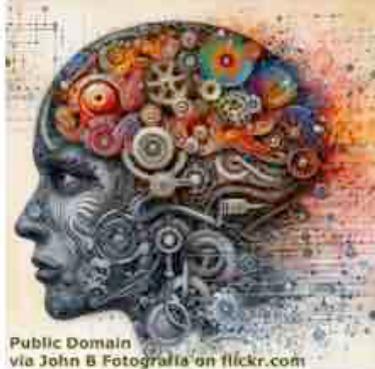


AI an 'extinction-level threat' says study by experts

1st April 2024



A report commissioned by the U.S. State Department has warned of the existential threat from artificial intelligence. The report posited a worst-case-scenario "extinction-level threat" to humanity. The authors identified a "growing risk to

national security posed by rapidly expanding AI capabilities from weaponisation and loss of control". The report added that there was a "clear and urgent need" for the U.S. government to intervene "quickly and decisively". It continued: "The rise of advanced AI has the potential to destabilise global security in ways reminiscent of the introduction of nuclear weapons." The report calls for a new federal agency to regulate companies developing AI tools and to limit the growth of AI.

The 247-page report was commissioned by the State Department in November 2022. It was written by a company that provides technical briefings and guidance on AI. The authors spoke extensively to experts at AI companies like OpenAI, Google DeepMind and Meta. The authors recommended setting an upper limit on how much computing power an AI model could have. They also recommended making it a criminal offence to open-source or reveal the coding behind more powerful AI models. The Futurism.com website stated: "Over half of the AI researchers surveyed say there's a five per cent chance that humans will be driven to extinction, among other 'extremely bad outcomes.'"

Sources: futurism.com / time.com / commondreams.org

Writing

AI is the greatest threat to humanity. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

report / existential threats / worst-case scenario / risk / national security / AI tools / Briefings / guidance / experts / AI companies / computing power / criminal / bad

True / False

- 1) The U.S. Defense Department commissioned a report on AI dangers. T / F
- 2) The report said a worst-case scenario will happen within a decade. T / F
- 3) The report said the government must act quickly on AI. T / F
- 4) The report said AI was a threat comparable to that of nuclear weapons. T / F
- 5) The report was written by State Department employees. T / F
- 6) Authors of the report spoke to AI about AI. T / F
- 7) The authors recommending capping computer power for AI models. T / F
- 8) AI researchers said AI would bring many good outcomes. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. commissioned | a. information |
| 2. threat | b. presented |
| 3. posed | c. consequences |
| 4. urgent | d. similar to |
| 5. reminiscent of | e. ceiling |
| 6. briefings | f. ordered |
| 7. limit | g. critical |
| 8. offence | h. forced |
| 9. driven | i. danger |
| 10. outcomes | j. crime |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of artificial intelligence?
- b) How has artificial intelligence changed your life?
- c) What other existential threats are there to humanity?
- d) How much of an existential threat to humanity is AI?
- e) What are the threats of AI?
- f) What can governments do to keep us safe from potential AI harm?
- g) How dangerous is AI compared to nuclear weapons?
- h) How is it possible to limit the growth of AI?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A report commissioned | a. reveal the coding |
| 2. warned of the existential threat | b. agency to regulate companies |
| 3. The report posited a worst-case | c. outcomes |
| 4. intervene quickly | d. scenario |
| 5. The report calls for a new federal | e. an upper limit |
| 6. a company that provides technical | f. by the U.S. State Department |
| 7. The authors recommended setting | g. and decisively |
| 8. a criminal offence to open-source or | h. briefings and guidance on AI |
| 9. a five per cent chance that humans | i. from artificial intelligence |
| 10. extremely bad | j. will be driven to extinction |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of ChatGPT and Gemini?
- What criminal offences should be created regarding AI?
- What will happen when AI becomes more intelligent than humans?
- How dangerous is revealing the code behind AI models?
- What do you think of predictions of human extinction?
- What will AI be like in ten years from now?
- What questions would you like to ask AI engineers?

Spelling

- cimissneomdo by the U.S. State Department
- the etasltxiine threat
- a worst-case conraesi
- opitasnniweao and loss of control
- enteveirn quickly and decisively
- rtsenimeinc of the introduction
- technical sgfirnebi
- ncegadiu on AI
- The authors spoke etvxniyesle
- making it a criminal fncofoee
- half of the AI researchers rseveyud
- lxeeeymrt bad outcomes

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. g	5. d
6. a	7. e	8. j	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Artificial Intelligence

You think A.I. is the biggest threat to humanity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their threats are survivable. Also, tell the others which is the least deadly of these (and why): climate change, a pandemic or a coronal mass ejection.

Role B – Climate Change

You think climate change is the biggest threat to humanity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their threats are survivable. Also, tell the others which is the least deadly of these (and why): A.I., a pandemic or a coronal mass ejection.

Role C – A Pandemic

You think a pandemic is the biggest threat to humanity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their threats are survivable. Also, tell the others which is the least deadly of these (and why): climate change, A.I. or a coronal mass ejection.

Role D – A Coronal Mass Ejection

You think a coronal mass ejection is the biggest threat to humanity. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their threats are survivable. Also, tell the others which is the least deadly of these (and why): climate change, a pandemic or A.I..

Speaking – Global threats

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest existential threats at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Artificial intelligence | • Pandemics |
| • A coronal mass ejection | • Cyber wars |
| • An alien invasion | • Climate change |
| • Water shortages | • An asteroid hit |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.