

AI Essay

Axel Demborg `demborg@kth`

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Artificial intelligence is a technology that makes a lot of promises, one of the greater ones being the end of all human labor. In a world where machines can do all the tasks we perform on a day to day basis better and without complaining then why should we, humanity could flourish in a time when we don't have to work for our survival but instead only focus on what captures our interests.

This utopia might lie far away in the future but at the rate that technology develops I believe that it is inevitable that it will be technically possible to reach this world some day (a few hundred years maybe). How we as a society will survive the winding path that might take us to utopia though is a whole other question and that is what I would like to discuss.

If we start with the premise that the machines actually will be able to take our jobs it is only reasonable to conclude that it won't happen all at once. Looking at the state of self driving cars today it is likely that most of the transportation sector will be in the hands of machines quite soon but something like preschool teachers where so much of the "human touch" is needed will keep their jobs for way longer. This is to me the heart of the problem, how will society take care of the people once employed by the transportation sector when most of the population still have their jobs?

Well, some might argue that they just have to find new jobs, that technology not only takes jobs but also creates them in just about the same rate, is that not how the world has worked until now? Well, yes but this is different, all previous advancements have replaced human physical labor freeing our minds to do more involved *mind work*. But AI is replacing our mind work, it is leaving no island of work that can not be automated. Hence getting new jobs is unlikely to be a possibility.

The situation we will find ourselves in is hence that AI will start making large swats of the population unemployable, not because they are lazy or ungifted but simply because society doesn't need the entire population in work. The only possible option I can see is then to give the entire population

some sort of citizen salary, state funded economic support to make working economically optional. This will be a costly solution but the exceeding abundance produced by these thinking machines will be able to cover it.

One further issue with a non working population might be one of identity, we define so much of our identity on what our profession is, what will we even do if we don't work? Most might want travel the world, but what if that gets old after a couple years. What do you do then to occupy your time? Ironically I think that this might be one of the bigger problems with this future, we all want more free time, but when we get it what do we do then? Is it not true that unemployment rates correlate positively to criminality? This might mostly be a simple way to earn money for those who have none and hence the citizen salary should remove much of this crime but maybe it is also something "meaningful" to do for a restless population and if this is the case we might have a lot of problems on our hands.

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