

Automation Of Thoughts

Artificial Intelligence vsHumanity.....Automations of thoughts all the way

We are evolving by every minute and the last decade has seen a mind-blowing leap in technology, much beyond our imagination and will continue to do so.

One of the reasons behind the newer inventions of our today's world is algorithms. We can almost feel their presence—that somewhere far away, we're interacting with a machine. Many users (approx. 60 percent), according

to the best research, are completely unaware of its existence. But does it really matter to them? The answer is no. Otherwise, we wouldn't have so many people glued to mobile phones.

Going deep into the effects of the algorithm and space it occupies in our lives today, try to imagine one of those earliest computers with its nervously blinking lights and long rows of dials. To tweak the algorithm, the engineers turn the knob, as they continuously try to make small adjustments, here and there, so that the machine performs to their satisfaction. However, there was always something lacking.

But how do the engineers of today know which dial to twist and how much without actually being present all the time? There's a whole discipline created in today's world which was unheard when I was a kid, **data science**, to guide the writing and revision of algorithms. This makes a few individuals control the behavior and experience of thousands of people.

Although, we're in the earliest days of this revolution, of course. But we can see where it's heading.

Imagine, algorithms replicating the process of creativity, then there will be hardly any reason to nurture human creativity. Why would the next generation bother with the tortuous, inefficient process of writing or painting, if a machine can create something seemingly as good and in a painless flash?

The result being, we are having fewer people in manufacturing plants and warehouses now, even though their capacities and production rates are rising.

Again in the near future, we will have lesser and lesser drivers on the road as "cars and trucks begin to drive themselves".

And believe it or not, we will have lesser and lesser last mile delivery jobs as drones start to do them more efficiently and cheaply.

This has been a 'hot potato' in the news in the last couple of years as more and more people are worried and threatened at the thought that in a couple of decades, many jobs will be overtaken by machine , leaving 3/4th of the world's population with no meaningful way to earn a living. Some call it "**Artificial Intelligence**"

But there is another angle and a deeper impact of the above automations which we are missing.

Should we bother about the automation of machines? Does it have any effect on our thought process?

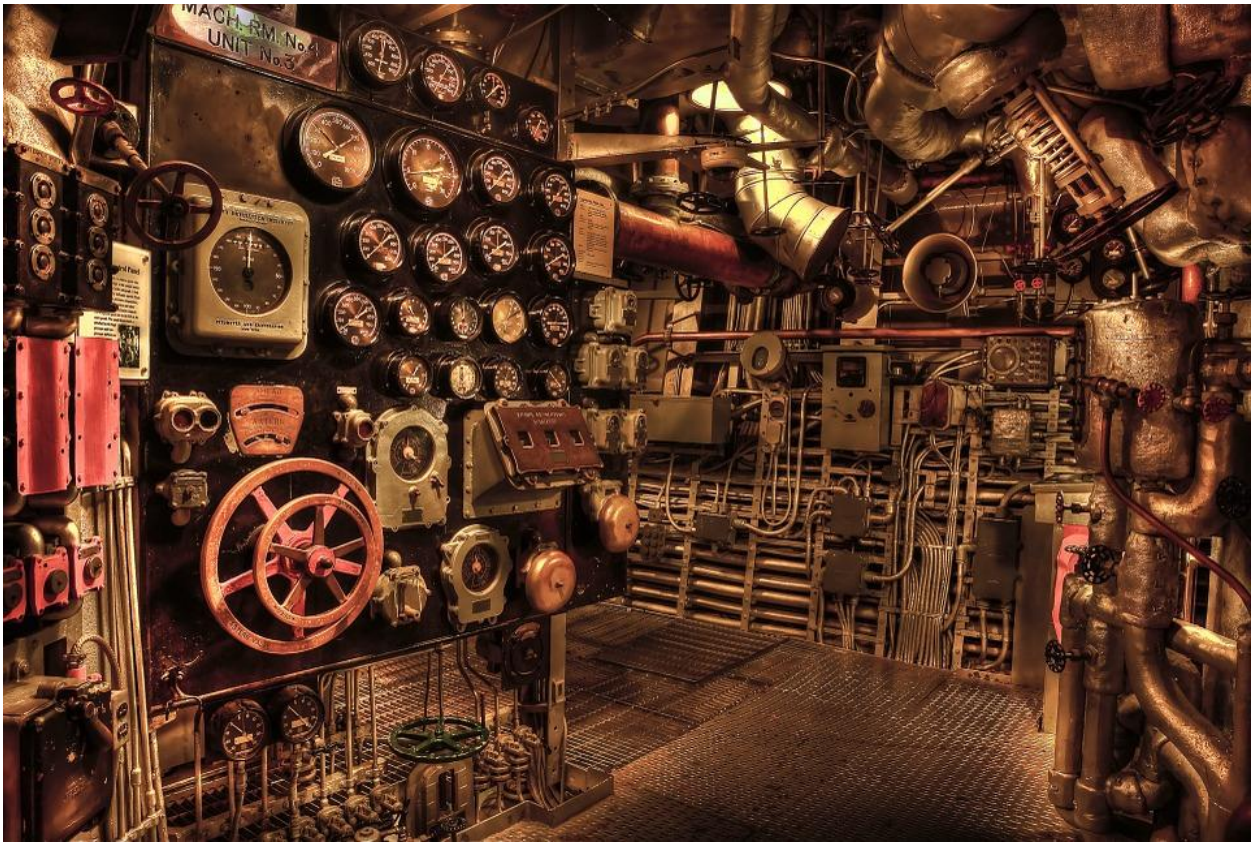
I have already explained the empty space created in the brain from solving arithmetic problems to decision making which is being taken over by the machines.

