Artificial intelligence - trying to rationalise

Having a technical background, specifically in the fields of telecommunications and computer areas, although I have not spent my entire career in those areas, I have maintained an interest and I am able to deal with most technical issues when operating my PC, laptop and mobile phone. From time to time I have engaged in various electronics hobbyist activities, particularly of a constructional nature. This however does not mean that I see myself as wishing to engage in every new artefact, such as the latest (smart) television and of course the ubiquitous mobile phone in its present form, as an all singing, all dancing, supercomputer with massive memory, audio and video recording facilities and so on.

As a consequence of this I have a tendency to resist all new gadgets, upgrades, synchronising devices, downloading apps and using my smart phone in relation to QR codes and so on. I am very much desk based, prefer a PC to a laptop or tablet and I rarely use my mobile phone for conversations, preferring the audio quality of my landline. My mobile phone number circulation is very restricted. One of the advantages of the latter is that I am not often contacted or interrupted when I am away from my desk or home.

A somewhat cynical view of mine is that whereas once upon a time we may have felt that we were controlled by the government, I would say that bureaucracy and bureaucrats have more control on our day to day 'life admin' obligations. And that includes much compulsory online activity, whereby you as a customer are kept at arm's length and of course subjected to menus and voice recognition systems. The latter will only increase with AI, but although each may improve in sophistication, it will inevitably increase the distance between the customer and commercial organisations.

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There is a tendency for technology to be a major influence on society by virtue of its latest technical development. This demonstrates that society is being heavily influenced and/or controlled by these technologies, whether conceptually new, or simply gadgets/toys with perhaps the purchaser/user not realising the control element. One example of this is where data collection is occurring and feeding into a surveillance mechanism. To put it another way, society is (already) being controlled by technocrats, or specifically a technocracy!

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Having established the last comment (I don't see how it can be challenged, as the evidence is all around us), then the effects of the coming 'wave' will be extremely easy to be established. And in a sense the infrastructure for this is already in place.

Most of the adult population will have heard of AI and may have some sort of idea what it is, or what it means. And have noticed in the media much scaremongering and alarmist views. As

always, there are many people who love to do the latter and googling 'AI', or looking on YouTube (videos), there is a plethora of documentaries, presentations, lectures and no shortage of animated film material and so on. There is almost certainly far too much material to get through and absorb. This means that the confusion is added to, rather than being able to locate clarity on what is rather a complex subject.

Everyone is familiar with computers in their various forms and mobile phones. And of course the internet and all its works. The collection of data by Google, Facebook, etc along with Amazon, supermarkets and many, many retail companies is virtually accepted by all. We are also familiar with CCTV surveillance whether installed on motorways and other roads, in town centres and in retail outlets and so on. In 1949 George Orwell wrote 1984 and some of his visions and predictions are familiar to many, especially where phrases such as 'Big Brother', 'telescreens' and 'Thought Police' have entered the vocabulary.

Paranoia about computers being in control (of us), telling us what to do, online, for example and coming across the phrases 'the computer says no', 'the computer said', 'this is the computer's error' and so on, are familiar. Robots taking over jobs, us and of course the world have been featured in entertainment films and documentaries for many years.

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Maybe artificial intelligence is just seen by many as the latest computer creation, another software artefact to use, just as occurred when Google and other search engines appeared. In other words, AI might be considered to be the latest toy and something else to be either amused by, or give individuals the feeling of being very clever in using this particular tool. And companies of course can take advantage of this development. The latter is where understatement occurs. Big business in all its forms can use AI to massive advantage. Insurance companies have been using software for some time which can analyse claim forms. This either as text, or listening to telephone conversations and being able to detect whether the claimant is making an honest claim, by virtue of the words, tone and inflection being used. If that process was not utilising AI (which it probably was), it will be now, or very soon. And the same applies across many other businesses, or if you like, as many as you can think of.

Playing around with such software as Chat GPT, Bing Image Creator and so on will demonstrate the capabilities of AI very clearly. And it will also give insight into applications on a much greater and more sophisticated level.

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Despite governments stating that they will do their utmost to regulate AI, by organising summits, conferences, etc, bearing in mind that AI is already here, it is being developed at a phenomenal rate. If methods of regulation and containment are not in place, now, how is it going to be controlled on an ongoing basis?

When the internet arrived, albeit compared to AI, relatively slowly and steadily, efforts may have been made to control, it but various malicious activities are well known, particularly on social

media and in financial fraud. Malicious websites are able to operate with impunity and also function very efficiently with fraudulent operations which can usually not be traced. It therefore does not bode well for the appropriate and essential containment of AI and all its works.

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Over the last decade or so, big tech companies have been developing computer hardware and software at an alarming rate. Firms like Apple develop their iPhone as if it is a cultist phenomenon. Regardless of how willing the customer is, they are being manipulated by the market.

AI development will and is, being developed at a fantastic rate. The technologists themselves will design and improve their products as if they are only limited by their ingenuity. They may need to be regulated and 'contained', by government bodies, but their enthusiasm and excitement will be unabated.

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