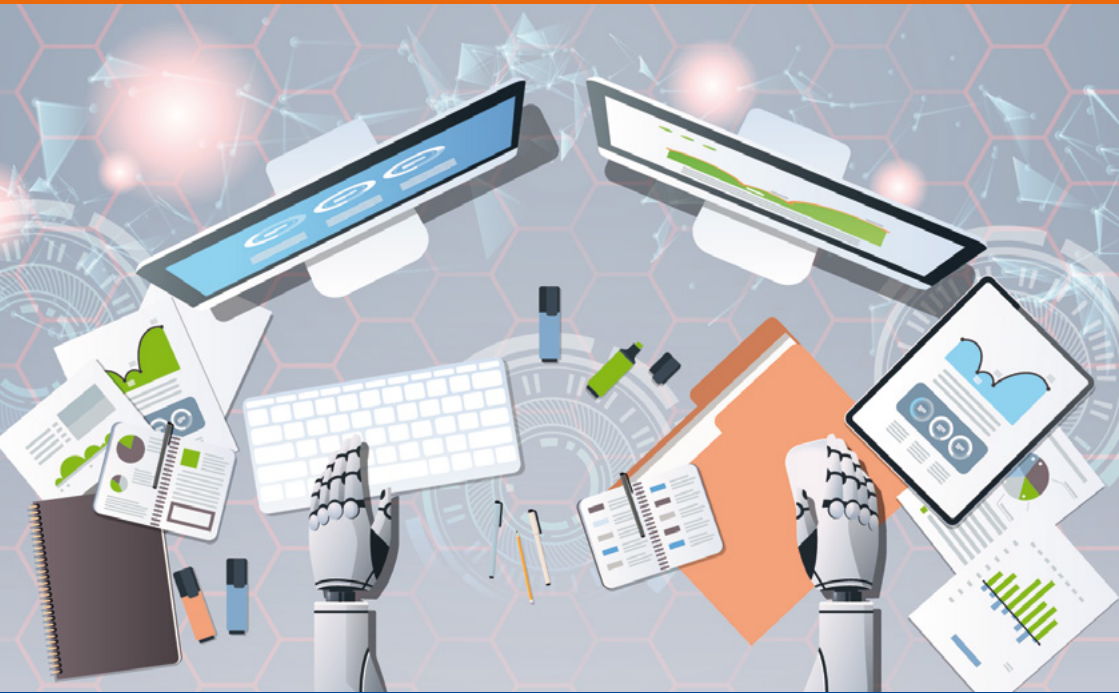


AI and you



De-mystifying artificial intelligence



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The term AI (short for Artificial Intelligence) seems to be on everybody's lips. It is attracting never-before-seen levels of attention from governments, the media and technology companies, and this is making many people nervous about how it might affect our lives.

The fact is that AI has been with us – and affecting our lives in one way or another – for many years, playing its part behind the scenes in many everyday things we do. And as it gets more highly developed, as the name suggests it increases in sophistication and the things it can achieve. Examples are development of a system which helps a paralysed man to walk again, and design of the world's smallest fruit picking device.

What is AI?

Quite simply, AI is technology which enables a computer to carry out tasks based on specified human goals. It does this by searching for and acquiring information and providing a response based on what it finds and/or has learned. This information may be the kind that is freely available to all of us on the internet, or held in, for example, corporate or government databases.

If you use entertainment streaming services, you benefit from AI when the platform suggests tracks or films you may like. If you shop online and receive suggestions about other purchases ... that's AI at work. From social media to satnav, online dating to booking a restaurant, you can be sure that AI will be working behind the scenes to ensure that you get what you want out of the technology, but also that businesses also obtain optimum benefit.

AI has also enabled substantial advances in the healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, finance, oil & gas, communications, health & safety, gaming, marketing, creative and many other sectors.

Should you be worried?

As is the case with many types of technology, a lot of people have misgivings about the future of AI and the negative impact it could have on our lives. Commonplace questions asked every day include: "Will AI take over our jobs?", "Will my privacy be compromised?" and even "Will we develop non-human minds that outnumber humans and take over the world?"

There are also fears that AI is making it easier for cybercriminals to commit fraud. It is true that this could be the case, but so did forged banknotes and stolen cheques.

To balance these fears, we should add that AI is also used extensively in *fighting crime*.

One of the recent advances that has fuelled these fears is the rise of *generative AI*. Now, it's possible for anybody to instruct one of these new platforms to create virtually any type of content or get the answer to any question simply by typing commands into any one of a number of publicly available AI websites. That's whether you're working on something for your professional, personal or student life. This has given many people, at first hand and for the first time, a hint of the power of AI.

In brief, AI is the latest in a long line of technologies designed to improve and streamline the way certain things are done. We should be no more nervous about it than we were about its forbears.

However, as is the case with all technologies, there are aspects we need to be aware of – and sensible precautions we should take – to ensure we can enjoy the many benefits of AI with safety, security and confidence.

- It's easy to become **too reliant** on AI to perform various tasks which should be carried out by yourself. Student essays/ dissertations and creative schoolwork are just two examples (AI could help you to achieve better grades when you are actually not using your own skills, which could mislead until you take exams, enrol on further courses or seek employment).

- The outputs of generative AI platforms are **only as good as the information they have acquired and learned**. It always pays to check other sources for accuracy.

- In common with our advice on many things you do online, we advise you to **not reveal unnecessary personal or otherwise confidential information** about yourself, your family, friends or finances, as this may appear in the results of other users' instructions.
- Also as we always advise, **be respectful**. What you enter into an AI-based or assisted platform stays there and will be used.

- **Always maintain vigilance** for attempts at fraud or identity theft. AI is already being utilised by cybercriminals to impersonate legitimate people or organisations, so ask yourself if a request for money or information seems right.
- Always regard AI as a **tool, rather than a replacement** for your own or others' talents, intelligence or qualities.



Visit www.getsafeonline.org/ai for the facts.

#AI

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