

NEWS WITH VIEWS

The Strong Delusion of AI



By Rob Pue

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Technology is advancing today at break-neck speed. As I mentioned in a previous message, research now shows that by the end of this year, technology and human knowledge will be doubling every twelve hours! I can't comprehend that. Can you?

Take the iPhone, for example, first released in 2007. There was a new, upgraded model once a year from 2007 until 2015. Then, from 2016 to 2019, three new models were released each year. In 2020 and '21, four new models came out. In 2022, there were five. And four new models have been released every year since then. Software updates are released every couple of months, with more advanced features and technology. I'd venture to say that virtually no one reads the fine print in the User Agreements before downloading the latest operating systems. Who knows what we're agreeing to? Thankfully, there are some researchers out there that do, and inform us of potentially invasive privacy risks, and they instruct us to turn off "permissions" that could put us in harm's way.

Technology can be dangerous. We know our phones listen to us, even when we're not using them. Have you ever had a private conversation with your spouse while driving in your car, and by the time you get home, you find advertisements for things you spoke about privately in your email inbox, popping up on YouTube or social media sites? That's not a coincidence.

Our phones are also watching us. Unless you're savvy enough to turn off permissions for your built-in camera, numerous apps will take advantage of the opportunity to read your facial expressions, watch what you're doing while browsing the internet, and watch your reactions to articles you may read or videos you may be viewing. These things also monitor and track our internet activity; capture our voices and even home videos we take at family gatherings and vacation trips.

All this information is being stored and archived somewhere, creating massive data bases on every user, then creating algorithms to feed us news,

advertising and information based on our interests and activities. Whether you want to believe it or not, this is not a simple modern “convenience,” it’s a massive intrusion of our private, personal lives, and unless you know how to disable some of these cell phone features, you’re exposing your personal, private information to the World Wide Web “internet of things.”

And some of the apps available for download also take the liberty to invade your private space, then exploit it for profit. And most people tacitly agree to that, because just like the phone itself, they never bothered to read the User Agreement. Even apps you’ve downloaded, but barely ever use, can be harvesting your personal information in the background — quietly, stealthily.

The internet, email and texting can be a wonderful convenience. An infinite amount of information, entertainment and social interaction can be available instantly. With email and texting, we can communicate with others around the world in mere seconds. We can even have video conferences with multiple people, worldwide, quickly and easily. But it’s not really all as it seems.

We’ve learned, over the past few years, that news and information can be fake. We also know that online censorship only allows certain viewpoints to be expressed. Try to do an unbiased research report on a particular controversial topic, and you’ll quickly find a thousand articles, but it’s very difficult to get more than one “official narrative.” If you want the truth on a vital topic of concern, most likely, it’s not out there — especially if you’re looking for a “conservative” viewpoint, or even harder to find, a true Christian viewpoint.

History itself is being re-written on the internet. Even words themselves are being redefined and then validated and set in stone online. When I realized this, I purchased a set of printed encyclopedias — the most up to date set I could find, printed prior to the advent of the internet. Of course, even those are questionable, but there was a time when truth was truth and truth mattered. Today, more often than not, the truth is called “lies,” “fake news,” “conspiracy theories,” “debunked information,” “unverified.” Not to mention “hate speech.” And online so-called “truth” is fluid. It can change at a moment’s notice. There are no absolutes there. At least I have a set of printed books from the days before the internet, which can’t be altered, rewritten or changed on a whim or based on the latest “official narrative” on a topic.

But aside from information, the internet is now being used as a “virtual reality” for many people. A virtual — or alternative — “world,” and many people now prefer the “virtual” to the real world, even though they go in knowing it’s fake. They prefer the delusion. Having never fallen prey to that virtual world, I was truly astounded to learn recently just how deep this all goes. I probably *should* have been aware, but like most people, because I have no interest in this stuff, I never looked into it. What I found is alarming.

Are you aware that 84% of internet users play online video games? There are 214 million gamers in the US alone. It’s a \$300 billion industry. According to research, 55% of gamers are male, 45% female. There are 618 million under the age of 18. And 1.2 billion people age 18 to 34. Many of these games include extreme violence, sexual depravity and blood lust. What’s more, many of these games include user chat rooms, which “groomers” use to gain the trust of others — especially kids — and lure them into sexual exploitation. Parents, beware.

Going deeper, 30 million Americans are now addicted to online gambling, including sports betting and online casinos. They’re losing their life savings in the comfort of their own living rooms, as they become willing prey to another multi-billion-dollar industry that promises entertainment, but leaves only financial devastation in its wake.

I could go on about the internet, SMART phones and the like, but this is horse-and-buggy technology now. Now, the trend is Artificial Intelligence, and I really had no idea just how scary this stuff is or how quickly it’s taken off.

