

## NAVIGATING THE AI TRANSFORMATION WITH HUMAN INGENUITY

In his recent erudite reflections on the multifaceted nature of intelligence, memory, curiosity, and perseverance, the Head of School posited that there is much upon which we ought to reflect. Encircled by evermore adroit and dazzling exhibitions of artificial intelligence (AI) proficiency, it is of paramount importance that we remain steadfast in our focus on the fundamental elements that underpin human development. Indeed, as we steel ourselves against the transformative wave of AI that promises to reshape the very fabric of our existence, we are well-advised to recall two additional factors, supplementing those already explored by the Head of School (namely, our intrinsic aptitude for learning, our penchant for creation, our instinctual intuition, our unyielding courage, and our unwavering faith in moments when reason abandons us).

The first consideration, which merits our attention, is the indisputable fact that humankind has confronted the emergence of novel technologies since time immemorial. AI, in its contemporary and highly refined form, signifies merely the latest incarnation of disruptive technology that humans have been ingeniously crafting and assimilating into our existence. As the Head of School illuminated over the course of his part four circulars, it is within the preceding few decades that the trajectory of AI has witnessed an accelerated momentum (especially with advances in the field of electronics from the 1960s onwards). Nevertheless, at its core, AI, or any disruptive technology, presents us with inquiries akin to those we are currently grappling with. An apt analogy would be the advent of the calculator: both innovations represent significant advancements in technology and have the potential to disrupt traditional ways of thinking, working, and problem-solving. They both raise concerns about the impact on human intelligence, skills, and the potential for machines to replace or outperform human abilities in specific domains. Subsequent to its introduction, comparable questions transpired with the inception of the internet, Wikipedia, and the like. Inevitably, we have adapted to these technologies, incorporating their transformative effects into our everyday lives with relative ease. Thus, while the unveiling of generative AI may appear ground-breaking in terms of its ostensibly profound influence, it is simultaneously familiar, as humanity has been persistently crafting and integrating novel technologies into our collective experience for millennia.

The second consideration, which is worth our reflection, concerns our apprehension surrounding the impact of generative AI. If we find ourselves deeply troubled by its potential consequences, one approach is to turn our attention to the aspects that AI cannot supplant. By emphasizing these attributes, as the Head of School has so eloquently done, we derive solace from the indomitable nature of life, the human spirit, and humanity as a whole. Simultaneously, it is equally beneficial to recognize the indispensable role *human agency* occupies in the development of any technology, including AI. AI is conceived, designed, and realized by human beings, individuals who share identical characteristics with us: two arms, two legs, a torso, and a head. Furthermore, those entrusted with the regulation of AI are also human, possessing those same characteristics.

The purpose of highlighting this fundamental yet irrefutable truth is to underscore that, given sufficient determination, we possess the means to direct the evolution of AI according to our collective vision. Admittedly, achieving consensus may be a formidable endeavor, but our recent experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic serve as a testament to the potency of a united human will. Who could have anticipated that the entire world would submit to comprehensive lockdown measures in concert to confront the perceived threat of the virus when—as the Head of School points out—our adversity quotient was tested to the limit? If such extreme actions are feasible, it stands to reason that we, as humans, are similarly capable of delineating with precision the trajectory we wish AI to follow.

Generative AI, while novel and disruptive, is not a divine intervention bestowed upon us by celestial beings residing in a distant realm. It is, rather, the product of *human* ingenuity, born of our efforts in crafting the hardware and software that have catalyzed the development of the current iteration of generative AI that we now employ. If humans are responsible for the conceptualization, programming, and implementation of generative AI, then they are undoubtedly equipped to regulate its development. The paramount question, then, is whether our collective desire is sufficiently resolute. If it is lacking, how can we fortify our determination? The power to define the velocity, direction, and objectives of generative AI ultimately resides in our hands as humankind. The critical challenge before us is whether we are willing to harness that power and shape our own destiny.

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