**Artificial Intelligence**

**Much of this online abuse could have been stopped. Mcrosoft and fellow tech firms could have built better guardrails into AI products, instead of rushing them to market. X and other social media sites could have kept, rather than cut, content moderation teams. And federal lawmakers could have passed legislation on pornographic deepfakes, as 10 states have done so far, instead of dawdling as the scale of harm grew. *(The Week magazine, February 9, 2024)***

**For the first time, the U.S. Air Force turned over control of a military flight to artificial intelligence. The algorithm used lessons it learned from half a million simulations to safely navigate and operate a U-2 Dragon Lady surveillance aircraft, although a human did act as a do-pilot. *(TheHill.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 31, 2020/January 8, 2021)***

**The world is now “awash in deepfakes – video, audio, or images that make people appear to do or say things they didn’t,” said Nate Lanxon in Bloomberg. New Hampshire voters last month received robocalls from a fake Joe Biden urging them to stay home during the state’s primaries, while a fake Tom Hanks has pitched dental insurance in an online ad. These digital doppelgangers are so convincing, it’s becoming “impossible to distinguish what’s real from what’s fabricated.” *(The Week magazine, February 9, 2024)***

**The last Beatles song: “It’s intended as an event, a farewell to the most beloved group of the rock ‘n’ roll era,” said Stephen Thomas Erlewine in the Los Angeles Times. “Now and then,” a tune written by John Lennon in the late 1970s, is now being billed as the Beatles’ final song, and the freshly completed version released this week might merit the honorific. Lennon recorded a rough demo that the three Beatles who survived him briefly worked on in the 1990s. But AI has now made it possible to isolate the vocals in such a way that Paul McCartney could add full instrumentation, including George Harrison-style slide guitar and Ringo Starr on drums. Even fully polished and filled out, “Now and Then” remains a “wispy, melancholy” ballad about yearning to renew a close relationship. Still, McCartney’s loving work “elevates this suggestion of a song into a realized record,” one whose “elegant, softly psychedelic flow lets Lennon’s longing linger in the subconscious.” *(The Week magazine, November 10, 2023)***

**The post-human sacrament: Anthony Levandowski is rebooting his AI church, said Jackie Davalos and Nate Lanxon in Bloomberg. The self-driving car pioneer, who was sentenced to 18 months in prison for stealing trade secrets from Google and taking them to Uber, then was pardoned by former President Donald Trump, first conceptualized his Way of the Future in 2015. The idea fused “worship and the understanding of artificial intelligence,” and it raised eyebrows at the time over its focus on worship and acceptance of a future “God” developed through computer hardware and software. But with AI now in the mainstream, Levandowski said, it is time to consider how “sophisticated AI systems could help guide humans on moral, ethical, or existential questions that are normally sought out in religions.” *(The Week magazine, December 8, 2023)***

**Computers are already better than humans at many tasks. But life doesn’t have rules. Humans are 3D, or 4D, or of limitless depth. We have almost infinite choices. Life is about change and surprises. Humans are endowed with often conflicting attributes well beyond reasoning: empathy, pleasure, ambition, creativity, emotion, love, loyalty, humor, responsibility, faith, trust, delight, despair, intuition, stubbornness. Add Freudian id and ego, inner voice, self-awareness, soul. AI’s trajectory is amazing and will outpace humans in many areas, but only those within 2D boundaries. Sentient? Thinking? It may fool some, but I don’t think we get there.” *(Andy Kessler, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Gates: "Concerned" about robots: Add Gates to the growing list of people worried about a robot uprising, said Kevin Rawlinson in BBC.com. In an "ask me anything" session on Reddit last week, the Microsoft founder said he worries about the threat posed by artificial intelligence. "I am in the camp that is concerned about super intelligence," Gates wrote. "First, the machines will do a lot of jobs for us and not be super intelligent. That should be positive if we manage it well. A few decades after that, though, the intelligence is strong enough to be a concern." Gates's remarks place him among several other high-profile tech figures who have worried about AI evolving "beyond human control," including billionaire Elon Musk and physicist Stephen Hawking, who once remarked that artificial intelligence could "spell the end of the human race." (*The Week magazine, February 13, 2015)***

**When AI writes your condolences: Vanderbilt University cheated in writing its statements of concern for the recent Michigan State shooting – by using ChatGPT, said Jordan Mendoza in USA Today. After a gunman killed three people and injured five, the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Vanderbilt’s education school called on students to “come together” to “create a safe and inclusive environment.” The statement was signed “Paraphrase from OpenAI’s ChatGPT AI language model,” and the backlash was swift. “There is a sick and twisted irony in making a computer write your message about community and togetherness because you can’t be bothered to reflect on it yourself,” said VU senior Laith Kayat. Vanderbilt apologized. *(The Week magazine, March 10, 2023)***