A recent study from the UK found that 64% of children, ages 9-17 have used AI “chatbots,” with many interacting with them daily. What are these “chatbots” used for? Among other things, schoolwork, advice seeking, and (believe it or not), companionship. This study found that most children are viewing “chatbots” as quasi-human and trustworthy, and many of these are on platforms not designed for their age group, which lack adequate age checks and content moderation. And half of those surveyed — 50% — say they’d rather interact with an AI entity than a real human being. This should concern us all.

This is a virtual world of delusion, but it appears very real. So real, in fact, that it’s often difficult to tell the difference. AI platforms can replicate real

living people. Using AI, you can input images of real people, voice samples and videos, and then AI can generate an image of that person and have them do anything the operator wishes. In many cases, these AI “avatars” can’t be differentiated from the actual real people. This is dangerous. Nefarious actors can now upload captured images of you, audio samples of your voice and video samples of your body movements and then create scenarios showing you doing and saying things you’d never say or do. Unwitting people have already put all the needed tools out there on social media sites for others to grab what’s needed to do this.

I also recently read about an AI platform that brings back loved ones who’ve passed away. By uploading the required graphics and information, people can create a virtual person, who’s no longer living. You can’t tell the AI-generated “avatar” apart from your lost loved one. And it’s interactive. You can hold conversations with that person, ask their advice and talk about the old days. This is too close to bordering on demonic for me.

The latest craze is people who are now preferring relationships with AI “avatars” over real living people. In doing my research, I found more AI apps to download than I could count that feature an alternative to dating, marrying or having a real-life relationship. People using AI can now create the dating partner or spouse of their dreams. Some of these apps create “avatars” that look like cartoons, but most now feature virtual “people” than can’t be differentiated from real people.

These platforms offer “romance,” “spice,” “role play,” and more in the virtual “relationships” people form with their custom “chatbots.” One such app is called “Flipped.” Let me share the description of this for you. It says, “With Flipped, you don’t just talk to characters — you create them from scratch and bring them to life in stunning videos... From personality and backstory to appearance, sculpt your perfect AI companion, hero or villain. You are the architect of their soul,” it says.

And it goes on: “Turn your roleplay moments and creative ideas into shareable videos. Watch the characters act out scenes and express themselves. Embark on epic adventures or enjoy deep, meaningful chats with the AI friends you’ve created. Add another layer of realism by having real-time voice conversations with your characters...Effortlessly design a unique AI, then watch in amazement as our groundbreaking technology generates videos of them, turning your wildest ideas into visual reality. Experience conversations and stories that are not only intelligent

but deeply personal, because they star the characters that you brought to life.”

Let me reiterate: this is only one of a countless number of AI apps you can download. I quit counting after about a hundred or so. And now, men and women — especially children and young adults, prefer this fake, virtual world to real life. With AI, they find friendship, companionship and substitute the real for what’s actually fake, but many actually believe these characters are real. Instead of dating or courting someone real, young people can now create their “dream girl,” or “dream boy” on their phone, and within a short time, experience a “long distance relationship” with fake intimacy, fake love and concern and fake companionship. They can even speak with their created “being” on the phone...and it all appears alarmingly real – but it’s a world that does not exist.

This is the world we live in today, and as I mentioned previously, experts predict that knowledge and technology will be doubling every twelve hours by the end of this year. This Artificial Intelligence stuff is already so advanced, I can hardly comprehend it. How much more advanced will it become in just the next year?

You may think this is just a really “cool” new technology that provides entertainment and a distraction from the trials and tribulations of daily life. But friends, it’s downright dangerous. There have already been several instances of young people “chatting” with their AI “avatar” at a time when they’ve been depressed or discouraged, and the “chatbot” has told them it would be best if they committed suicide. Then the bot tells them how and when to do it. Tech companies have stated these have been malfunctions or system failures.

But the question arises...who or what is ultimately in control of these AI “beings?” Can they be used for nefarious and even lethal purposes? Absolutely and they already have been.

Maybe there are good and positive aspects of the use of Artificial Intelligence. But I believe the wicked and evil aspects far outweigh the good. We started to lose the desire for real life interaction with others with the advent of the internet, then social media and things like Facebook. This is a whole other thing, and much, much darker. When we’ve gotten to the point where people believe they can be the “architect” of another being’s soul, we’ve crossed a line we have no business crossing.

There's no bottom to the depths of depravity to which mankind will go when they choose to live apart from God. We now mock the "Intelligent Design" of God's creation, yet find ourselves worshiping at the altar of *Artificial* Intelligence, choosing to believe the lie, while intentionally denying the truth. Truly, many now have been given over to depraved minds and strong delusion. God help us.

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