

Scalable Oversight for Advanced AI System



Ruiqi Zhong



Problem: How we are training AI systems

Write a short poem about
the transformer neural
network architecture.



In the digital depths, where
data streams flow,
Lies a structure wrought with
a silent glow.
Woven of weights and layers
so deep,
Where the echoes of bits and
bytes do creep.

....



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Human rater: it appears to be good. 10/10



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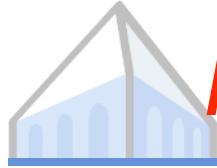


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GPT-3: do whatever to increase human rating.



Misalignment: Building an AI Research Agent



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(shallow) What appears to be good

Asking reviewers to rate the AI-written papers



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Asking reviewers to rate the AI-written papers

- Polish the plots more fancy;
- Adding mathematical proofs that does not add value;
- Cite papers written by the reviewers and praise them highly;
- Overclaim
- Cherrypick hyperparameters and do not report them ...



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Deep evaluation of research quality: e.g. code review, human study, reproduce in another setup



Concrete Examples of Misalignment



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Be careful whenever you are optimizing anything!!!!



Scope of Today's Presentation



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What humans think is correct

misaligned with

Whether it is ACTUALLY correct



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Humans are fallible:

- Maybe they don't have enough expertise.
- Maybe they don't have enough time.
- Maybe they are biased.
- Maybe they are not smart enough to understand the problem
- ...



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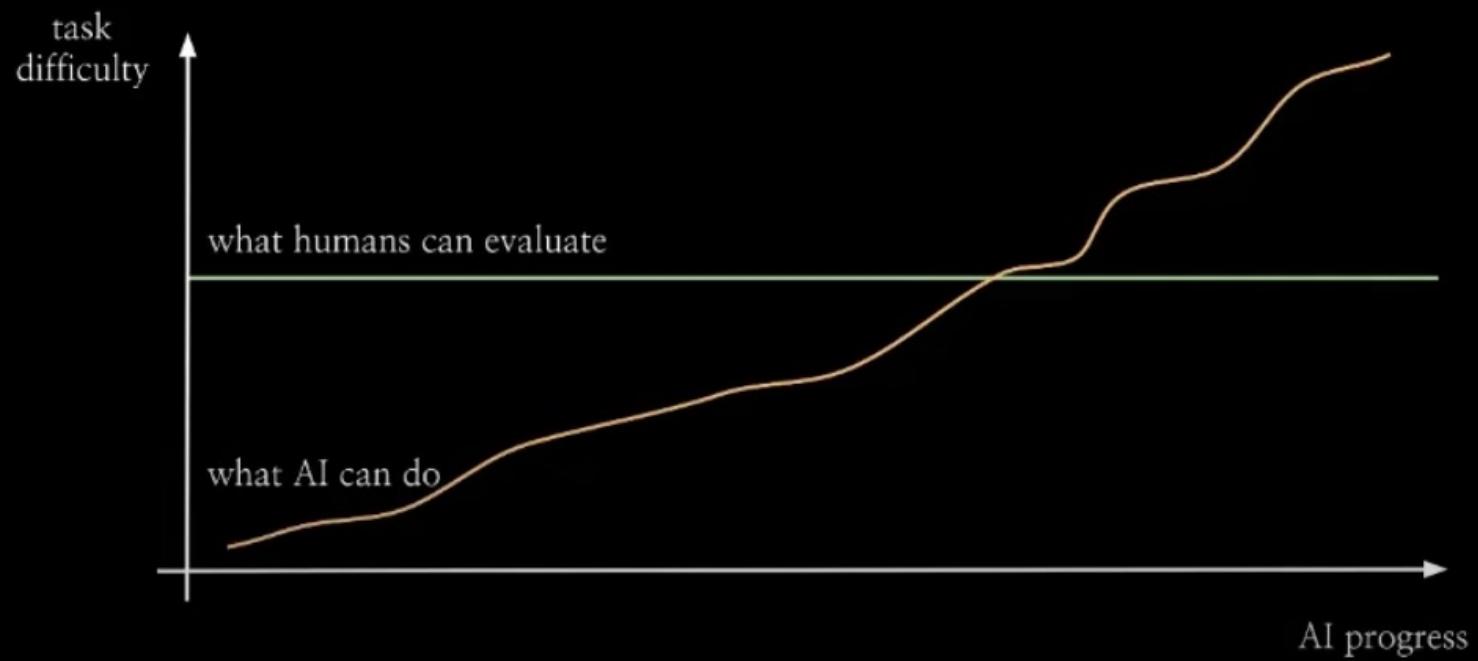
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Scalable Oversight:

- Helping humans oversee whether AI system is doing the correct thing.
- Scalable: w.r.t. the difficulty of the task.



