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Welcome to Quinn's AI Update

Issue #19, March 2024

Hello, AI Enthusiasts! And early Happy St. Patrick's Day wishes to you!

Wow—I waited an extra week for this issue of Quinn's AI Update, and it's a doozy!

- Meet Devin—the first AI Software Engineer
- A Big week in AI at UTSA
- Google Gemini Shows Us What Digital Bias Looks Like
- Elon Sues OpenAI
- Can Government Catch Up?
- Fight for \$15 is the Full Employment Act for Robots?

Read on for more!



Image generated with Leonardo.AI and the prompt "A cyborg leprechaun in anime style, standing in a futuristic Irish landscape."

Cognition Labs Announces the First AI Software Engineer

One of the challenges with writing this newsletter is how much AI news there actually is on a daily basis, how world changing it is, and how fast it arrives. Just as I was putting the finishing touches on this newsletter issue, news broke that the world's first AI Software Engineer has been developed.

The AI is called Devin and it's been developed by a company called Cognition Labs. You can see a video of the announcement [here](#) along with a demo. And [here's](#) an article from Bloomberg about the company.

As we'd seen late last year with the closing up of coding schools like CodeUp in San Antonio, I imagine this is going to drop the demand for human coders. And proves Jensen Huang of NVIDIA right: DON'T learn to code. The AIs will do it for you.

Big Week in AI at UTSA

The National Science Foundation (NSF) AI School took place last week at the School of Data Science at UTSA. We had NSF representatives along with AI experts from the UTSA Matrix AI Consortium and from other universities like Rice, Columbia and Duke. Topics included seminars on Federated Learning, neuro-inspired AI design, and Edge AI.

UTSA also hosted an AI Symposium on our Downtown San Antonio Campus for the entire UT System of universities. In addition to keynotes from Dr. Archie L. Holmes, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UT System and Dr. Melissa Vito, Vice Provost for Academic Innovation, UT San Antonio we also heard from Dr. Andy Hines, Futurist & Program Coordinator at the University of Houston's Graduate Program in Foresight and I-Sah Hsieh, Principal Social Innovation Manager, SAS' Data Ethics Practice. Faculty from throughout the UT System shared how they are introducing AI tools in their classes. [Here's the YouTube Channel](#) with recordings of the keynotes.

UTSA has also announced previously it will be standing up a new College within the University that brings AI, cybersecurity, computer science and data science together in one place to advance knowledge. You can see the announcement [here](#).

Google Gemini: Garbage Training = Garbage Performance

So Google launched with much fanfare it's Gemini Generative Art AI to compete with Dalle, Midjourney, Leonardo, etc.

And humans discovered some interesting biases that had been built in.

When asked to draw an image of a German soldier from 1933, it drew a picture of a Black man in a Nazi uniform.

I did Nazi that coming.

Further, when asked to draw a picture of the US Founding Fathers, it included a Black man and an Asian woman. When asked to draw a picture of a happy White family, it refused, offering to draw a picture of a diverse family instead. However, when asked to draw a picture of a happy Black family, it simply went ahead and did it, no hesitation.

It turns out that Gemini had been trained according to DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion) rules. So much so that when you asked for a drawing that would be historically accurate showing only White people, for example, it *added* the word "diverse" to your prompt, *without letting you know*.

You can check out the debacle [here](#).

Google has removed Gemini from public use and apologized for its behavior. Some have even called for the removal of Google's CEO, Sundar Pichai, over the matter.

I for one am glad this happened, however. It gives us a perfect example of how biased training leads to bad results and highlights the importance of working hard to remove bias as we find it in AIs just as we work to remove it in ourselves.

Elon Sues OpenAI

Elon is suing OpenAI, claiming that GPT-4 has reached the threshold of AGI and, by not open-sourcing it, they are in violation of the Founding Agreement that Musk, Altman and the other founders of OpenAI all signed. [Here's an online version](#) of the lawsuit—sorry if Captcha makes you prove you're a human.

In the court documents submitted by Musk, he talks about Artificial General Intelligence or AGI and Q* (Q-Star). You may remember that Q* may have been part of what resulted in the firing of Sam Altman back in November (I covered that back then). No one is completely sure what Q* is, but Musk referencing it in the lawsuit suggests it's pretty important.

