

## OPENAI, WHY PROFIT AND SAFETY CANNOT CO-EXIST.

Over the weekend the software industry variously referred to as 'Generative AI', 'Deep Learning' or Large Language Models (LLM), was rocked by the surprise ouster of the Managing Director and Chairman of OPENAI for their lack of candor. The board of OPENAI refused to elaborate further on the reasons behind the ousting of Altman and Brockman except to say they had lost confidence in Altman. "[The board no longer has confidence in \[Altman's\] ability to continue leading OpenAI,](#)"

Predictably the fundamentally corrupt and cynical titans based around Silicon Valley attacked the board, not Altman. The board was condemned as being juvenile, inexperienced, unfit for purpose and so on. To understand why they vilified the board while lauding Altman we need to take account of two things. Firstly, money making Silicon Valley does not like non-profit organisations. Secondly, they adore even venerate the entrepreneurial giants who make them money ignoring the less than exemplary way these entrepreneurs clawed their way up the ladder on the backs of their unacknowledged engineers and programmers.

OPENAI was set up as a non-profit venture in 2014. Due to the need to raise additional capital given the huge expenses involved in developing LLM, it restructured in 2019 as a capped profit company. (Before proceeding it is worth making the following point against those who do not understand the value lodged in immaterial production. Much of the value that goes into immaterial production does not arise from its distribution costs, which are negligible, but are found in the development costs. If we take an orchestra, the value they produce is not confined to the time they are playing in front of audiences. More time is taken up in rehearsals and even more time is taken up at an individual level honing their craft.) Today OPENAI consists of the governing OPENAI and its subsidiary OpenAI Global, LLC whose purpose is to safely commercialize the products produced by OPENAI.

In their brief statement on the ousting of Altman, the board reiterated that: "[OpenAI was deliberately structured to advance our mission: to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of humanity. The board remains fully committed to serving this mission.](#)" Benefitting humanity of course only applies to the product not to how it was produced. In their quest to serve humanity one wonders if the board is including the underpaid and overused Kenyan trainers amongst others who were key to training the early results of CHATGPT. Silicon Valley has a very dark side.

Nonetheless benefiting humanity does not sit well in venture capital contaminated Silicon Valley. And these investors have no humility. Were it not for the world wide web and the internet, the product of hundreds of scientists and programmers giving of their work for decades, and making these wondrous leaps free to use, it is unlikely Silicon Valley in its present form would exist, for where these achievements to have been patented and a rent charged for their use, the wealth would not have flowed into the pockets of these corporations and venture capitalists, but into the pockets of the inventors making them not billionaires but trillionaires. And yet they condemn the notion of AI benefiting humanity when the internet which has made them their fortune was gifted precisely in order to serve humanity.

In my previous articles I pointed out that OPENAI was scrambling around to monetize its product. So it is not surprising that Altman clashed with the board. As long as OPENAI monopolized LLM, raising funds was not difficult. Investors like Microsoft were keen to develop the product knowing they in turn could commercialize and exploit it. What they poured into OPENAI would be more than made up in subscriptions

when it was incorporated into the enhanced *Microsoft Office* suite. The problem for OPENAI was that many other corporations are now offering similar LLMs. In fact OPENAI already faces [eleven competitors](#) including Google and Meta. It is no longer offering a unique product while some of its potential customers are buying their own Nvidia driven servers to prepare their own proprietary LLMs. Altman became increasingly desperate to monetize OPENAI's LLM products before it was too late and it is this that led to the blow up.

### **A.I. a threat to humanity?**

A.I. is not incomparable. It is part of the information system beginning with language, moving on to simple Paleolithic art depictions, then to written language, then to printed language, then to moving pictures, then to the internet and now algorithms which can vastly accelerate the sifting through and interpreting of information. From the outset, information could either inform or mislead. It all depended on intention. From the onset of class based societies ten to twelve thousand years ago, language alongside the sword was used to oppress, to invoke obedience and condition thinking, so nothing new. After all remove the s and the sword becomes the word.

What the elevated forms of communication allows for today is the more rapid and forceful flow of ideas. Thus a movie picture has a more stimulating and powerful emotional influence over the viewer compared to the written word on its own. Even before LLM, smartphones and their apps were designed to trap the attention of the user to the point of addiction, because time spent engaged, is time monetized for the advertisers.

But what the critics of LLM mean when they say it is a threat, is that they fear it will fall into the wrong hands. Bad players, terrorists, we are told could use it to build bombs, viruses, chemical weapons and even contaminate us all with dandruff. But even before LLM, all previous forms of communication could do this. Before the internet for example when books predominated, there was the *Anarchist's Cookbook*. No it was not a vegan off-grid cookbook, it taught the reader how to brew up explosives etc. After that, the Dark Web took over doing the same.

