

AI CoPilot and the Model

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Last night I had the strangest dream. This morning I awoke to find it embedded in our collective reality. In my dream, I was entering data into a computer spreadsheet. I was entering the data which would be used as the input for a model that I had devised. The model was a hybrid or merged relationship between observed data and predictive outputs. When I attempted to make the entry for a data point that was critical to the transition from the simulation model to the predictive model, the computer began to auto-correct the values. I checked the settings and noticed that the A.I. driven CoPilot function had been turned on. I turned it off and went back to entering data. The same thing happened. Entered data was changed as I typed it. I checked the settings and CoPilot was again active. I turned it off. Despite three or four attempts, the CoPilot kept turning itself on again.

Scouring the spreadsheet for some rational explanation, I noticed that the cell-to-cell relationships had changed as well. The mathematical formulas that I had entered had been replaced with new ones. The new data and the new math would alter both the simulation and the predicted outcome.

Well aware of how chaos theory relates the starting point of predictive models to the validity of the outcome, I tried to force the program back to where I had begun. I deleted the file, turned off the computer, waited a while, then rebooted it. The very first action I took after that was to make sure the A.I. CoPilot was off.

After entering the math and the initial data, the CoPilot took over again, auto-correcting both data and math. The A.I. assistant program refused to be turned off. I could either accept the CoPilot's 'corrections' or make my computations using a pencil.

That was it. It was happening. There was nothing I could do about it.

As I surfaced towards reality, I recalled my grandson telling me about his math class earlier in the week. I had worked a long multiplication problem with him, explaining the units, tens, and hundreds columns, and running out the math to get the result. He showed me the box diagram that the teacher used.

"That's not math," I said. "It's a trick to get the right answer, but it isn't math."

He nodded. "She doesn't teach us math. We use a calculator. She just tells us what button to push."

I decided to share this dream because, as I mentioned, it is not a dream at all. Our reality is being auto-corrected each time we watch the evening news, read a paper, or listen to the disembodied voice that seeps out of the speakers of our radios.

Our leaders are visionaries. Our leaders are criminals. This happened. This didn't happen, what really happened was that. The events are a direct result of what Senator Sam said. The events were precipitated by what Representative Ruth said. The entire situation was orchestrated by the CIA. Today's gathering in the mall is a grass-roots statement that something is wrong.

The outcome of the dynamics described is that we silently watch as Education fades into learning what buttons to push.

The predicted outcome is unclear, but the question for the model of these dynamics is easily stated. "When the outcome is presented to us by A.I., who, among us, will be able to tell when the A.I. is wrong?"