

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

NOV'18 (29 to 05 Dec')

Artificial Intelligence: Impact on Humanity

Companies from Silicon Valley to Mumbai are betting on it, venture capitalists pour billions into the research and development and start-ups are created on a daily basis. Our era is the next Industrial Revolution; A.I. is one of its driving forces.

This is the reason why professionals entering the job market today need to know about AI. In its crudest form, AI can be traced back to some of the earliest machines in history. Like abacus, the ancient mathematical tool that has been there for thousands of years, helping us with arithmetic calculations. It has a certain intelligence, which is still applied in the area of brain development and children's education.

Another example of early computing is the Antikythera (from around early 1st century BCE) designed to calculate astronomical positions. Over time, we have strived a lot to create mechanisms that aid human intelligence.

Counter Views:

Debates continue to rage between two schools of thought – one sees AI as some kind of evil force that will annihilate the human race, take away all jobs and another that sees its countless possibilities. Among all this, one pattern is the computer's ability to advance till the day technological singularity will occur.

According to some futurist, scientists and experts AI can reach human levels of intelligence in the next 30 years. We all see AI around us every day as we depend on our smart phones, as we rely on Google for every little piece of information, as few algorithms complete words and sentences for us in WhatsApp messages, as we dry our clothes in intelligent washing machines, visit smart stores or proudly show-off our Alexas. People have actually become the tools of their machines and this is applicable when we view the present conditions.

AI is becoming the area of billion-dollar investments for companies globally. Departments that earlier relied on human intelligence could all be replaced by an AI or super intelligence. We will surely see more workplaces where AI and its use will grow further.

Conclusion:

AI will influence every sphere of life. At the same time, there is doubt about the effectiveness of algorithms and of compassion and politeness that could be fed into the machines. These are few factors that make life in workplace and home worth living. Many AI who are considered sophisticated examples of an AI, still can't understand empathy, compassion or humour. They observe human behaviour and develop their responses to nuances. At the same time we can work on those qualities, which still make us human. So perhaps there is still hope for all of us.

Suggested Reading:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/opinion/artificial-intelligence-human.html>
- <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-dream-of-being-an-ai-powerhouse/article24305644.ece>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/oct/14/the-guardian-view-on-artificial-intelligence-human-learning>