Unit 7 Reflection

In this unit, I worked towards completing the literature review on the topic of Machine Learning to Prevent Traffic Accidents. It has been a challenging journey, that has both ups and despairing downs. Ups, because the literature review was an interesting learning experience on how to take a topic and attempt to locate literature to support your research questions. Down because it is not as simple as copy-paste; no, a coherent narrative is required. For the most part, I have no trouble establishing a narrative on topics I am familiar, but for the literature review, it seemed I was led down a path to look at the various machine learning algorithms used for traffic accident prediction. I am far from statistically minded and so struggled to understand what "mean", "regression", "Bayes Theorem" or even "K-Nearest neighbour" means.

The middle of this week I contemplated throwing away all the research performed to date simply because I felt the content, I was generating was insufficient. It was very disheartening and disappointing to consider. My head hung low, and I wanted to give up and walk away. But a part of me did enjoy the challenge of piecing together some form of narrative, even if I do not fully understand the statistics driving it. This challenge caused me to reconsider my research questions and to reframe them based on the content I had researched. Reframing the question (guided by the informative feedback submission in unit 4) certainly was a great help. Time management has been a problem on this module, mainly because of stronger work commitments and the mental exhaustion that is setting in: just writing, writing, writing, writing all the time! (I question my life choice on paying for a degree that requires so many written words. Surely, there is coming a time when such copious, useless searching and writing will come to an end because AI tools will have advanced sufficiently that they can automatically scan, summarise and piece together topics, thoughts, ideas from all journals, all written works. It will then be for the few students that remain, to ask of the AI the right question).

The pain is over! I submitted the literature review. Yet another hill remains. Ad nauseum.

However, reflecting on the experience, I feel better enriched in knowledge about the topic reviewed. I learnt a lot more about what constitutes a literature review and how to better structure one. In the future, based on the experience gained from this literature review, I feel better prepared to better structure the thoughts and how to better extract arguments for and against each type of literature. I learned about the importance of a reference management system, and the need to make specific references of points made by authors that really stand out—it's difficult to recall a phrase or thought I *know* I read but cannot tell which.

One experience from the literature review matches the 2000 words written in the very first module: a *lot* of research material is coming out of China regarding AI and ML. And their research quality tends to be a lot higher, and more in-depth than counterparts from across the globe. This is in itself, a literature review: why are Chinese researchers producing more copiously, research in the fields of technology?