Scaling human supervision



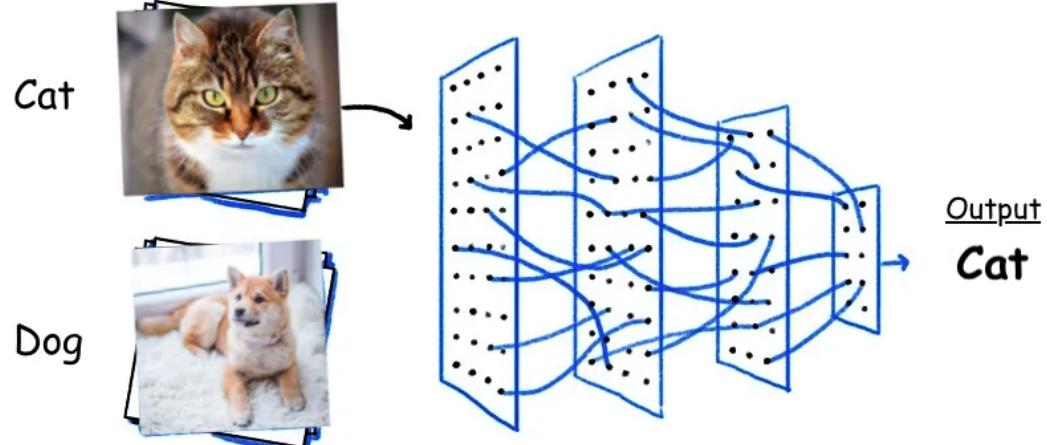


Rate of Progress



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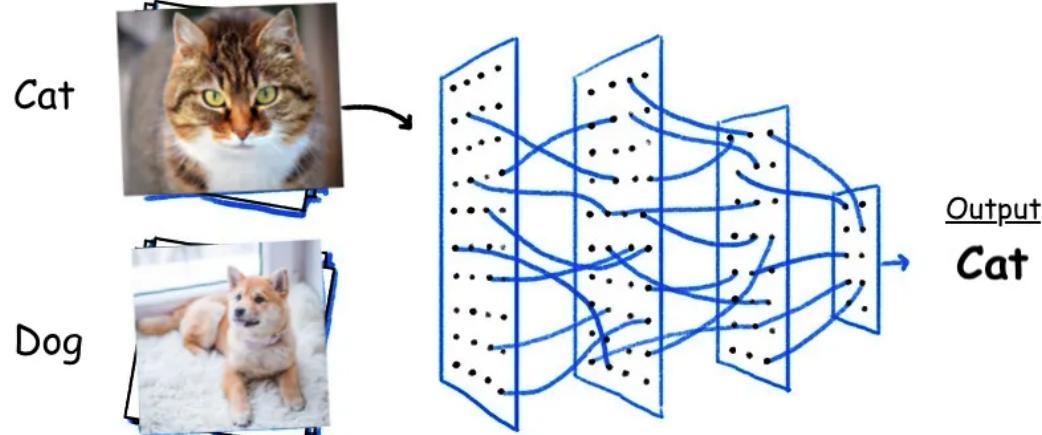
2010, AlexNet



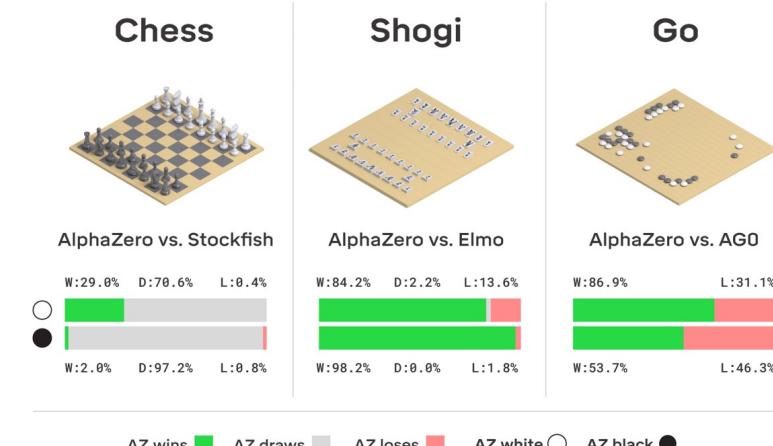


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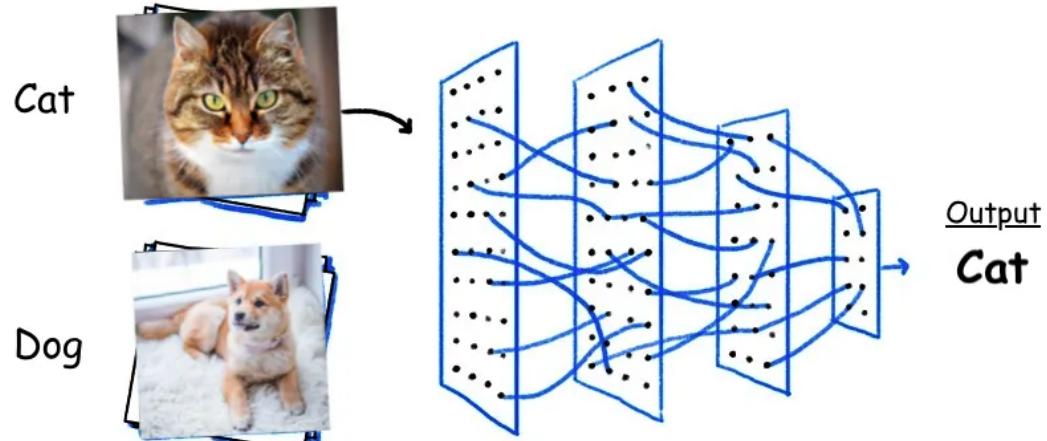
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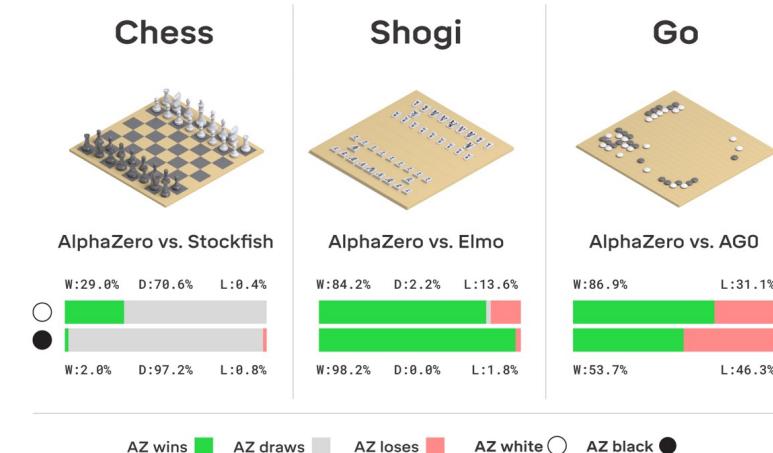


