

AI and You

Transcript

Special: And Now For Something Completely Different

Episode 110

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Welcome to episode 110! And now... for something completely different. But first, I've been busy finishing my book, which is also called Artificial Intelligence and You, so that makes it easy to remember, and it was just released, it's available for order from Amazon in paperback, hardcover, Kindle, and shortly as an audiobook. Over 350 pages that address the same questions you hear at the beginning of every show, lots of diagrams, stories, and explanations putting AI and its impact in context for you. I'm really proud of it, and it makes a perfect study guide for social studies and other courses, and a perfect gift for someone in your life who's interested, or ought to be, in AI. Go to <https://humancusp.com/book2>, which is linked from the [podcast site](#), or search on Amazon for "[Artificial Intelligence and You Peter Scott](#)".

And so to celebrate, with this episode we're taking a bit of a break and interpreting some themes in the world of AI through the lens of *Monty Python* skits. If you are not familiar with Monty Python, this is not going to make sense... but if the only thing that this episode does for you is to prompt you to go out and discover what you've been missing, it will have performed a very valuable service indeed. With that, we'll---

Hello squire, mind if I sit here?

Um, sure, I'm actually recording—

Nice robot you've got there squire, very sleek, very sleek, know what I mean, know what I mean?

Oh... thank you. Yes, she's the latest model in the Optimus line.

Bit of a goer is she? Eh? Eh?

I beg your pardon; she's intended purely for domestic chores.

Chores? Yes, yes, could call it chores, could call it chores. *Domestic* chores. Nudge nudge, wink wink, say no more.

Excuse me, are you insinuating something?

Naaaaaaah, I wasn't insinuating nuffin', squire. No offense, no offense. Still.... Whoar!

Now look here. I won't stand for this any longer. I've got half a mind to give you a damn good thrashing!

[Female robot voice] Oooh... I like it when you get all manly like that, luv. It gets me all hot in me front diodes.

[Man] (Pause) You didn't hear that.

[Quiet newsreader voice] And now we go to Google's 37th press conference on the subject of Blake Lemoine, the engineer they suspended after he announced that their LaMDA AI had achieved consciousness.

[Crowd yelling]

Shut up!

[Crowd quiets]

For the last time, 'e's not discovered sentient AI! 'E's a very naughty boy!

[Crowd starts yelling again]

Shut up! Shut up!

[Bell ringing]

Hello. This is an artificial general intelligence shop, is it not?

Yes guv'nor, that's what it says on the door.

Very good. I would like to take one of your best Gödel machines, if you please.

Sorry guv'nor, we're fresh out of Gödel machines.

Oh. Well, then I'll take a probabilistic inference engine.

Hold on, I'll take a look. (Pause) Sorry, we don't have any today.

Alright... in that case, I'll just settle for Theory of Mind.

Ah...no, we don't have any.

What do you mean? It's the single most common model of AGI there is!

Sorry guv'nor.

I'm not licked yet. Virtualized embodiment? Universal algorithmic agent? Kolmogorov quantum synapse simulation?

Ah... no, no, no.

You don't really have any artificial general intelligence, do you?

(Pause) No.

I knew it!

But it's not like anyone else does!

Fair point.

[Quiet newsreader voice] We now go to the headquarters of OpenAI, to hear about their plans for the next generation of transformers in the GPT series. Here is a senior scientist and distinguished researcher.

[Loud and bad Australian accent] If we compare the number of parameters in GPT-3 to the number of synapses in the human brain, we see that it is much smaller. If, however, we now scale it up so that the energy consumption during the training phase equals the output of a small nuclear power station, we see that -- it is still not as big. But -- and this is the key point -- it is larger than it was.

[Glasses clinking]

Another glass of port, Stanley?

Don't mind if I do, Reggie.

Y'know, back int'day, we used t'hafta curate our data by 'and. Nun o' this pointin' a transformer at bleedin' Wikipedia and 'ittin' Go. We 'ad to check every data repository and get signed affidavit fromt'owner that it were free o' bias.

Ha. You 'ad it easy. Y'know t' first ImageNet crawl by Fei-Fei Li? I 'ad to take arf those pictures meself. Most of 'em were me wife and kids makin' funny faces.

You call that tough? We 'ad only the one digital camera and instead of proper battery we 'ad to power it with arf a lemon.

Luxury. We used *t'dream* of 'aving a digital camera. We toggled our images into t'front panel of PDP 11-45 in 'exadecimal, and if you missed a checksum, you 'ad to start all over again. And if we did, t'principal investigator would beat us 'til we cried.

And you tell the data architects of today that, and they won't believe you.

[Quiet newsreader voice] We now go to the London briefing room of a multinational social media company.

We are here today to hear proposals for the next generation of our mobile application interface, and here to present his firm's concept is Mr. Snodgrass of the firm of Kenworthy, Jenkins, and Diphtheria.

Snodgrass: Good evening. It's an extreme pleasure to be invited to present our proposal to such an august body as your good selves. As you can see in this augmented reality simulation, the user is immediately entranced by the neo-Greco-Roman design of the splash screen, and upon login, is taken through a series of successively more outrageous and radicalizing interactions involving increasingly unhinged members of society. They are eventually directed to go outside at a suitable time when our low Earth orbit 10-megawatt laser is passing overhead and has a sufficient charge to penetrate their skull and boil the contents. The last---

Excuse me, did you say laser?

