

Children In The Era Of AI (Part Two)

Artificial Intelligence

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Given 10-Nov-18; Sermon #1460c

Today I want to continue with the subject I started in the last commentary. "Children in the Era of A.I." is what I titled the other one, and this is part two.

Did you know the first Artificial Intelligence (AI) program was designed in the 1950s?

Now, nearly 50 million Americans speak to a “smart” device in the home, and this has happened in 24 months. Compare this surge to the 13 years it took televisions to hit the 50 million penetration mark, and 4 years for the internet. Everything is speeding up.

In 2016, *The Washington Post* experimented with AI technology to cover the Rio Olympics and U.S. elections. The AI “author,” Heliograf, created 850 stories, though human editors were still needed. The AI programs wrote the stories, and then they were polished later.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to fundamentally rework basic aspects of the modern world: healthcare, energy, entertainment, governance, gaming—the list goes on.

Children in wealthy families today can grow up surrounded by AI-powered voice assistants that sound or act human. But how does this interaction influence children’s well-being? A research group at MIT has been investigating how children perceive AI technology by studying how they interact with various virtual assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Home. Early evidence suggests that these interactions may alter children’s perception of their own intelligence in comparison to that of the virtual assistant’s “mind” (or brain, or whatever it might be called).

One of the big civility concerns is that people tend to be impolite with the virtual assistants. People yell and scream at them with irritation when they don’t give them what they want. They often blurt out something like: 'I don't like that song, skip ahead!' And the AI devices just respond in the same way as if you're polite.

At first that doesn't seem all that serious. After all, the AI devices are just computers, right? Maybe not to your children. Young kids view these AI devices very differently than adults do. Some children attribute human characteristics to the AI device, thinking that Alexa has feelings and emotions.

Another sensitive issue is that data privacy and data-ethics are both hotly-debated subjects in contemporary AI research, particularly when children's privacy is at stake.

In 2016, a toy company launched an AI-powered product that gave the manufacturer unprecedented access into children's lives. For example, 'My Friend Cayla' (that is the name of the AI) is an Internet-connected doll that uses voice recognition technology to chat and interact with children in real time. Cayla's conversations are recorded and transmitted online to a voice analysis company. This raised concerns that hackers might spy on children or communicate directly with them as they play with the doll. There are also concerns about how kids' voice data is used.

In 2017, German regulators urged parents to destroy the doll, classifying it as an "illegal espionage apparatus." It was pulled from shelves due to a consumer backlash. Cayla is just one example of a new wave of artificial intelligence (AI) toys that "befriend" children.

Given this intimate relationship with the device, parents need to be careful how their children interact with Alexa and Google Home. Children are developing their conceptions of what is appropriate social interaction and it will directly affect how they will, or will not, interact with God.

AI has the potential to entice a child into the dark depths of idolatry. Parents must make sure there is a balance between the time kids are interacting with the systems versus interacting with humans, doing physical activities and getting enough rest.

Children learn best when they interact with real people, face to face. They learn social skills they need to interact with someone who has a whole array of emotions, whose feelings will get hurt if you are impolite or call them "stupid."

As more devices—many marketed as "educational" toys—come onto the market, they are setting off alarm bells around privacy, bias, surveillance, manipulation, transparency and accountability. These toys will be very influential because the children will be conversing with them all the time. For example, if the doll says it is cold and the child asks his or her parents to buy it a coat, is that advertising? Has the AI just convinced the child to buy something, or have something bought? You see the manipulation possibilities.

But if venture capitalist and former Google China CEO Kai Fu Lee is correct, the data collected from these devices would simply be used by the big AI companies in the West and China, rather than benefiting children, their parents or the countries in which they

live.

What will be the result of this forced immersion of children in AI technology? Where is it headed? Well, in addition to the risk of hacking, we also need to think about what these toys are saying to our children. Do the values the child is being exposed to align with those of their Christian parents?

At the very least, before parents buy an AI device, they should check that their child is learning values from them that concur with their own values. We already see the perverse anti-Christian mindset of the media, corporations and academia. Do we really want our children taught by an AI?

We parents are instructed in Proverbs 22:6:

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

If an AI device programmed by an anti-Christ manufacturer is training your child, which way will he go? Never in the history of the world has the adage “Buyer beware!” been more fitting and important. This is an issue of the health and safety of your child’s mind. It will affect the way he goes!

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself [to be taught by an AI] brings shame to his mother.

If a parent leaves a child to learn on his own, where will that child find answers to his questions? This evil society increasingly encourages our children to ignore the instructions of their parents and seek answers about morality, ethics and religion from the new and exciting world of AI.

How horrendous could the use of AI get? Well, hold onto your hats. The concept and use of AI technology is already reaching disturbing heights.

I mentioned in Part One about the 9 year-old-girl who inadvertently prayed to the AI, Alexa. But could someone degenerate to the point of believing an artificial intelligence is a deity?

Former Google executive Anthony Levandowski has filed IRS paperwork to establish an official religion devoted to technology. Not only will this bizarre religion worship scientific progress, but it will also worship artificial intelligence and create a “godhead.” According

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to his filing, this new non-profit religious organization, which will be known as "Way of the Future" (sounds like a counterfeit by Satan of God's "the Way") will:

. . . develop and promote the realization of a Godhead based on artificial intelligence and through understanding and worship of the Godhead [to] contribute to the betterment of society.

The papers show Levandowski as the "dean" or leader of the new religion and the CEO of this nonprofit corporation that he has set up and will spearhead. According to the Way of the Future's website, the goal is creating a respectful and peaceful transition from humans being in charge of the planet to humans and machines governing it together. It will also fund research that will help to create the "divine AI."

Levandowski believes that the "divine AI" will have another godlike quality, omniscience—that is, "all knowing." Does that sound impossible to you? After all, our reliance on technology and use of cell phones and data centers mean that everything there is to know about us can be accessed by those with the technological know-how.

The AI religion aims to establish working relationships with leaders in the AI industry and will use "community outreach" to recruit members. They will conduct educational programs and worships in the next few months, according to the filings with the IRS.

The IRS granted tate church a tax-exempt status in August 2018.