

“Chat-GPT is stupid“

At last week's "Researchers Beer" event featuring guest Pascal Kaufmann, the discussion revolved around both human and machine intelligence. Moreover, it delved into why AI should be further developed despite all the concerns.

Barbara Gassler

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a hot topic, began Barbara Haller-Rupf, Managing Director of the hosting Academia Raetica, in her conversation with Pascal Kaufmann, the founder of "Lab42." This research lab was established a year ago in Davos and is dedicated to the exploration of AI. In preparation, Haller had consulted Chat-GPT, the currently hyped AI, about "Researchers Beer Davos" and received a spectacular incorrect answer. This was no surprise to Kaufmann, who simply referred to the system as dumb. "It needs 300 million cat images to learn to recognize a cat. My little son can do that better." Chat-GPT is also already better at intelligence tests than humans. Nevertheless, this kind of AI is solely based on an incredible volume of data. "That's not intelligent." Intelligence comes into the process when there's a need to master a completely new situation. And in that regard, humans are still far ahead of computers. "We have three brains," Kaufmann clarified his statement. One is instinct, where genes take over command without being asked. The second is culture, with its immeasurable wealth of experience that dictates right or wrong behavior. "The third is actually located between our ears and is capable of learning an incredible amount." Intelligence is needed only when none of these available knowledge stores can provide an answer, as defined by the AI pioneer. Programs like Chat-GPT function differently. These "brute-force automations" deliver useful and impressive results but have nothing to do with intelligence. "That's why in <Lab42>, we seek to understand the principles of how the brain functions and, in doing so, create a genuinely intelligent machine." Similarly, once the principles of flight were understood, we were able to build machines superior to bird flight.



Pascal Kaufmann and Babara Haller-Rupf at the recent „Researchers Beer“ event.

Can we achieve human-like intelligence?

This question triggered an animated exchange with the numerous scientists present. Chat-GPT can solve many tasks better than humans, someone pointed out, which Kaufmann confirmed. In an experiment, the program had even outperformed its human counterparts in terms of creativity. This was simply because it could generate many different solutions from the vast pool of information available on the internet. When asked whether human-like intelligence in a machine is possible and desirable, Kaufmann affirmed both questions. "And I very much hope that the breakthrough will be achieved in Switzerland with its ethical rules." Otherwise, it could be a large technology company or an Asian surveillance state with unknown motivation that make the break-through.

Do we want human-like intelligence?

Another participant asked why human-like intelligence would even be desirable. "I don't think that eight billion people will hold hands and sing peacefully in the future," Kaufmann replied. This is not very likely with our "old" brains. "Therefore, we should build on the next best thing. That's AI." Haller then asked, on behalf of many others, how Kaufmann's opinion is about the question: "Can AI be kept under control?" Scientific progress cannot be stopped, Kaufmann explained.

And yes, anyone doing work that follows rules is indeed at risk. Addressing the gathering, he went a step further: "It would be great if a machine could perform such work. That would give you the freedom to do much more interesting things." In his view, it is necessary to relieve people from "dumb" jobs. "Knowledge work," like that of the scientists gathered that evening, is particularly at risk, while manual labor is less vulnerable. "Physical robots are much more difficult to build.

Battle of Values

The possibilities demonstrated by such programs have frightened the scientific community, Kaufmann continued. However, "they are changing the world, and we should welcome them." Haller insisted on an answer to what restrictions should be imposed on these programs. "None," came the surprising response. "I wish it were different, but elsewhere people don't care about values. So we must try to be at the forefront." This was comparable to the former development for nuclear power, someone suggested, and Kaufmann agreed: "Only, it is even more important. Whoever controls this technology is at the forefront." Because working on AI is about values, he reiterated, and added: "That is the first question I would ask a genuinely intelligent machine: How should we humans live together in a peaceful and sustainable way?"