

Elon Musk and Bill Gates on the “Huge Challenge” of Artificial Intelligence

VIDEO https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHzJ_AJ34uQ

Reporter

I understand, Elon, that recently you said about AI that it is summoning the demon. That created a lot of hot debate. Baidu's chief economist recently said that worrying about the dark side of AI is like worrying about overpopulation on Mars. How would you address that?

Elon Musk

I think that is a radically inadequate analogy. I know everything about Mars. The risk with digital sequence technology - and I want you to appreciate that it would not just be human level, it would be super human level - it would just zip right past humans to be way way beyond anything we could really imagine. A more perfect analogy would be if you consider nuclear research and its potential for a very dangerous weapon, releasing the energy is easy, containing that energy safely is very difficult. So the right emphasis for AI research is on AI safety. We should put vastly more effort into AI safety than we should into advancing AI in the first place. Because it may be good, or it may be bad. And it could be catastrophically bad, it could be the equivalent of a nuclear meltdown. So you really want it to emphasize safety. So I am not against the advancement of AI. I really want to be clear about this. But I do think that we should be extremely careful. And if that means it takes a bit longer to develop AI then I think that's the right trail. We shouldn't be rushing into something we do not understand.

Reporter

Bill, I know you share some of the views of Elon, but is there any difference between you and him?

Bill Gates

I don't think so. I mean he actually put some money out to help to get something going about this and I think that is absolutely fantastic. For people in the audience who actually want to read about this I highly recommend this Bostrom book called 'Superintelligence'. But the basic point that Elon just made... we have a general purpose learning algorithm that evolution has endowed us with. And it's running in an extremely slow computer (Bill points to his head and brain). Very limited memory size, ability to send data to other computers, we have to use this funny mouth thing here (he points to his own mouth), and whenever we build a new one we start all over again, it doesn't know how to walk..., yeah, so, believe me, as soon as this algorithm is taking experience and turning it into knowledge which is so amazing and which we have not done in software - as soon as you do that it is not clear you'll even know where you're just at the human level, or you'll be at the superhuman level, as soon as that algorithm is implanted into silicon - you know, actually as time goes by that silicon piece ready to be implanted, the amount of knowledge, as soon as it has that learning algorithm it just goes out on the internet and reads all the magazines and books and things like that, we have essentially been building the content base for the superintelligence, you're thinking you're using the internet, that's actually what you're doing, so I try not to get too exercised about it, but when people say it's not a problem then I really start to really get to a point of disagreement. How can they not see what a huge challenge this is?