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Module: Ways of Perceiving (IUMW4006)

Essay Title: The Future Unveiled: Exploring the Transformative Role of AI in Communications and its Implications

How often do you find yourself going on AI platforms to ask a seemingly simple question? Has it crept its way into the crevices of your life as it has for many others living in this technological era? Is AI really taking over the world like the past predicted? Firstly, we need to look at AI and how it works. AI stands for Artificial Intelligence, basically when computers have the ability to think like humans through data programming. Allen (2020) stated that AI can be grouped into two broad categories; handcrafted knowledge, and machine learning. The main difference between these two is that handcrafted knowledge is built on the basis of human-written rules and programs, while machine learning is based completely on learning the patterns shown by analysing existing data.

AI can provide the advantages of longevity, credibility, and cost-effectiveness in addition to eliminating uncertainty and increasing efficiency in problem-solving or decision-making (*Artificial intelligence applications to critical transportation issues*, 2012). According to Aldoseri, Al-Khalifa and Hamouda (2024), AI has the ability to promote innovation and progress worldwide as demonstrated by its revolutionary power, which continues to reshape how we live and work. Almost everything we do these days is powered and assisted by AI, whether we like it or not. AI is continuing to provide influence to sectors such as healthcare, personalized learning, finance, predictive maintenance, transportation route optimization, and precision farming (Aldoseri, Al-Khalifa and Hamouda, 2024). AI also has infiltrated the creative industry with the emergence of AI-generated images, music, videos, and even literature. While the original purposes were probably just to satisfy curiosity, it can become quite harmful when people utilize the services with malicious intent. Someone can just take your face and paste it onto someone else's body and have you speak something you have never spoken before. This can be very dangerous as the AI technology nowadays has become so evolved that distinguishing between real and fake has become such a difficult decision, especially for less technologically competent users like the elderly. As said by Chan-Olmsted (2019), the deep learning neural network is an

advanced type of machine learning that draws inspiration from the architecture and operation of neural networks. Deep learning uses neural network configurations and a vast amount of multi-layered data to train computer models that can learn to execute categorisation tasks from images, text, or voice.

AI is also being used as a companion in trying to navigate through relationships and human connections. Ojo and Afolaranmi (2024) state that the growing usage of AI in applications related to emotional support and mental health is one significant advancement, as people might feel like they prefer confiding about their problems to a robot that can tell you what you want to hear as compared to telling another human being that possesses genuine emotional intelligence. People might feel better when opening up to AI as a result of fear of being judged or fear of not being heard properly, as AI can dive deep into their database to extract information and utilize the ever-evolving sentiment analysis that can help satisfy the user. Ojo and Afolaranmi (2024) also state that intimacy, empathy, and trust are essential components in creating and preserving meaningful human connections. However, is AI really capable of handling these emotions that have such a significant impact on a human being's entire life? Can AI really replace the need for therapists or psychiatrists to cater to people who rely on these professions to help keep themselves present in this world? The main drawback of using AI as an outlet for emotional disturbance is that AI systems are unable to fully participate in genuine, sympathetic conversations since they do not have a thorough comprehension of human emotions and experiences (Ojo and Afolaranmi, 2024), therefore making the empathy being shown to users seem inadequate or insincere. It might help with sudden or brief confusions, but will likely be more damaging for the user in the long run.

Moving on, AI has also influenced the media and marketing industries by improving and speeding up interactions between media, content, audiences, and procedures in addition to reducing the amount of work (Chan-Olmsted, 2019). A lot of companies nowadays utilize AI in their marketing strategies and advertisements in efforts to relate to consumers better. While passive approaches use clickstream data or information on prior transactions, active approaches present concerns directly (Chan-Olmsted, 2019), meaning that the customers' input is being gathered and analysed for future references for the company or brand. AI programming in this

context can actually displace human workers as it is more efficient and cuts down on the company budget for salaries. It is possible that AI-powered robots and machines will take over human jobs that require computational processing in the marketing industry, examples being data or marketing analysts, blog content writers, and advertisement copywriters. Other than that, AI chatbots also have a higher potential of replacing customer service chats as AI can handle common queries by anticipating and analysing previous conversations. Visual advertisements are also being replaced by AI-generated images as an effort to reduce the costs for booking photoshoots with real-life models, photographers, editors—many of them who rely on these jobs to earn a living. Beyond creating competitive advantages, AI can also be used to combine audience and content insights, matching audience interest and relevant content in real-time to deliver customised content and improve the overall user experience. It may also assist media companies in finding new business opportunities (Chan-Olmsted, 2019).

In this fast-paced and career-focused era of globalization, it is important for a person to possess high employability skills in order to maintain their relevancy in the working bubble. AI can also be used as a helpful tool to help with innovation in our very lives. Aldoseri, Al-Khalifa and Hamouda (2024) said that rapid developments in AI technology have changed several industries, generated a wave of innovation, and revolutionised our way of living life, and that innovation and AI should not be seen as competitive but instead collaborative. AI tools can help to relieve humans from doing repetitive tasks, allowing them to be able to concentrate more on strategy, creativity, and emotional intelligence in their busy lives. In a way, AI is revolutionising communication professions through modifying the most valuable competencies, not by eliminating them. To remain employable in this era, people need to adapt to develop alongside AI, not working against it, as those who can successfully combine computer intelligence and human creativity will control the foreseeable future. A study by Aldoseri, Al-Khalifa and Hamouda (2024) points out the possibilities for in-depth future research while shedding light on AI's pivotal role in innovation and digital transformation. They also stated that the development of ethical regulations, privacy issues, and effective organisational processes that take multiple variables into account should be the primary objectives of any future studies that will guarantee the appropriate and responsible usage of AI.

The impact that AI has on ethical and societal implications is a little concerning, meaning we might be killing the Earth as we continue to use AI platforms for the most basic things that you would have discovered if you utilized search engines like Google or Microsoft Edge properly. Ligozat et al. (2022) states that AI has advanced so significantly in the last decade that it is now considered the preferred method for addressing environmental problems, including greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). However, an influx of GHG emissions may happen as a result of significant energy consumption used by AI training models. Other than that, AI also plays a big role in the deterioration of the human brain's thinking capacity. Nowadays, students are highly dependent on AI to help them with school work, which can be a good thing if they know how to utilize the platforms to their advantage. It becomes a problem when students or users mindlessly believe what the AI models tell them, without even applying their critical thinking skills to ensure that the information being spread is trustworthy and genuine or not. Another societal implication is the spread of 'deepfakes' and misinformation that are generated using AI models, which can greatly affect the credibility of content being published online.

In the end, AI is changing how we perceive, generate and interact with meaning itself rather than just altering the means of communication. It can be a useful weapon that can help smart and proficient users to unlock their full potentials, while at the same time can be a very dangerous game of relying too much on computer-based analytics without having any meaning or passion in making your own way through life. AI should be used as a stepping stone or catalyst for developing new technology that will help make our future more liveable and sustainable, and should not be depended on as a constant crutch that deters your mind from evolving and utilising its full potential. An absolutely sure thing that can be concluded is that AI is here to stay, and might be for a long time. Therefore, we should all learn how to adapt to living with these computers for the many years to come.

References

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