This has created more scope for automaton of thought which instead of utilizing the human brains' uniqueness and creativity goes into automation of thoughts.

Let me give you an example.
When I was a child, I would go to the library and look among hundreds of books to pick one that I would read for the day. But now, the moment I'm done reading one, I already have a recommendation (which is pretty good by the way) for what I ought to read next. This happens with books I read, the music I listen to, the clothes I buy, the plays and movies I watch, the dates I go on, the food I order, the restaurants I visit, the places I travel to, etc.

Since the early days of my life, I always had an excellent memory (probably still do). I would remember and recollect friend's birthdays and phone numbers. I used to remember a lot of the things like the stories I read and could easily quote from books I read. Now most of them are automated and I do not need to trouble my mind anymore. All I need is an Internet connection.

When I was a kid, I used to be really good with arithmetic calculations (probably still am). I could multiply big numbers in a matter of seconds and could solve difficult math problems without writing down a thing. Now, all that has been automated and I don't need it anymore. All I need is a computing device.



What jobs are best suited for us, who should be our friends, what food we should eat, whom we should date, what we should do on weekends, are all served up to us as recommendations by effective and highly sophisticated engines?

The result being, a lot of our thoughts and our choices have been automated. Well, you might be thinking you are still in control as to which of the recommendations you click on and watch. **Think again!**

A lot of analysis has gone into deciding what choices are presented in what contexts and what positions, so that you are most likely to pick them.

In that sense, you still make a choice, because the algorithms are personalized to cater to your tastes. But that choice is now automated.

The engineering mindset has little patience for the manic obsession of words and images, for the mystique of art, for morality and emotional intelligence. This kind of mindset only views humans as data, components of systems, abstractions. With this kind of cold-blooded thinking, so divorced from the uniqueness and mystery of human life, it's easy to understand for anyone, how long-standing values have suddenly begun to seem like an annoyance—why a term like privacy carries so little weight in the engineer's dictionary, why publishing and journalism seem so imminently disruptive and biased.

So, one thing is absolutely clear that algorithms are meant to erode free will, to alleviate mankind of the burden of choosing, to push them to think in a particular direction.

Algorithms brings in the creator a sense of omnipotence, the condescending belief that our behavior can be altered, without our even being aware of the hand guiding us, in a superior direction. That was always the danger of the engineering mindset, as it moves beyond its roots in building inanimate stuff and begins to design a more perfect social world. We are only the screws and bolts in the grand design. In the coming time, free will and choice will be more and more a theoretical concept.

Our thoughts, choices and consequently our decisions progressively being automated, a few questions need to be addressed as we plunge in this automated world blindly.

1. Why is the brain so gullible to these automations?
2. Are these automations a new phenomenon of the last few decades or they existed?
3. Does our mind have a natural bias to these automations and hence are sitting ducks to these newer algorithms?

