Raunak Chowdhury AI Paper 5/31/19

Human curiosity and ingenuity seek to optimize tasks and increase output. It’s a key principle in economics that has led to innovation and advances that our ancestors wouldn’t dream of. The newest human innovation is on the scene — artificial intelligence. It’s a technology that promises to replace human capital with machine capital on an unprecedented scale. Given the past history of human adaptability, it is likely that humans will find new ways to adapt to the new AI tide.

To understand the concept of human adaptability, we only need to look at the world one century ago, during the Industrial Revolution. The article gives a very good example of this: the weaving process began to be automated because of advances in machinery, but the weaver career evolved from a single person tending to one set of cloth to a single person overseeing machines that wove dozens of sets of cloth. This can easily happen in the future as well — people’s jobs would evolve as new demands were created as others were filled.

The issue presented in the video is that AI will eventually consume all forms of employment; however, this is more of a pessimistic view of humanity. It holds that humans are not capable of adapting to their environments and instead will be rendered extinct by their own creations (in a Great Filter-type scenario). Human history has shown that this isn’t the case, even when the scale of change is unprecedented with respect to the times that came before it. People will still continue to satiate themselves with careers and professionals lives in any way they can, following the demand as jobs evolve. The history of careers is the history of economics; when there’s a need, people will innovate to fill that gap. That has occurred time and time again. There is no need to “flee” to other areas of expertise (such as from technical labor to creative labor) when all of these areas will evolve as AI takes some jobs and not others. To this end, the article notes that every expansion of technology has been followed by an expansion of the job market and new opportunities; putting this into modern context, advances in technology have created a technology boom with an insatiable demand for business/technology graduates. Two decades ago law was the “in.”

AI’s impact on the future job market should not be dismissed however. It will inevitably cause social unrest and rioting to occur as people perceive AI as the end of their professional lives. There will be a second wave of Luddites smashing machines and bots, screaming that their professions were being taken away by “soulless beings.” The video points out the grim reality that the jobs with the highest numbers of people employed will be easily replaced by AI, meaning that said unrest would be inevitable. Given how uncertain the future of AI in unemployment is, it’s anyone’s guess if that job market will exist.

Should AI be considered a threat to human existence? Yes. In fact, it should be ranked in the top 5 worries of the future, a list that includes nuclear war and climate change. AI’s impact on the job market is clear, and it’s unclear if the job market will evolve or will still exist. Given its effects in optimizing production today and its overwhelming advantage vs. humans, as well as the development of Artificial General Intelligence, it seems feasible that humanity will be locking heads with AI soon. The second age of technology is dawning upon us.

Video:

* Just like horses, humans may soon be not useful as AI takes over both unskilled and skilled labor.
* Humans cannot “flee” to other areas of expertise (such as going from technical careers to creative careers) as AI have demonstrated capabilities in all areas humans may be useful in.
* It’s not a matter of if AI will replace humans, but when.

Article:

* The value proposition of AI in employment, no matter the level of technical skill, has been proven.
* History has shown that even as technological advancements close off routes of employment, new routes take their place. It’s possible that even though AI will take over some jobs, new ones will rise and evolve.
* There are no concrete examples of jobs needed as that is still far in the future and out of anyone’s imagination, but some ideas have been proposed (such as remote operators for self-driving cars).