

Will A.I. derail human connections: A perspective by a psychologist.

All social systems and institutions work because of the ability for people to trust.....but will the long term impact of A.I., social media and technology, potentially derail our innate ability to trust one another. Psychologists add to the Global debate.

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As the world is now more connected, the ripple effects of change are more significant, impactful, and closer to home.... Some of the changes are good, some are bad, and some are yet to be determined, as hindsight and history will unfold.

With an ever-increasing awareness of global issues, such a global climate change, pandemic, wealth inequality, sustainable energy, inequity in health, wealth and employment, gender and race discrimination and political unrest, are “forces” that are driving enormous changes in our societies.

It can be quite overwhelming that complex global issues are now at our doorstep and that generations to come, will need to address. These enormous and significant forces are occurring at vast speeds, and most frightening, accumulating.

A good example is climate change whereby we know it is happening, individuals can observe everyday minor changes, but never seeing it as a direct threat... However, once we see the cumulative impact, ice melting, deforestation, animal extinction, the changes to atmosphere, we can deduct a period of significant change and worrying outcomes at a global stage.

No previous generations have had to deal with this kind of amplified effect, the speed and potential impact of such global issues. My own kids are now informed and concerned about global warming, wealth distribution, gender discrimination and security. It is no wonder the new generations may have less trust and faith on our current leaders and institutions, they are much better informed, and they can see the amplified impact of these forces without preconceived ideas or prejudices.

However, as a Psychologists and Social researcher I see that the culmination of these significant global issues and the way people are immersed in information technology, is also undermining one of our most precious resources, to address global issues, which is our ability to **trust** one another.

What we value, what we hold as important meaning in our lives, the diversity, and complexities of what it is to be human. The key is how people can cooperate and contribute to our societies, communities and families are dependent on the basic and fundamental ability to **Trust one another**.

The global Trust Crisis.

In recent months we have been exposed to the A.I. tools which are supposed to revolutionize productivity and create numerous disruptions to traditional technologies and workplaces.

The negative sides of this technology are emerging (If not already predicted) including disrupting various organizations and professional services, especially in the financial, social media and technology spaces, with concerning potential to displace various workforces, disrupt industry and change sectors.

Many social media platforms are utilizing the potential of A.I. by transforming visual, audio and written information, with the ability to create enormous amount of content at dazzling speeds.

On a day-to-day level, we are seeing content that is fabricated to the point where we question its authenticity. The content can be indistinguishable from original content, with vast improvements and investments in deep fake, manufactured images, targeted content, and algorithms directed to artificially navigate content, based **not** on individual choices, but targeted to attract and retain attention for revenue streams.

The organizations and companies that are driving these social media changes, have created (and are driven) by the attention economy. Not only is the ability to create and hold individual's attention, monetized but entire industry is created on this approach to "mining" for attracting and retaining attention.

These organizations that develop the A.I. and social media tools (and ultimately people in these organizations) can remain anonymous and removed from any direct social responsibility in veil of technology advancements and progress.

As a psychologist, the most concerning impact of A.I. is a significant threat to people and society, as this technology can 'dilute' or 'flood' information with a sense of authenticity. People using this technology can warp, monetize, and disrupt one of the most fundamental elements of our society, the ability to **Trust**.

For nations, societies, and communities to address some of the global challenges, people will need to rely on the fundamental human ability to trust one another. If that cannot be achieved or it is monetised, monopolised, or manipulated, there is a fundamental disruption to the equity and access in our societies.

As a Psychologist, the concerns relate to the additional impacts of A.I with disruption and disorientation to the fundamental psychological function of people trusting their own instincts, their own experiences and their own personal attributes and choices. With the ever automizing and reliance of these tools, people can lose a sense of autonomy and their individual perspective of what is fundamental to be Human.

We are starting to see a few examples where A.I can be exploited, manipulated to create scenarios at an individual level that cause mental health distresses. Frighteningly these individual scenarios can be amplified to cause disruption to the viewpoints and distress to entire communities and population groups.

As A.I. gains traction and evolves (This is a self learning machine with a life of its own) its developers have no way of knowing how this tool will evolve, with the mild assurance that they can manage the direction of tool to restrict content based on manual intervention and tweaks.

This topic needs much more attention and focus as the implication are worrying particularly as there is little or no regulations and importantly there is no turning off or turning back. Research and regulation is far too behind to address any of the potential implications and effects from the misuse of A.I.

Recently I have observed that from a political and societal aspects some key figures around the world are starting to highlight the dangerous implication of A.I. particularly around swaying political opinion, voting preferences and the possibility of undermining and disrupting the foundation of our

societies. However as a Psychologist there is a fundamental threat to our wellbeing and our identity as a individual.

PS: the contents of this article are my own and not representing the Psychology profession or any organization or peak body. These views are my own individual perspective on this broad topic.

If this article resonates with your concerns, please feel free to contact me to keep this conversation going: bill.campos@gmail.com