



Comment: The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

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It is not clear whether intelligence has any long-term survival value. Bacteria multiply and flourish without it. However, intelligence is central to what it means to be human. It allows us to learn more about ourselves and our environment, and as a species it gives us competitive edge. Everything our civilized action has achieved is a product of human intelligence. I regard it a triumph that we, who are ourselves mere stardust, have come to such a detailed understanding of the universe in which we live.

The potential benefits of creating beneficial artificial intelligence are huge. Used as a toolkit, AI can augment our existing intelligence to open up advances in every area of science and society. However, it will also bring dangers. Governments around the world are already funding an AI arms race. And in the future, AI could develop a will of its own, a will that is in conflict with ours...

In short, AI will be either the best or the worst thing ever to happen to humanity. We do not yet know which. That is why in 2014 I and a few others, called for more research to be done in this area. I feel it is important to have this discussion now, in order that the research and its applications benefit society as a whole.