



Impossibly Stupid

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Minneapolis, MN, United States

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3 years ago

Drew Philp: My \$500 house in Detroit -- and the neighbors who helped me rebuild it

There are many kinds of poverty. Rich people who focus on nothing more than money experience a poverty of community. This talk was about a neighborhood of people who obviously *are* willing to work and *did* do the jobs that need to be done. They didn't just buy a McMansion in the suburbs and pay people to maintain it. You really have to think about things harder if you're still pushing the old narrative that wealthy people will fix everything for everybody.



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3 years ago

Christian Piccolini: My descent into America's neo-Nazi movement -- and how I got out

"I'd tried to make new friends and cover my tattoos with long sleeves, and I wouldn't admit it because I was afraid of being judged the same way I had judged other people." No, there is a *big* difference between the kind of prejudice the speaker practiced and the judgement that comes as result of the very real hurt he has caused. As compelling as a story of redemption can be, it is always sad to see people cheer for someone just because they stopped being the worst of the worst. Where is the applause for all the people who *didn't* sink to that level despite encountering the same "potholes"? Yes, pick people up after they have fallen, but the idea that needs to be spread more it's that it would be better to help people *before* they fall. Until you do that, all you'll have is the continuous cycle of misery that this speaker represents.



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3 years ago

Mariano Sigman and Dan Ariely: How can groups make good decisions?

> You can interrogate a computer, of course you can. Better than a human. You can ask an AI why and how it reached some conclusion and not other. No, you can't. You clearly don't know much about the technology involved. You can't, for example, go up to a self driving car and ask it to describe what a stop sign looks like. All it "knows" is an activation pattern that was laid down during training that allowed it to yes/no classify example images of what it was told should be considered stop signs. > Well, that will be mostly evident. No, it won't. There are plenty of examples online of people tricking image classifiers to report false results. Please gain a better understanding of how the technology works before you try to defend it.
<http://news.cornell.edu/stories/2015/03/images-fool-computer-vision-raise-security-concerns>
https://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2017/08/confusing_self-.html
<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-41845878> > Well, as I understand it, "true progress" is how to better achieve the set goal. No, it's about how to achieve "good decisions". Sometimes the best decision is to determine that the goal *itself* is wrong, and have the ability to explain *why*, and to devise a completely new goal that better achieves the *intent* of the initial goal. That's why it's misguided to throw raw computing power at a problem before you've applied the intelligence needed to make the first good decision.



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Mariano Sigman and Dan Ariely: How can groups make good decisions?

> Really? In what particular case? In all cases. It's the reason we can *have* a philosophy in the first place. That's why I said epistemology is what matters. None of the current crop of machine learning algorithms are going to debate one another on what is the best way to recognize a stop sign or a tumor or anything else! > What part of being totally capable of ending poverty, hunger and not doing so is intelligent? All of it. If you don't see why, it's because you don't have a solid working definition of intelligence. Many people don't, including the vast majority of people who claim to be in the field of AI. > Is intelligent a society of endless consumption in a finite world? Yes. Intelligence is just knowing how such a society is likely to end, not necessarily being able to stop it. My point remains that we need to focus on *how* we are able to make "good decisions" if we want to address the problems, because giving up isn't going to fix anything. > Computers might help processing data for us to better understand things that our brain is biologically limited to compute. But that's not how the current fad of machine learning works. It doesn't "help" us do anything, it just calculates *some* way that acceptably classifies inputs as outputs. There's no good way for the neural network to express what it has learned in any human fashion, so you can't reasonably know that it *is* making good decisions.



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True enough, but as these conversations go on they also tend to drift away from the original topic that is supposed to be discussed. TED also deletes some comments because of external links, which I'd like to use to support my points. I'll go back a try a two-part reply, but if the system balks, that's that . . .



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Unfortunately, TED limits messages to 2000 characters, and my reply to you is much longer than that. Please contact me through my blog if you wish to continue this interesting conversation. Thank you.



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Machine learning is *not* intelligence, and the ability to have an intelligent conversation is what allows humans to come to the conclusion that some things are good or bad. If you can't interrogate a system (be it artificial or human) and find out *why* it thinks more or less of something is better or worse, then you're not really able to make true progress. An "expert" that is unwilling or unable to explain their thinking is of limited value.



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I would say it's not really about democracy so much as it is about epistemology. Even when it comes to people like doctors, there are "experts" (e.g. chiropractors, TCM, etc.) who still fail to follow a process that produces verifiable results and corrects errors (aka, the "good decisions" we want). That underlying weakness is widespread, and it will likely continue to be a deficit in any society where powerful people making bad decisions is acceptable.



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Since the topic of this talk is supposed to specifically be about making "good" decisions, it is your talk of mere consensus that is misguided. As I mentioned in an earlier comment, but this video actually fails to address, is whether or not the answers given by TED attendees to the moral questions *are* indeed "good". Nor does it demonstrate a process by which the people or their collective groups come to the "good" conclusion. All it seems to do is demonstrate that a result assembled in stages can be more a accurate predictor than the naive total average. At best, it's a poorly titled TED talk.



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What struck me most is the response of most TED attendees to the two moral dilemmas. They think it's a big deal to tweak some cells in a lab? They think it's *not* a big deal to kill a sentient intelligence? That's a sad reflection on what passes for good decisions in this increasingly scientific and technical world.

Previous | 1 | 2 | 3 | Next

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