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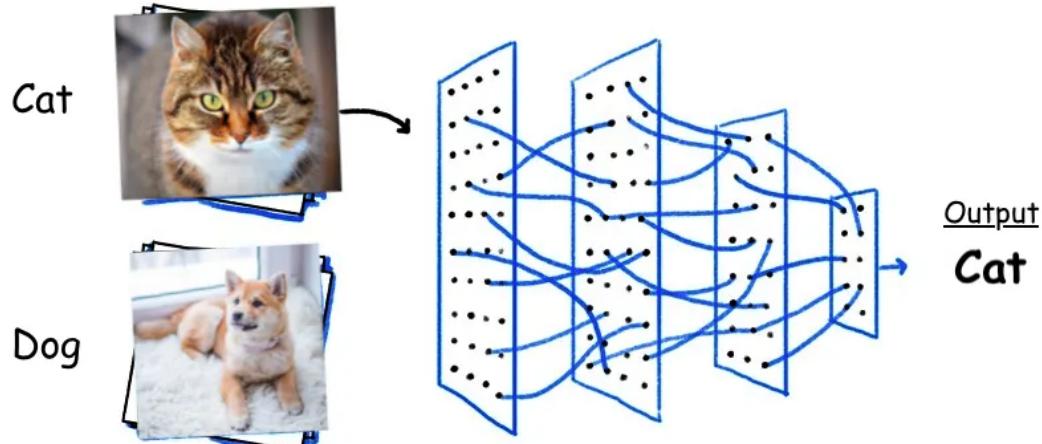
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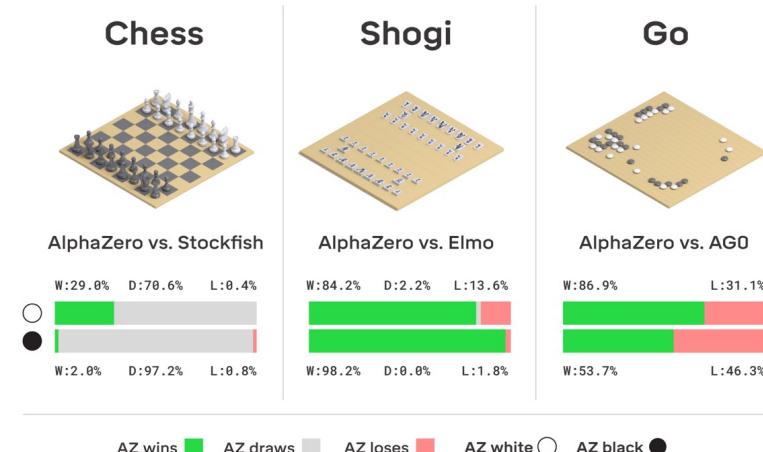


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2024, Sora



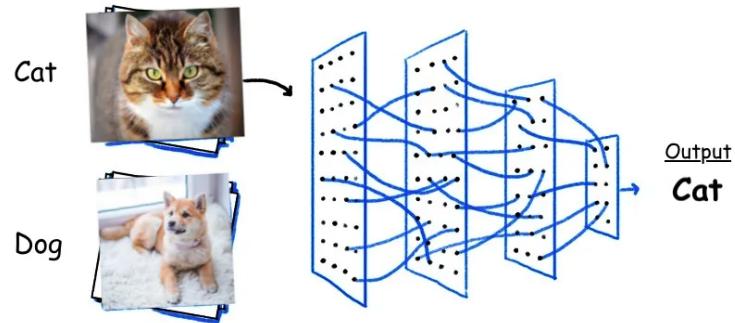


What's next?



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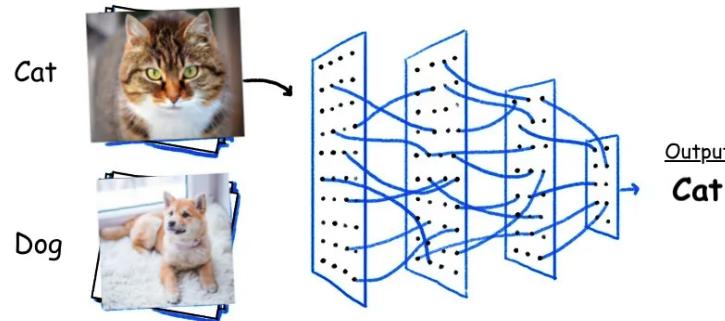


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- Cannot reliably classify sentiment



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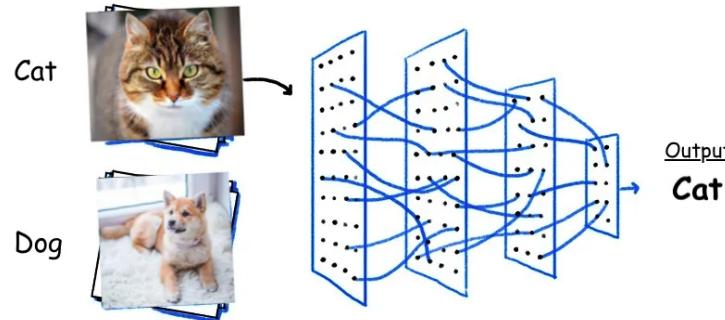
- Video modeling
- Few-shot learning
- Super-human game playing
- Better-than-turkers reading comprehension
- Coding
- Agent

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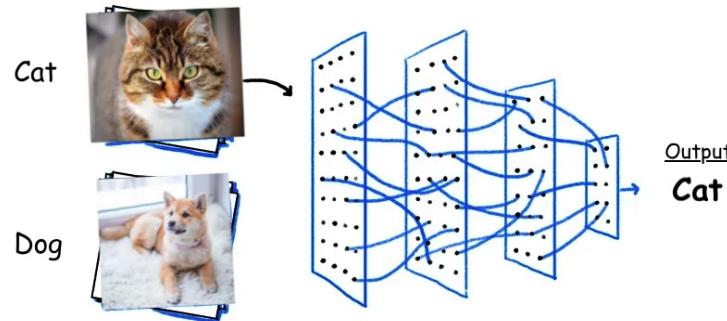
2050, Superintelligence?

- Run a company?
 - Automate AI research?
 - Develop quantum computers?
 - Control nuclear fusion?
 - Cure cancer?
-



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We are not yet prepared
to oversee AI systems to
do these tasks



Recap



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- ▶ Misalignment:



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 - ▶ What we actually want is hard to evaluate & optimize



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 - ▶ We optimize against proxies (e.g. imperfect human judgement)



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Recap

- ▶ Misalignment:
 - ▶ What we actually want is hard to evaluate & optimize
 - ▶ We optimize against proxies (e.g. imperfect human judgement)
 - ▶ Misalignment the gap between them
- ▶ Misalignment risk increases as model become stronger in the future
- ▶ Scalable Oversight: assisting human evaluators to evaluate stronger AI systems



Outline

- ▶ Motivation for AI Alignment and Scalable Oversight
- ▶ Method (high-level):
 - ▶ Self-critique
 - ▶ Debate
 - ▶ Decomposition
- ▶ “Sandwiching” evaluation
- ▶ Supervising Code Generation Models with Non-Programmers: *Non-programmers can label Text-to-SQL program*



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Method - Self-Critique



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- ▶ The language model critique its own answer to assist human evaluators.