**Biden order invokes emergency powers: A sweeping executive order signed by President Biden this week aimed at reining in artificial intelliogence, said Cristiano Lima and Cat Zakrzewski in The Washington Post. The order, which relies on emergency authority under the 1950 Defense Production Act, calls on “a slew of federal agencies to mitigate the technology’s risks.” Building on the commitments by 15 tech companies signed this summer, AI developers will be required to perform safety tests “and notify the government of the results before rolling out” new AI products. The order also directs federal agencies to investigate uses for AI in their work, “with a focus on bolstering national cyber defenses.” *(The Week magazine, November 10, 2023)***

**Good week for: Humanity, after a panel of Al-powered robots at a conference in Geneva assured people they have no current plans to take over. “My creator has been nothing but kind to me,” said a robot named “Ameca,” adding, “I am very happy with my current situation.” *(The Week magazine, July 21, 2023)***

**News that Microsoft was hiring former OpenAI CEO Sam Altman added $54 billion to the company’s market value. The stock is up 57 percent this year to notch a record high. *(Business Insider, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 1, 2023)***

**Ahead of this week’s New Hampshire primary, residents received robocalls in which an AI-generated impersonation of President Biden urged “nonpartisan and democratic voters” to skip the ballot, calling the primary “a bunch of malarky.” The New Hampshire attorney general’s office said it is investigating what appears to be an “unlawful attempt” at voter suppression. *(The Daily Beast, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 2, 2024)***

**Yes, AI can replace the average CEO: You’ve herd automation experts philosophize about how AI is going to replace vast swaths of workers, said Zachary Crockett. Here’s another idea: “Why not start by replacing the highest-paid employee of them all – the CEO?” Today’s average chief executive is paid the equivalent of 399 median workers’ salaries, up from 20 to 1 in 1965. Studies show that executives have simultaneously gotten more expensive while becoming less effective over time. Automating the CEO wouldn’t just be cheaper, it might actually improve the company’s performance. McKissey, the consulting company beloved by ruthless CEOs, estimates “that roughly 25 percent of a CEO’s time is spent on tasks that “machines could replicate,” like reviewing financial performance and forecasting trends. CEOs are “heralded as decision-making geniuses,” but firms like IBM and Google already rely quietly on AI, much as football coaches use data and analytics to determine what plays to run. Some companies are going further. Last August, a Hong Kong-based online gaming firm called NetDragon Websoft appointed a virtual robot powered by artificial intelligencee as its CEO. “She worked 24/7, didn’t sleep, and was compensated $0 per hour.” And so far, Netdragon’s shares have beaten the Hong Kong stock market – the CEO’s ultimate performance metric. *(The Week magazine, April 7, 2023)***

**Turning the tables on spam callers: You can now hire an Al chatbot to answer unwanted telemarketer calls, said Robert McMillan in The Wall Street Journal. Roger Anderson says he has “several thousand customers paying $24,99 a year for use of his call-deflection system, called Jolly Roger,” which automatically answers calls and talks in circles “to frustrate and waste the time of telemarketers and scammers.” Anderson’s war on telemarketers began years ago with “an answering machine that said ‘Hello’ a few times before hanging up.” Al, though, has expanded the possibilities for telemarketer torture. Jolly Roger starts off “with preset expressions” like “I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name” or simple grunts of “Uh-huh.” After a few minutes, the Al software steps in “to process the telemarketer’s spiel and generate responses,” which are fed into a voice cloner that carries on the conversation “forever – or until callers finally give up.” *(The Week magazine, July 21, 2023)***

**Sorry, AI won’t tank the markets: “Regulators are like most people,” said Tyler Cowen, “They can’t be expected to know where AI is headed.” But that doesn’t stop them from opining. The latest artificial-intelligence doomsayer is Securities and Exchange Commission chairman Gary Gensler. Gensler said this week that it was “nearly unavoidable” that AI would cause a market crash. And unsurprisingly, Gensler has called for “new regulation.” Because that’s what regulators do. And indeed, it’s not inconceivable that AI could change market dynamics in a way that could cause a crash. Crashes are unpredictable. But that’s not the likelihood. Get past the “exaggerated” fears and AI probably lowers the chances of a market crash.” The worry about AI is that many hedge funds will turn to the same trading models, causing “herd behavior” in which fast-moving funds all buy and sell at the same time. But that’s not how investing, or AI, works. Trading firms know all about herd behavior, and they know that using the same model as everyone else will “lead them to sell into a falling market or buy into temporarily rising prices.” One way to cut the chances of this is to let AI flourish with a greater “diversity” of models – exactly the kind of thing that heavy-handed regulation of AI on Wall Street would stifle. *(The Week magazine, October 27, 2023)***

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