accuracy whilst computers where answering at 99.8%

Once computers got better than humans at this test, the CAPTCHA had to change.

CAPTCHA V2, an image based CAPTCHA used the identification of road objects to tell the difference between humans and computers. The result of this CAPTCHA was used to train Google's self driving car software and similarly to CAPTCHA V1, that algorithm can identify road objects at a higher accuracy than humans.

This procession showcases the dynamic between humans and computers - an arms race to continuously redefine a shrinking boundaries between human and computer capabilities.

A couple of weeks ago I had to complete a new form of CAPTCHA that asked me to identify synthetically generated images of bowling balls from a range of other synthetically generated sports ball images.