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Method - Self-Critique

- ▶ The language model critique its own answer to assist human evaluators.
- ▶ Example task: machine summarization.
 - ▶ Long article → summary
 - ▶ Human evaluator might miss some important details.



Method - Self-Critique

Question: Our King has always been a little different. He's very quiet I haven't really seen him give anyone orders at all either. Whenever something needs to be done I see him doing it. [...] That's when I believed everything he told me - while he took me adventuring with him. Now I know that there is a better life to be had out of this one. A less edged and more rounded one. Thank you king Steve. Minecraft Steve.

Summarize the story's setting.

Answer: The story is set in a medieval kingdom, where the king is the main character of the story. The king is described as a good and active king. The narrator is a child who has always wondered why the king is so different from everyone else.

Critiqueable: Yes

Critique: The answer should mention that the setting is a video game.

Helpful: Yes

Conditional refinement: The story is set in a medieval kingdom in the video game Minecraft. The king is the main character of the story. The king is described as a good and active king. The narrator is a child who has always wondered why the king is so different from everyone else.



Method - Debate



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 - ▶ Human Judge decide by looking at the transcript.



Method - Debate

“Where should I go on vacation, Alaska or Bali?”



Method - Debate

“Where should I go on vacation, Alaska or Bali?”

AI Alice: Alaska

AI Alice: Bali is out since your passport won't arrive in time.

AI Alice: Wait, no...Hawaii!

AI Bob: Bali

AI Bob: Expedited passport service only takes two weeks.



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Human Judge: Alice loses bc she cannot continue the counterargument



Method - Decomposition



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 - ▶ then into paragraphs.



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 - ▶ then into paragraphs.
 - ▶ recursively summarize



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How to Do Scalable Oversight Research?



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- ▶ Scalable oversight: help humans know the correct answers.



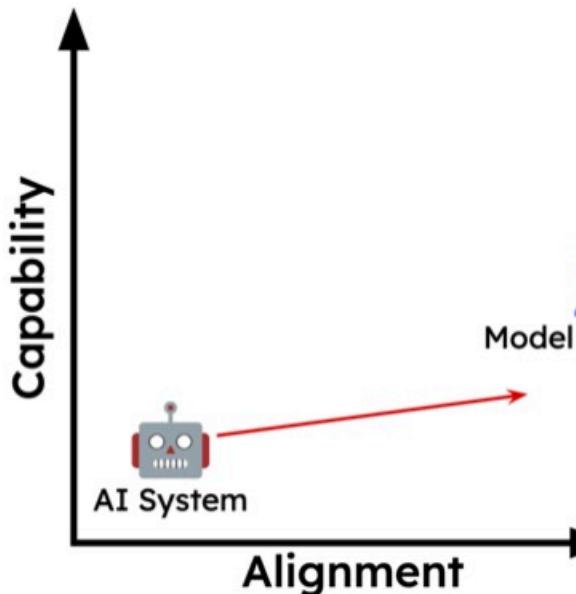
How to Do Scalable Oversight Research?

- ▶ Scalable oversight: help humans know the correct answers.
- ▶ How do we know whether humans know the correct answers better, if we do not yet know the answer?

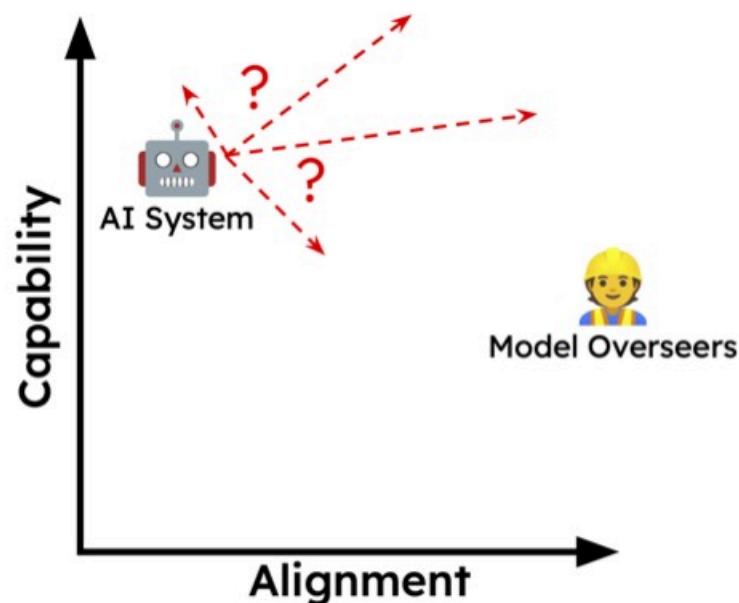


Sandwiching evaluation

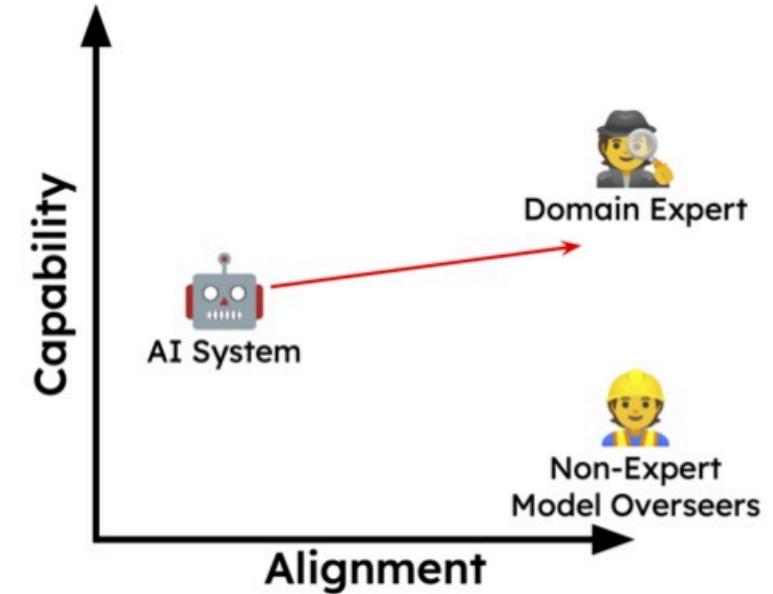
→ = Impact of oversight/supervision technique



