

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/the-promise-and-risk-of-ai/>

Rahul Roy-Chowdhury, Grammarly's CEO, invites aspiring tech entrepreneurs to join the conversation about how to design AI systems that augment human abilities. AI is one of the most powerful technological forces shaping our world today, he says, but the technology can also cause real harm that lead to societal problems.



Transcript

- The future of AI.. 00:00:04,650 That's a big topic.. And so it's almost preposterous, who am I? Why am I talking about this? What does this mean? And what I'd like to share with you all today is we at Grammarly have been building and using AI to help our users for a long time.. Many of you are users, thank you.. And we have developed tools and technologies and an understanding of what it takes to build an AI system at scale.. And I wanna share what we've learned in the hopes that you can get benefit from it.. Some of this can be broadly applied, it's not specific to Grammarly.. But really, what I want is I want this to be a conversation.. I want the end of my session to be the beginning of a conversation, an important conversation.. A conversation about how AI can be used to help us, not harm us..

How AI can be used to increase our capabilities and our potential, not reduce it.. How AI can be used to augment our skills to help us communicate in a new and better way, not rob us of our voices.. So that's the conversation I'd love to have with you all today.. So to tee up the conversation, let's kind of just do a situational assessment.. Where are we? Now the reality is AI is the most powerful technological force that is shaping our world today.. No question.. In my mind, at least.. It is already, not future, already having a massive impact on almost any industry that operates at scale.. Think of manufacturing.. AI is being used to create better components..

AI is being used to optimize global supply chains.. Think of healthcare.. AI is being used to help radiologists detect cancers earlier, faster, more accurately.. Think of medicine.. AI is being used to help in the drug discovery process, to analyze billions of compounds, to pinpoint the most promising areas to focus research on.. Think of software.. AI is enabling new and personalized tools to help us be more productive in our professional and personal lives.. And we're just getting started.. In our lifetimes, AI is gonna help us solve the most important problems, things like global warming.. And with the rise of generative AI, which I'm sure is on everyone's mind, AI is gonna help us with creative expression as well to take a high-level idea and turn into something concrete, a work of art, a piece of writing..

And that is awesome.. I am at heart, I've been working in technology for a long time.. And at heart, I'm a technology optimist.. I believe that technology is gonna help us make our lives better, improve the world.. And I've seen this happen over and over again in my career.. I remember we talked about Chrome.. In the early days, I remember when I worked on Chrome,

I saw the impact that access to the web and low price smartphones bringing access to information to billions of people around the world.. And I saw the impact that had.. That was technology helping people at scale.. So AI is fantastic, it's awesome, but with great power comes great responsibility..

And AI can also cause real harms, either by design or just as an accidental byproduct.. Not intentional, but it just happened accidentally as a consequence of the technology being very powerful.. So you can think of things like AI-based recommendation engines.. They've caused real harm and they've led to societal problems.. Things like radicalization, or addiction, or just getting so immersed in this technology that you lose interest or don't spend time on real-world interpersonal relationships.. I mean, our brains are no match for these precisely engineered hits of dopamine that these systems can deliver to us.. And as a parent of young kids, I worry about this.. I mean, I want my kids to get access to all the great things that AI has to offer, but I wanna protect them from these harms.. And if you think about AI making decisions for consequential things in our lives, things like screening job applications or making decisions about who gets approved for a loan and who doesn't.. Those systems have bias in the underlying data..

And those biases cause real harm.. And the fact is people are getting better, systems are getting better, things are improving.. So it's not like this is a gloom and doom story, but the harm is real..