Subject: Re: Politics and AI
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 29 Jan 2025 22:32:51 GMT
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I would argue that the biggest challenges in AI are still the same ones we've had since the 1950s. It isn't political. It's technical.

The Large Language Model is really excellent stuff, but it isn't capable of attaining what many today are calling "AGI" - The "G" being "general" - and the idea being "human like." Some will tell you that current LLM technology is capable of that, but they are in denial.

The disconnect, in my opinion, is actually the fact that the LLM doesn't have an understanding of concepts. Even multi-modal systems - those that consider images, sounds and words - don't put those together as concepts.

Even when an LLM is trained with a lot of source material, using a ton of time and energy, it still doesn't understand the simplest of concepts, like inside versus outside, above versus below or equal versus unequal. It only knows the words, and maybe the pictures or the sounds. It doesn't "connect" those with any concepts.

So that's the first problem.

The second problem is this: Even when a neural network is made capable of that, consider the system it is modeled from: The human brain. We're an incredible machine and our brains are able to do a lot of mental stuff. But a lot of it is still assumptions, guesses, estimations and even fantasies.

Take, for example, the resistance of most people to consider that the Earth was basically spherical and rotated around the sun. Even when faced with a lot of facts that "fit the picture" of the model of the Solar System we all understand today, many people thought the Earth was flat and the Sun rotated around us. Some thought this for hundreds of years after the current Solar System model was pretty much proven.

Our brains tend to "fill in the blanks" of stuff we don't know. And we are prone to being easily influenced. Repeat something enough and it appears as fact. That's just how we're built. It's hard to retrain ourselves counter to this nature.

We're great at training for motor movements. Stuff like walking, riding a bike, gymnastics and other physical activities. We can teach ourselves to do incredible feats by practicing something repeatedly. And we can do that sort of thing with our thought processes too, but that's sort of an awkward way to learn something that is deterministic.

From a computing standpoint, it's kind of weird to have to practice something like mathematics to be good at it. Same thing with learning and reciting facts. We don't just store and retrieve them. Those "facts" we learn have to be repeated to be remembered, and they sometimes morph in our memories over time.

Cool stuff to consider. But odd issues to deal with in a computing system.

So I could kind of care less about politicizing AI. First thing is to get a handle on it from a technical perspective. I love that stuff. Just love it! But right now, a lot of this hype is merely popular discourse.

It's cool to see the public enamored with it now - not just the geeks and the techies. But that's really all it is right now. It's a popular fad. Maybe that's a bit of an understatement - it's more than a fad - 'cause now there are some useful things that it can be used for.

But the "fad" part is the misunderstanding of its capabilities, the public fantasy, really. And of course, the organizations that want to politicize it. They're the most "artificial" intelligence there is.