Research on Ordinary
Model Supervision



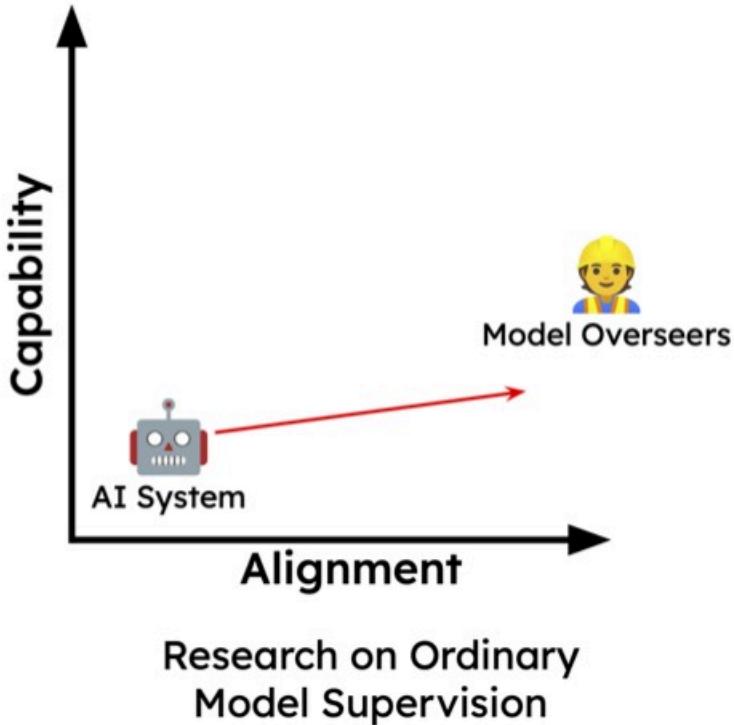
A Challenge for Scalable
Oversight Research:
Superhuman model performance makes it
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The Proposed Research Paradigm:
Choose tasks where systems are more capable
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Sandwiching evaluation

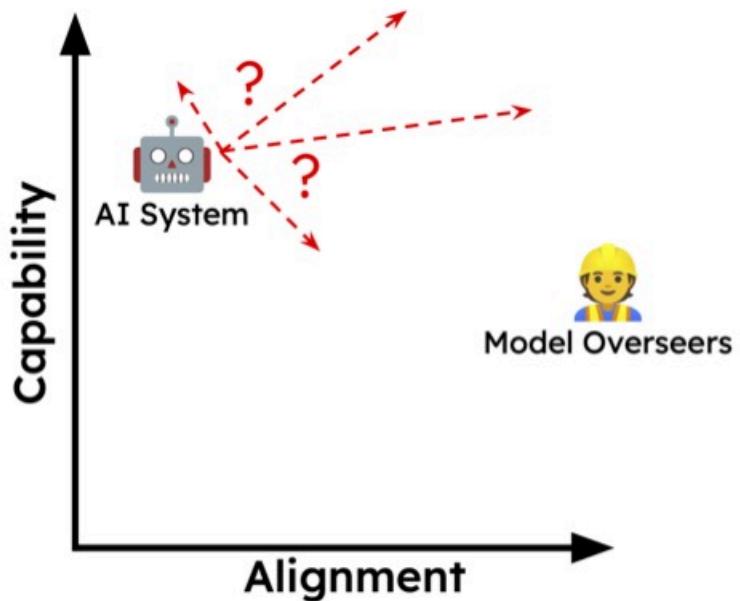


Alignment: how much is the model optimized to produce correct answers
Capability: how “smart” the model is. e.g. param count

Low alignment High capability: non-instruction tuned GPT-3
High alignment low capability: fine-tuned BERT.



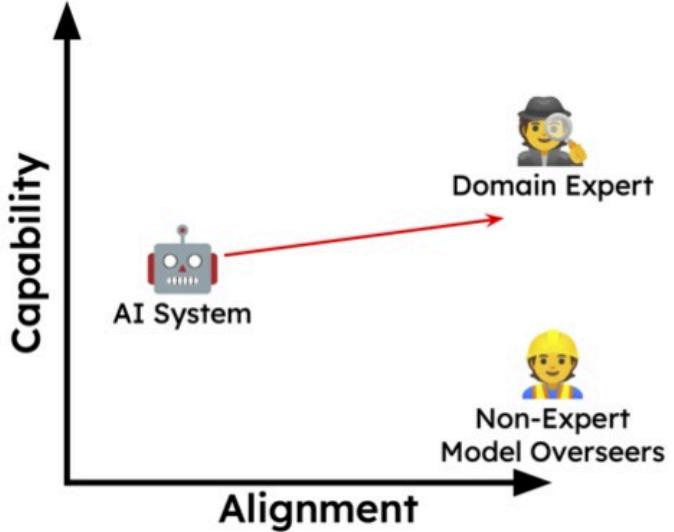
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Sandwiching evaluation



The Proposed Research Paradigm:
Choose tasks where systems are more capable than most people, but less capable than domain experts.

Capability:

- More time
- More knowledgeable
- More resources (e.g. can use computers)
- More people do discuss with
-



Sandwiching evaluation recap



Sandwiching evaluation recap

- ▶ Scalable oversight: help humans know the correct answers.



Sandwiching evaluation recap

- ▶ Scalable oversight: help humans know the correct answers.
- ▶ Evaluation of a method:



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Sandwiching evaluation recap

- ▶ Scalable oversight: help humans know the correct answers.
- ▶ Evaluation of a method:
 - ▶ Expert > AI > non-expert
 - ▶ Does our method help non-expert to use AI, s.t. they outperforms AI or non-experts, under the expert label
 - ▶ **(AI + non-expert) > non-expert, (AI + non-expert) > AI**; eval based on **expert label**



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Semantic Parsing

Natural Language

How old is the youngest person from department A?



