ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: DISRUPTOR OR TRANSFORMER OF 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- An intelligent agent that can take in the environment it is in and maximize a goal (Brent Barron, Director, Public Policy, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research)

- Automation will displace between 400 and 800 million jobs by 2030, requiring as many as 375 million people to switch job categories entirely (McKinsey Global Institute)

- Machines are becoming skilled at learning, speaking, recognizing patterns and making decisions . . . We will not spend hours on library computers researching a question when AI can do it for us in seconds. (Ben Johnson, Adult Services Manager, Council Bluffs Public Library, USA)

- AI technologies will be the most disruptive class of technologies over the next 10 years due to radical computational power, near-endless amounts of data and unprecedented advances in deep neural networks (Mike J. Walker, Research Director, Gartner)

AI ISSUES FOR SOCIETY

- Human bias in data and programming

- Black box for decision-making

- Privacy, consent and appropriate use of data

- Machines become more efficient for jobs with repetitive tasks based upon leveraging large amounts of data

- Humans transition to jobs that require judgment, emotional intelligence and artistic capabilities

- Need to balance economic benefits with social good

AI OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBRARIES

- Libraries can:
  - Leverage expertise in information literacy to help democratize AI technology by supporting AI literacy and transparency/understanding of AI algorithms
  - Continue to be advocates for intellectual freedom, privacy and informed consent
  - Support open source AI technology to balance out the prevailing proprietary technology of Apple, Microsoft, Google, Facebook . . .
  - Help promote the balance between the economic benefit of AI and its impact on society
  - Leverage their own data
  - Not see their futures as being simply an information provider

QUESTIONS:

1. What might our role be in facilitating the conversations and decisions around the ethical use of AI in our communities and society at large?

2. How could libraries use AI to leverage our resources to create new information and provide AI-enhanced services?

3. What should library leaders do to prepare for an AI-enhanced workplace and have library staff become the robot masters instead of risk being replaced by robots?

READING LIST

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