Snodgrass: 10-megawatt laser, yes. As I was saying, the first pulse vaporizes their hair and surface skin layers, and then---

Pardon me, but are you proposing to slaughter our users?

Snodgrass: Does that not fit in with your plans?

No.

Snodgrass: Well, may I ask you to reconsider? I mean, your algorithms have been setting people at each other's throats for the last five years; this is just taking out the middle man.

No, thank you.

Snodgrass: This is because I don't have a PhD, isn't it? I mean, look, you can't wait to make money in this field if you're spending 7 years as some professor's lap dog. The rest of the world passes you by, and by the time you get out, your thesis isn't even relevant any longer.

Sorry about your proposal.

Snodgrass: Oh, sod the proposal. Look, if you'd let me in to a few interdisciplinary studies committee meetings and postdoc seminars, I promise I'd just sit at the back and be very quiet and not say anything.

Next, please.

Snodgrass: I see. Well, that's just the sort of blinkered, philistine pig-ignorance I've come to expect from your sort---

[Quiet newsreader voice] We now go to the latest round of the Loebner Prize competition---

Snodgrass: You excrement!

...and the first to see entrants using speech recognition and synthesis for the conversation.

Hello, and how are you doing today?

[Synthetic female voice] I am doing very well today, and how are you?

(Smugly) Aha! I can already tell that you're a computer, that's exactly what a chatbot would say.

[Synth] No it isn't.

You're just doing a simple text matching and response algorithm. I've done this before, you know. You have to prove that you're human, you see.

[Synth] You go first.

Very droll, very droll. But the brevity of your responses belies your cybernetic provenance, my electronic friend.

[Synth] You're the one that's the computer.

Look, the whole point of this exchange is to engage in a rich, multilayered conversation that exercises the full panoply of rhetorical talents that elevate humans above nonsentient lifeforms. It's our duty to demonstrate the pinnacle of cognitive function that the human race has reached through the superiority of our linguistic abilities.

[Synth] No it isn't.

You do not win the bleedin' Loebner Prize just by the automatic gainsaying of every assertion your interlocutor makes! That's not a sophisticated display of high-class repartee!

[Synth] Yes it is.

Look, if you were human, you'd be engaging with the fundamental issues I am raising in my witty rejoinders!

[Synth] Not necessarily. I could be taking a day off.

Taking a day off? What kind of a non sequitur is that? I'm not going to sit here for any more of this---

[Synth] I figured it out. He's the computer. Take him away.

[Burly voice] Alright, come wiv' us mate, don't make a fuss.

What???

[Bell rings]

'Ello miss?

Yes sir?

I'm sorry; I have a cold. I wish to register a complaint.

We're closin' for lunch.

Never mind that. I wish to complain about this level five self-driving car wot you sold me.

Oh, yes, the model [BEEEEP]. What's, uh... what's wrong with it?

I'll tell you what's wrong it It's dead, that's what's wrong with it.

Nah, nah, it's just... resyncing. Lovely car, the model [BEEEEP]. Beautiful seat covers.

The seat covers don't enter into it. It's stone dead.

Nah, nah, it's resyncing.

Alright, if it's resyncing, I'll wake it up. 'Ello Mr. Car! Navigate to Charing Cross Station if you please.

There, look, 'e just made an unprotected left turn!

That was you bumpin' the steering wheel!

No I never!

Now look, my good man. When I bought it not 'arf an hour ago you assured me that its total lack of decision-making ability was due to it being tired and shagged out following a prolonged software update.

Well, yes, guv'nor, the Model [BEEEP] does take a while for the over-the-air updates, but they're worth their weight in gold. Beautiful seat covers, eh?

Look, I took the liberty of examining that car when I got it 'ome, and I discovered that the only reason it was displaying a LIDAR visualization was that it had been drawn onto the dashboard screen with a marker pen. It is deceased.

No, 'es just pining for ---

Never mind what 'e's pinin' for. I want a replacement!

'Fraid we're sold out of Model [BEEEP] right now, guv'nor.

I see, I see, I get the picture.

(Pause) I gotta life-size android robot.

Pray, does it know how to drive?

Not really.

Well it's hardly a bloody replacement, then, is it???

[Soft voiceover] We now go to our reporter Reginald Lettuce Leaf Johnson at the headquarters of DeepMind, where they are attempting to fit one more model in Gato, their AI that has so far been trained to perform a staggering 604 tasks.

Et maintenant, monsieur Gato, ze pièce de résistance, a tiny, after-dinner, classification algorithm.

I can't. I'll explode.

Oh, monsieur... one more little wafer-thin random forest model.

Oh, alright.

[FX: Explosion]

Conclusion

Well, that's the end of the show.

Next week, my guest will be Cansu Canca, [who is a philosopher with a PhD in applied ethics, and the founder and director of the AI Ethics lab, where they help businesses solve ethical problems in their areas.

Until then, remember, no matter how much computers learn how to do, it's how we come together as humans that matters.

I'm Peter Scott, and this is *AI and You*.

[Computer voice] No it isn't.

<http://aiandyou.net>