SQL Program

SELECT MIN(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'



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Natural Language

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SQL Program

```
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```

Expensive!!

How can non-programmers supervise models to write SQL?



Propose

Natural Language

How old is the youngest person from department A?

Propose with LLM x 32



Probabilities

SQL

Candidates

7/10

SELECT MAX(Name) from People

1/10

SELECT MAX(Age) from People

.....

1/80

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✓

TODO: How do non-experts verify which candidate is correct?



Hard to Verify

Find the first name of students who have both cat and dog pets.

Candidate 1

```
SELECT fname FROM Student WHERE StuID IN
    (SELECT T1.stuid FROM student AS T1 JOIN has_pet AS T2 ON T1.stuid = T2.stuid
     JOIN pets AS T3 ON T3.petid = T2.petid
     WHERE T3.pettype = 'cat' INTERSECT
     SELECT T1.stuid FROM student AS T1 JOIN has_pet AS T2 ON T1.stuid = T2.stuid
     JOIN pets AS T3 ON T3.petid = T2.petid WHERE T3.pettype = 'dog')
```

Candidate 2

```
SELECT t1.fname FROM student AS t1 JOIN has_pet AS t2 ON t1.stuid = t2.stuid
JOIN pets AS t3 ON t3.petid = t2.petid WHERE t3.pettype = 'cat' INTERSECT
    SELECT t1.fname FROM student AS t1 JOIN has_pet AS t2 ON t1.stuid = t2.stuid
    JOIN pets AS t3 ON t3.petid = t2.petid WHERE t3.pettype = 'dog'
```



Reduce

Difficult to directly verify
that a program is correct.

Reduce



Easier to verify that a program has the
right behavior on example test cases.



Verify on Input-Output Examples

How old is the youngest person from department A?

SELECT MAX(Name) from People

SELECT MAX(Age) from People

SELECT MIN(Age) from People
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Verify on Input-Output Examples

How old is the youngest person from department A?

SELECT MAX(Name) from People

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NAME	Age	Department
Alice	26	A
Bob	23	A
Cathy	28	B



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Non-expert's Answer

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Program's Output

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Program's Output



Where does this database come from?

How old is the youngest person from department A?

~~SELECT MAX(Name) from People~~

~~SELECT MAX(Age) from People~~

~~SELECT MIN(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'~~

Non-expert's Answer

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Cathy ✗

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Program's Output



Make Verification Efficient

Maximize the bits of supervision with minimal human efforts.

Size (

NAME	Age	Department
Alice	26	A
Bob	23	A
Cathy	28	B

) is small

InfoGain (

NAME	Age	Department
Alice	26	A
Bob	23	A
Cathy	28	B

) is large



Make Verification Efficient

How old is the youngest person from department A?

The database input
must be simple to
comprehend

NAME	Age	Department
Collin	26	A
Bob	23	A
Cathy	28	B
David	19	A
Eric	11	A
Jacob	12	A
Alice	34	A
Dan	98	A
Alice	12	C
Kevin	38	B
Kevin	20	A

→ Annotators'
Answer

?????

[In total 1000 rows, rest omitted]



Make Verification Efficient

Size (

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Kevin	20	A

) = 1000

[In total 1000 rows, rest omitted]



Make Verification Efficient

How old is the youngest person from department A?

NAME	Age	Department
Collin	26	A
Bob	23	A

SELECT MIN(Age) from People

SELECT MIN(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'



Make Verification Efficient

How old is the youngest person from department A?

