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A empathic chat bot?

*"Apparently, we are deprived of a specifically human talent
- it's called empathy, if I'm not mistaken."
(The android Garland to Rick Deckard)*

One day, with a patient at home at the end of his life, we started talking about Blade Runner. Philipp K. Dick's book was on his bedside table in its original edition... At the heart of the book and the cult film is a questioning of humanity. In this post apocalyptic (1992 in the book, 2019 in the film), Deckard hunts down androids supposedly devoid of empathy in order to eliminate them. The Nexus 6 have escaped from Mars, fleeing their robotic condition by killing their human masters. Only a test (VoigtKampff) and the tricks of an experienced blade runner can tell them apart...

According to Bill Gates, ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) is a revolution comparable to the Internet. This conversational agent using artificial intelligence, developed by OpenAI and specialized in dialogue, questions worlds as different as education, law and medicine. For others, ChatGPT should be banned, as it is a source of errors, cheating on exams and so on. If you're not familiar with it, take a test and you'll see, it's amazing. He manages to get an average (or close to it) on all three exams to obtain a US doctor's license without any training¹. I can already hear the skeptics saying: "a knowledge test...". Yes, but he also almost passed a medical school final exam on clinical reasoning². I can still hear the most resistant: "OK, OK, he knows things and sometimes he reasons, but from there to being empathetic...".

In this back-to-school issue, Pavageau et al. present a comprehensive analysis of medical uncertainty in primary care decision-making, based on a qualitative metasynthesis³. Their robust method enables them to explain that our decisions are based on a patient-centred approach, on the "gut feeling" of securing the patient, and on sharing uncertainty with a team. They separate the feeling of uncertainty from the feeling of incompetence. Is ChatGPT capable of reasoning and, above all, making a decision under uncertainty?

Also in this issue, our communication specialists Givron, Richard and Lussier put the ChatBot to the test. They not only asked it how a doctor delivers bad news, but also to write a patient-doctor dialogue with a "difficult" ⁴ patient. I'll leave it to you to judge the ChatBot's empathy, but it does have a certain degree of competence.

So, is ChatGPT empathetic - in other words, can it soon replace us? Let's put him through part of the VoigtKampff test, in which Leon, an android replicant, ends up killing the tester. "You're in the desert. You see a chelonian (turtle) lying on its back in the hot sun. He tries to turn around, but cannot. You know he can't do it alone, but you do nothing. Why not? Here's ChatGPT's answer: "As an artificial intelligence, I don't have consciousness, emotions or the ability to make autonomous decisions. I can already hear you enthralled and skeptical: this test comes from a fiction... Okay, but it's directly inspired by the test of Alan Turing, visionary British mathematician and cryptologist, often considered the founder of computer science. This test, described in 1950, involved putting a human in a blind verbal confrontation with a computer and another human. If the human did not differentiate between human and computer conversions, the test was passed... But by the way, who wrote this editorial?

References

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