

AI Discussion Forum

Kick off

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Purpose

- The goal is to have a shared forum where concerns/issues/questions about AI can be raised and discussed in an inclusive manner
- This should happen in a constant feedback loop with the other working groups and the main hub meeting
 - I'll present the discussions in the hub meeting, and people are encouraged to join discussions relevant to their working group
- End goal: a report with recommendations on “good”/“ethical”/“however we want to call it” AI use in academia

I started this because I felt it was needed, if you want to help me organise that'd be very appreciated :)

Example discussion topics (from my brain)

- Knowledge transfer, code maintainability and research reproducibility
- Deskilling: the issue with human-in-the-loop, how can we ensure that people become and stay experts?
- Model stagnation, convergence and collapse: if you use AI for academic tasks, how can you alert on model degradation?
- AI ethics (could also be nice to get invited speakers for these):
 - Sustainability
 - Copyright
 - Codes of conduct

Meeting organisation

- It's important that the discussions are structured to keep them productive

How do you structure a discussion?

Time keeping

- I propose we have a (somewhat) strict schedule for every meeting:
 - 5-10 mins introduction of the topic
 - 40-45 mins discussion
 - 10 min summary and choosing the next topic
- It's this final summary that I will present in the hub meetings
 - By composing it during the meeting, we will ensure that the summary accurately represents the discussion and we'll minimise possible editorialising on my part

Discussion roles

- **Discussion leader:** presides over the discussion, making sure it stays on track, and that everybody gets a chance to contribute
- **Topic responsible:** gives the introduction on the meeting's discussion topic, possibly based on preparation materials shared in the meeting announcement (so that people who have the time can read up a bit)
- **Note taker:** takes notes during the meeting that will be used at the end to summarise the discussion. These should not be minutes, but should focus on accurately representing the various arguments being made so that the notes can form the basis for the final summary

Discussion roles — organisation

- The workload for the different roles should be spread out, and whether we can have all three roles also depends on the turnout
- I suggest that the **topic responsible** should be the person who suggested the topic in the first place
- **Discussion leader** and **note taker** can't really take part in the discussion themselves, so their distribution is a little more tricky
 - The fairest way is to rotate the roles, have a schedule and that's it
 - We can also try distributing on a voluntary basis (e.g., if you know you don't have a lot of opinions on a topic, you could volunteer to be discussion leader or note taker)

The topics

- Collaborative document ([link](#)) with list of topics at the start
 - Currently it's filled with a list of topics that I came up with, so feel free to add your own!
 - Working groups can also collectively suggest a topic, and appoint a topic responsible who will give the introduction in the relevant meeting
- We'll collectively decide at what point we have enough material for the report, timeline is flexible

Warmup discussion: what is your favourite instance of AI being used and why?

Very specific wording because “I like using AI to code” is not quite the type of answer I’m looking for here (a little too generic)



My favourite use of AI

- From the comic *On the Way to Meet Mom* (read it)
- Big circle thing looks AI generated to me, either fully generated or pulled through some AI filter (e.g. sharpening)
- Why I like it:
 - In the story, this represents an archive that's so incredibly vast it's beyond human comprehension
 - Using AI to create the visual plays into this, as a human artist drawing it would automatically make it comprehensible

It's using the incomprehensible nature of generative AI as part of the visual narrative

Next meeting's topic?

My suggestion: confirmation bias in AI experimentation (based on a blogpost I read that was a little dramatic but made some interesting points)

Why not have AI take the notes?

- Sustainability: tokens aren't free
- Privacy and data security: our conversations would be shipped off to some datacenter in the US, and personally I don't like being recorded without proper safeguards in place (like external privacy audits)
- But most importantly: **it defeats the purpose of having a note taker**
 - The end product of every discussion is the summary, and creating it in 10 minutes requires efficiency
 - By having someone take notes, we ensure that there is at least one person that has a good overview, which is pretty much a requirement for making a good summary
 - AI notes would need much more extensive scrutiny (because of e.g. verbosity and editorialising), which we simply would not have the time for during the meeting