But this is not the point. Various nation states do not need LLM to teach them how to destroy the world. Between the USA and Russia they have sufficient thermonuclear warheads and bombs to end all life many times over. No doubt they have their reagents ready to turn into chemical weapons. These states which enforce and defend the rule of the exploiters and oppressors are never put into the equation. It is taken as read that society is in their safe hands. No what worries our rulers is that their monopoly of terror can be broken by LLMs leaking their secrets. When we cast our eyes over history, the major atrocities, the mass killings were never carried out by terrorists, but by the state engaged in war with other states or attacking their own citizens who dared to revolt.

And in a sense, this is all deflection, an attempt to get us to look in the wrong direction and elevation. The threat facing society caused by LLMs is here and now. It is already present. It takes the form of all the disinformation and biases hoovered up by these programs and then dished out to us as vibrant objective information. I will never tire of saying this. Given that information is power while ignorance is capitulation, the capitalist class and their agents always feared the information age. There were three remedies open to them. Censor the internet. Let it be. Or finally, drown it in disinformation and fake news. They chose the latter. CHATGPT does not overturn this flow of dis-information, instead it assembles it, collates it and spits it out in a more user friendly and profound way.

In this sense LLM is no different to any computer programme. Garbage in and garbage out. Here we need to distinguish between the general programs used by the public compared to the proprietary systems used by corporations and scientists. Proprietary systems based on objective and verified information are formidable. Take Google DeepMind's weather programme. The difference between it and current algorithms is speed and the fact that [DeepMind](#) has been trained on decades of historical weather patterns. It can predict more accurate weather further into the future compared to current models based solely on equations which represent current weighted weather related interactions. Like humans there is no substitute for experience.

### **Who makes the money?**

The chip makers and the users of LLM. The producers of LLM such as OPENAI will in fact be loss leaders. In time they will disappear, one reason being that LLMs are self reproducing, they can write their own software.

The users will take two forms. The first will be those able to offer subscription services to consumers, both personal and corporate, such as Microsoft. The second will be the myriad of companies using LLM to cut costs by shedding labour. Here the cost of the programme will pale into insignificance compared to the cost savings it can generate by allowing one worker to do the job of four.

The developers of OPENAI face another problem and here we are looking primarily at the general programs such as CHATGPT. To train their programs and make them useful they have had to Hoover up great swathes of information and techniques. But information in the realm of private property is not necessarily accessible, at least not without payment. The best information and techniques tend to be ringfenced and protected by Intellectual Property explicitly as well as implicitly.

This therefore raises the question whether or not LLM is compatible with private property if it is to become universal. It is already clear that LLMs have been pirating what is really Intellectual Property and undoubtedly there will be a whole series of court cases seeking damages unless these companies achieve the status of say the vaccine industry with their immunities against harms.

What is interesting is that the companies involved with CHATGPT or their equivalents, such as Microsoft and Google have abandoned their 'get out of court card'. Originally in the legal fine print which no one ever read but which I pointed out, it was the end user, aka the public, who were responsible for any plagiarism or passing off when using these programs, not the producers of these programs such as OPENAI. Clearly this rankled with their corporate users so today the LLM companies have agreed to bear responsibility for the misuse of data used to train their algorithms. I thought this would go up to the Supreme Court for a determination, but it seems the LLM companies realised their position was legally absurd and would be struck down.

### **Conclusion.**

We live in unsafe societies with or without LLMs. Class makes our societies unsafe and because these systems will be used by the ruling class to increase exploitation and surveillance, they will make our societies more unsafe and more inhospitable. LLMs are not intelligent enough to prevent this. They are simply intelligent tools open to misuse and abuse, no more and no less.

What the convulsions at OPENAI shows is that these systems will not be used for the betterment of humanity despite OPENAI's mission statement, but for the betterment of corporate profit. LLMs will be used to better entice us, better analyze us, better manipulate us. They will seek to turn us into mindless consumers, and if they were a religion, they would deny there is something called free will.

What LLMs represent in their stark form is the most acute contradiction between the forces of production and relations of production to the point they can induce political instability by ripping the fabric of society. These systems will be used by the few against the many. They will transmit the ideas of the ruling class more personably and convincingly, and they will be used to cull tens of millions of jobs, particularly white collar jobs.

A.I. is not invincible. Hamas taught us that far from being invincible, they are breakable. They empower the capitalist class only when we allow them to disempower society. We can take on these systems, we can beat these systems, and when we emancipate society, we can transform them to serve our needs and aspirations.

Brian Green, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.