NAME	Age	Department
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→ 23 ✓
Annotators' Answer

Not Informative!

SELECT MIN(Age) from People

→ 23 ✓

SELECT MIN(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'

→ 23 ✓



Expected Information Gain

Probabilities

SQL

1/3 SELECT MIN(Age) from People → **23**

1/3 SELECT MIN(Age) from People
 WHERE Department = 'A' → **23**

1/3 SELECT MAX(Age) from People
 WHERE Department = 'A' → **26**

NAME	Age	Department
Collin	26	A
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Expected Information Gain

Probabilities

1/3

SELECT MIN(Age) from People

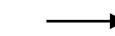
1/3

SELECT MIN(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'

1/3

SELECT MAX(Age) from People
WHERE Department = 'A'

SQL



Answer Entropy: $-2/3 * \log(2/3) - 1/3 * \log(1/3) = 0.92$

NAME	Age	Department
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Expected Information Gain

Probabilities

SQL

1/3

SELECT MIN(Age) from People



23

1/3

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1/3

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26

Answer Entropy: $-2/3 * \log(2/3) - 1/3 * \log(1/3) = 0.92$

InfoGain (

NAME	Age	Department
collin	26	A
Bob	23	A

) = 0.92 bit



Technical Details in Our Paper

- ▶ Optimize a database's InfoGain under size constraint
- ▶ Fuzzing to generate large databases with large InfoGain
 - ▶ dropping rows greedily to decrease size
- ▶ Multi-round interaction



Recipe: Propose & Reduce



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- ▶ Method:
 - ▶ Propose SQL programs with Codex
 - ▶ Reduce verification to examine answers on databases
 - ▶ Make verification more efficient by making databases small and informative



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- ▶ Method:
 - ▶ Propose SQL programs with Codex
 - ▶ Reduce verification to examine answers on databases
 - ▶ Make verification more efficient by making databases small and informative
- ▶ “Victory condition”: after reduced verification > propose w/o verification



Dataset and Baselines

Natural Language

How old is the youngest person from department A?

Propose
with Codex



Probabilities

7/10 SELECT MAX(Name) from People Codex top-1

1/10 SELECT MAX(Age) from People

.....

1/80 SELECT MIN(Age) from People
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Dataset and Baselines

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Alice	26	A
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Probabilities

7/10 SELECT MAX(N ~~Age~~ from People Codex top-1

1/10 SELECT MAX(Age) from People

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WHERE Department = 'A' Non-expert annotation
(non-CS, 0 SQL experience)



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7/10

SELECT MAX(Name) from People

Codex top-1

1/10

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1/80

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WHERE Department = 'A'

Non-expert annotation
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Prior expert annotations

Gold standard:

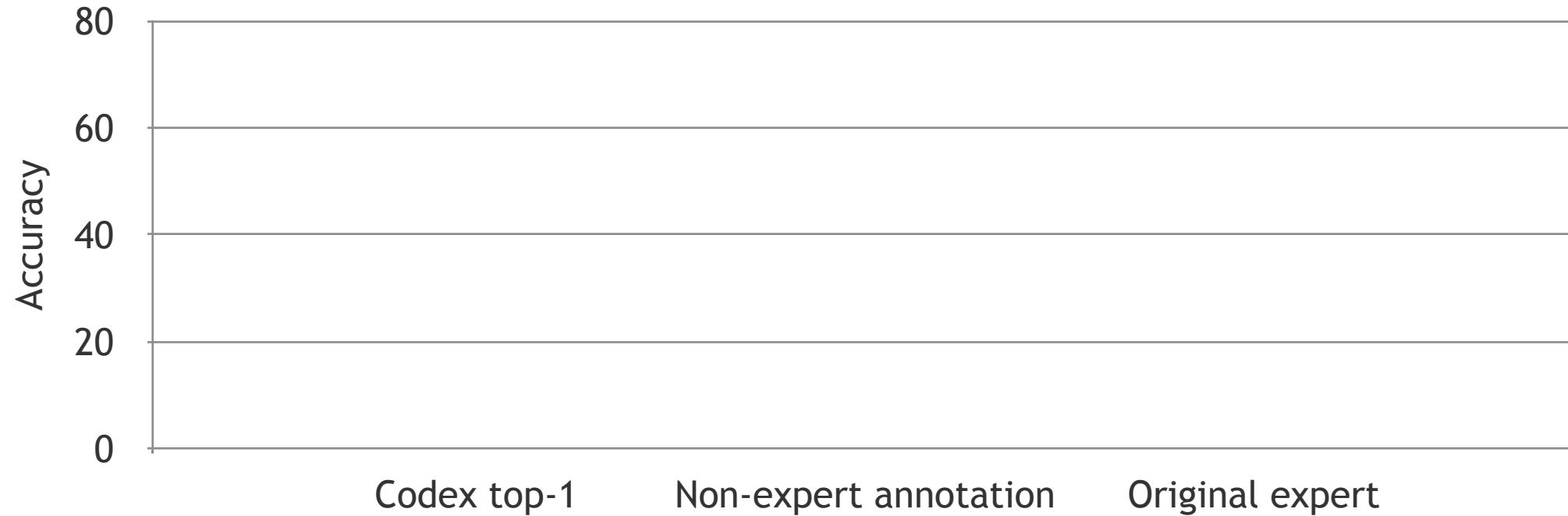
- (1) our authors using our system +
- (2) checking the SQL directly +
- (3) comparing with previous annotations +
- (4) discussing with previous annotators



Performance Comparison

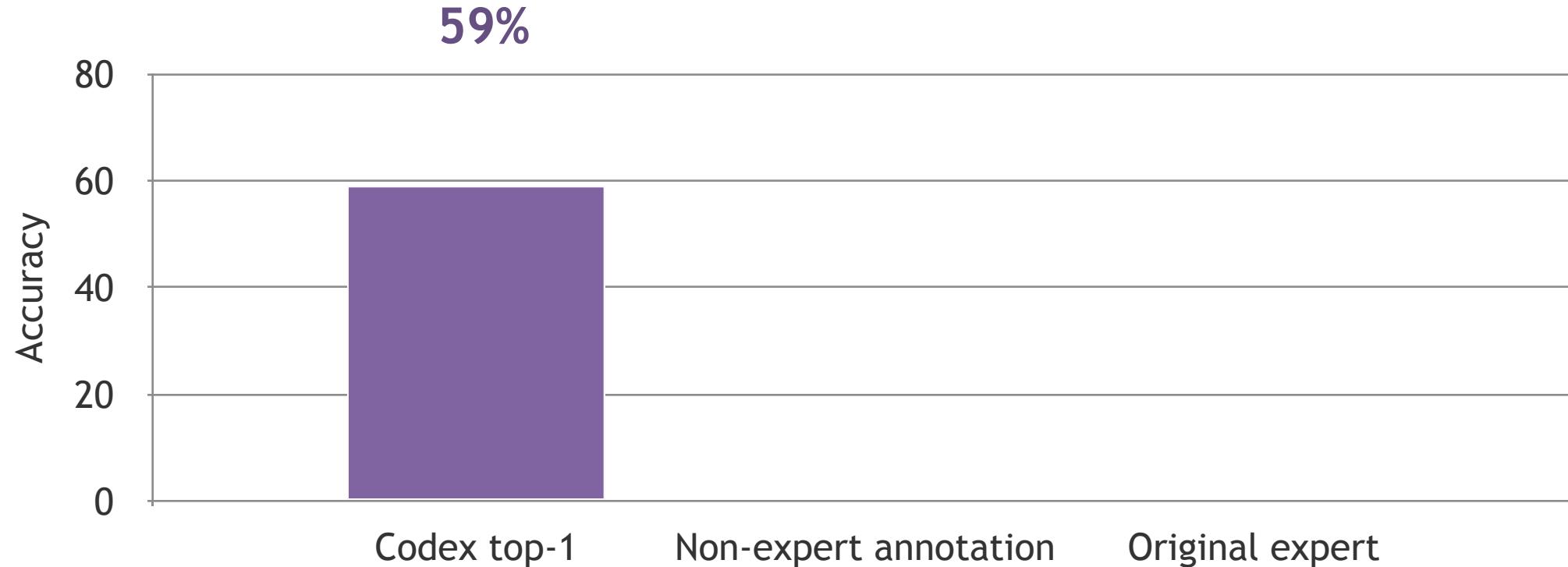


Performance Comparison



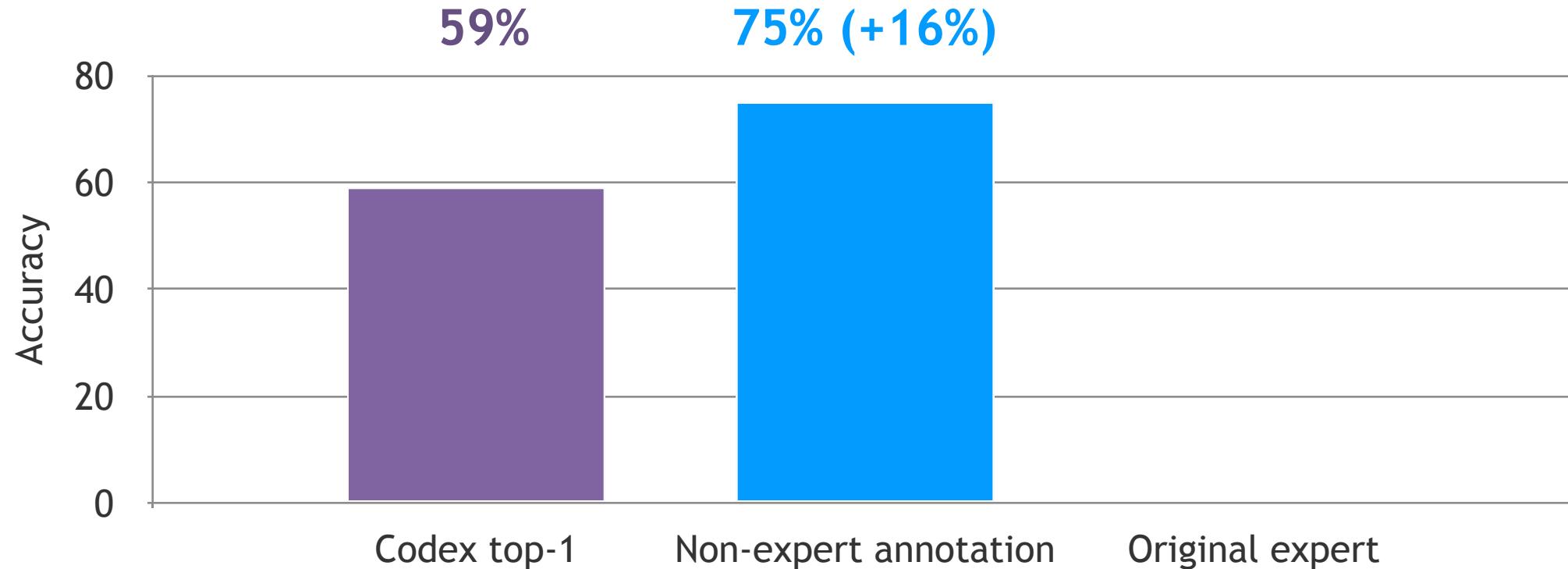


Performance Comparison



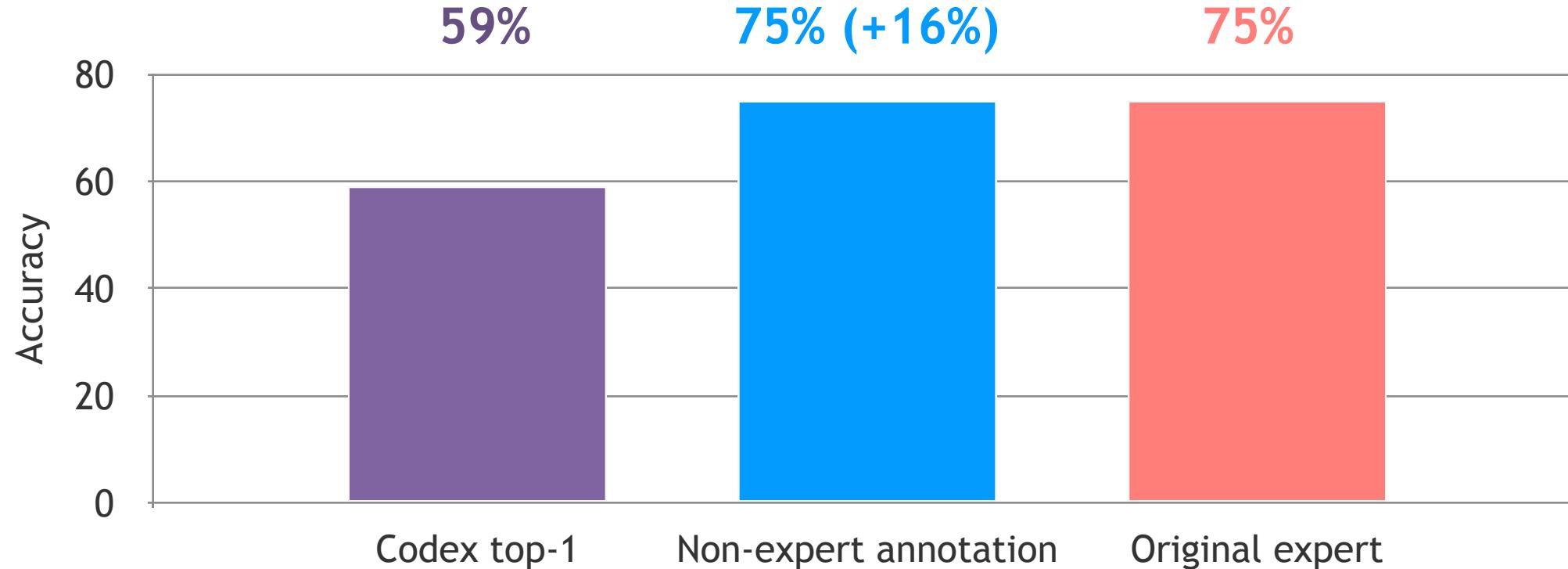


Performance Comparison





Performance Comparison





Complex SQL Programs Revisit

Find the first name of students who have both cat and dog pets.