Let us try to understand more about automations of thoughts.

Automation is defined as the technique, method, or system of operating or controlling a process by highly automatic means, as by electronic devices, reducing human intervention to a minimum.
To simplify it further it is the method of making a machine, a process, or a system work without being directly controlled by a person.
The drive to provide increased levels of control of electro-mechanical systems, and with it, a corresponding distancing of the human from direct system control has grown out of the belief that automated systems provide superior reliability, improved performance and reduced costs for the performance of many functions.

Similarly, we have the universe and nature around us, working in automation. Let me try to explain this in detail. The planets revolve around the sun and the satellites (the moon revolves around the earth in automation). Although it is not absolute because there are instances where the balance between them changes, what we know as variations in the gravitational force causing storms and cyclones. In physics, **Gravitational force** and the **electromagnetic quantum dynamics** are two principles to explain why the organism and the universe move in automation.

But the majority of the time, the universe tends to move in automation. Similarly,

the life cycles of organisms on planet earth move in automation. Nobody can deny the fact that we are born, then we get young, turn old and finally die. These are the facts which we have to live with every single day of our life. The heart beats every single moment, the breath and the various organs like the liver makes bile or the kidneys making urine, they all move in automation without any voluntary control.

But there are instances when this automation is momentarily disturbed, which changes the balance. So as in an infectious disease or neoplasms or any other disease once the automation is broken, it rewires and starts moving into other automation, only this time it destroys the body rather than being in harmony. We call this a parasitic relationship rather than symbiotic. When we intervene with treatment in the form of medicines or therapy, we break this automation and try to get the body back to harmony or homeostasis.
The fact that the universe and all its beings are moving in automation is now well established. There are subtle moments which change this automation to make them move into new automation. For example comets or meteors changing the path.

Similarly, our brain and its pathways tend to automate. This has resulted in us making those **micro and macro changes** in the brain when we learn to ride a bicycle or a motorbike. Initially, when we learn to ride a bicycle we all have had fallen off balance at some moment. Once we have learned and the brain pathways have become autonomous, we do not necessarily get off balance easily and fall off the bicycle. Even when we are talking to someone while riding we are able to maintain the balance. But during our learning, we need to have maximum awareness and focus on the task, be it learning how to read and write or riding a bicycle. It can be learning how to communicate or the social interactions in early childhood. Our awareness is at its maximum. But once the learning is done, the brain and its pathway set the same task into automation.

Since the ancient history of mankind, reacting to a stressful situation or managing difficult emotions are some of the things has always been understated and not given its due importance. But today in this fast-paced world, managing thoughts and emotions has become one of the most essential skills. Multinational companies are on a lookout for such employees having high emotional quotient who can challenge this automation.

In many cases, automation has provided the desired benefits and has extended system functionality well beyond existing human capabilities. Along with these benefits, however, a certain price has been extracted.

In 1989, a US Air B-737 failed to take-off at New York's LaGuardia Airport, landing in the nearby river (National Transportation Safety Board, 1990). The precipitating cause was an accidental disarming of the autothrottle. Neither the captain nor the first officer monitored the critical flight parameters in order to detect and correct the problem, thus the take-off was not aborted in a timely manner, resulting in the loss of the aircraft and two passengers.

In 1983, a Korean Airlines flight was shot down over the (then) USSR with no survivors. The aircraft was interpreted as hostile when it travelled into Soviet airspace without authorization or radio contact.

In each of these cases, the human operators overseeing the automated systems were unaware of the critical features of the systems they were operating. They were unaware of the state of the automated system and were unaware of the aircraft parameters the automation was responsible for.

The more we are aware of these automations, the more we will realize the horrendous effects of the technology on our minds.
I am not anti-technology by any chance and strongly believe that embracing these advances are a must for a better future. But I also believe that these automations of thoughts are one of the primary reasons behind mental health diseases and are less highlighted in the day to day life. Too much dependence on technology lead to increase automations in our thinking resulting in being driven into a lonely world of machines which can never replace the social need of the human brain.

As we embrace the newer technologies we also need to embrace the old age methods of mindfulness, cultivate empathy and emotional intelligence which seems to be the most prudent solution to the automations created.

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