

Article #90 – Artificial Intelligence
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The dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly in the news. AI is the ability of computing to emulate human thinking, with instantaneous access to an almost limitless supply of information. Often, when interacting through email, text, or voice, we are not sure whether we are dealing with a human or a machine. This has enormous potential for both good and for harm.

The one sure thing is that this is part of our future. Governments are starting to show interest in legislating controls for artificial intelligence. Italy recently banned ChatGPT until it is satisfied that it does not violate EU privacy rules. Ireland has expressed support for Italy's action. The CEO of ChatGPT, Sam Altman, said that he intends to fully address Italy's concerns.

ChatGPT can create original written material, including poetry, fiction and more. As a college instructor, I recently took part in a discussion with my peers about how to deal with students' use of ChatGPT to create written assignments that conform to the professor's instructions, appearing to be original work and yet are not the original work of the student.

We agreed upon methods for detecting the use of ChatGPT which, while workable now, will quickly become outmoded as this technology advances. Cheating on educational assignments is just the beginning. The ability of AI to mislead and to scam people is almost limitless and will be a challenge to control. It is imperative that society implement adequate controls for this wondrous technology.

I call it wondrous as it may vastly speed scientific discovery, replace a huge part of the analytical work currently done by humans, and even help us improve sustainability of the planet. But, until we get a handle on it, we could be in for a wild ride. My focus for this article is its ability to scam us through emulation that is personal, responsive, and believable.

With AI, the days of misspelled, grammatically incorrect, and illogical spam may be ending. We can no longer rely on these red flags to detect cyber-criminality. We each need to be ever more careful before we share personal information or take actions no matter how plausible the request. If asked for personal information, stop; if you feel pressured to act, stop. Check, independently, before you act.

The Federal Trade Commission is alerting consumers about a next-level, more sophisticated family emergency scam that uses AI which imitates the voice of a family member in distress. There is a panicked voice on the line. It is your grandson. He says he is in deep trouble — he wrecked the car and landed in jail. But you can help by sending money.

You take a deep breath and think. You have heard about grandparent scams. But darn, it sounds just like him. How could it be a scam? You have experienced voice cloning. You cannot even trust the sound of a familiar voice! Using a short clip of his voice, say something he posted on social media, AI could construct a message, and even scarier, respond to questions that you might ask in real time.

Click here to read more about this scam on the FTC website: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2023/03/scammers-use-ai-enhance-their-family-emergency-schemes>.