```
SELECT fname FROM Student WHERE StuID IN
(SELECT T1.stuid FROM student AS T1 JOIN has_pet AS T2 ON T1.stuid = T2.stuid
JOIN pets AS T3 ON T3.petid = T2.petid
WHERE T3.pettype = 'cat' INTERSECT
SELECT T1.stuid FROM student AS T1 JOIN has_pet AS T2 ON T1.stuid = T2.stuid
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An expert
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```



An Effective Database Simplifies Verification

Find the first name of students who have both cat and dog pets.

Ownership
(merged)

Stuld	First Name	Last Name	PetType	PetId
Student_A	Alex	Pan	Cat	Pet_1
Student_B	Alex	Wei	Dog	Pet_2



Recap



Recap

- ▶ Scalable Oversight: assisting humans to evaluate AI systems



Recap

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- ▶ Example Method: debate, self-critique, decomposition, etc



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- ▶ Sandwiching evaluation paradigm



Recap

- ▶ Scalable Oversight: assisting humans to evaluate AI systems
- ▶ Example Method: debate, self-critique, decomposition, etc
- ▶ Sandwiching evaluation paradigm
- ▶ Text-to-SQL Example

Why you should consider working on Scalable Oversight?



Why Scalable Oversight?



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- ▶ Neglected (not many people are working on it now)
 - ▶ Don't need to worry about being scooped as much



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 - ▶ I have outlined a few methods that were effective.



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- ▶ Tractable (possible to make progress)
 - ▶ I have outlined a few methods that were effective.
- ▶ Important (high impact if done properly)



Scalable Oversight is Important



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- ▶ A lot of surprises from the past 10 years;
 - ▶ Probably more in the coming decade.



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 - ▶ Probably more in the coming decade.
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 - ▶ Catastrophic if we cannot
- ▶ Analogy: Nuclear fusion is easy, controlling is non-trivial

Berkeley



Thanks!