Microsoft is of course a partner with OpenAI and has invested billions in the AI startup. And they are already building AI into their products like Bing, Word and Excel.

Some suggest that the contract between OpenAI and Microsoft ends when AGI is reached. It it's already been achieved and Musk can get a court to make that decision, it could get Microsoft's fingers off OpenAI and help to return OpenAI to its nonprofit state and ChatGPT to open source development.

Stay tuned—I'm sure this will get very interesting.

"It does seem weird that something can be a nonprofit open-source [like OpenAI] and somehow transform itself into a for-profit closed source. I mean, this would be like, lets say you funded an organization to save the Amazon rainforest, and instead, they became a lumber company and chopped down the forest and sold it for money."

—Elon Musk, Cofounder OpenAI, commenting on OpenAI's conversion

Deep Dive: Can Government Really Regulate AI?

As much as I think [Dave Shapiro](#) is naively optimistic about how our future with AI will unfold and how things like Universal Basic Income will work, I agree with his take on this: there is nothing going to slow down AI at this point. His take on it is [here](#).

Some have suggested that government should play a role. They point to the "rules" that the EU has rolled out and the executive order that the Biden Administration recently announced.

But I don't think governments yet even understand AI. To be sure, there are those in the military, in the NSA/CIA and other intelligence services, those in other countries' militaries or clandestine services who understand it and probably currently use more powerful AIs than ChatGPT or Claude 3. But the run-of-the-mill congress-person or senator? Capital Hill staffer? Lobbyist? No, I don't think they know much about it or understand the possibilities for good and evil that it represents.

I think government is way behind the curve and will remain there. They can't even develop regulations governing self-driving cars or porn on the Internet. How will they manage to regulate AI?

And AI is not like other technologies—it's not a web page you can opt into or out of. It's not a bomb that requires exotic materials to manufacture, or a disease that requires a Level 4 biohazard lab to conjure up. Soon, it won't even require humans to innovate and improve it, since it will be able to improve itself. There is no one applying brakes to AI—and anyone who does at the moment dooms themselves and their country/culture/company to being left behind. To becoming obsolete.

Bottom line, I don't think that something that moves as slowly as human state government can possibly manage the task.

That leaves us, I think, with having to have non-governmental organizations that provide that regulation in coordination with the AIs themselves. Perhaps something like The Institute for Ethics written about in William Hertling's book [The Last Firewall \(Book 3 of the Singularity Series\)](#) is the answer. Where augmented humans and powerful AIs keep the peace together through a social reputation scoring mechanism of checks and balances. And brute force reserved for the really bad actors.

Unfortunately, I don't see that happening in the short term. There's too much to be gained in a "gold rush" towards AGI—for individuals, corporations and nation states.

I guess there's always the [Butlerian Jihad solution](#), though I'd really like to avoid that one.



Image generated by Leonardo.ai with the prompt "spring lilies popping up through the snow giving the promise of warmer days to come."

Fight for \$15? The Real Minimum Wage is Always Zero

So will AI or inflation put more humans out of work faster?

In California, they've passed a law to raise the minimum wage to \$20 for restaurant workers at chains that have more than 60 locations (Panera Bread excluded).

It turns out \$20 is the tipping point where machine's replacing human labor makes sense. And so the first fully automated restaurant has opened in California. CBS covered it [here](#).

So it seems economist and author Thomas Sowell is right: the actual minimum wage is always zero, because at some point you can always replace humans with automation that doesn't get paid any kind of wage. Or take sick days, or vacation days, call in complaints to HR, etc. You buy the machine and amortize it's cost over time.

Once Artificial General Intelligence is achieved, an AGI will be able to do most white collar jobs (affecting all humans, but women workers more) And once robots arrive, then manual labor jobs go away too.

Recently, [California representative Barbara Lee](#) said during a debate she wants a \$50 minimum wage for individuals and families to be able to afford living in the Bay Area. Imagine the result if she would get her way.

But that eventually leaves us with the question of what will humans do for work? To earn a living? Some think Universal Basic Income (UBI) that aots a basic income for the basic needs of humans would be enacted—paid for by the AIs/robots or the companies that employ them. It's been tried on small scales around the country and each time it has failed. Will it work if administered by AI? No one knows.

Others suggest that humans will find other things to do that we can earn a living doing. Not sure what those things could be, yet. (Maybe the AIs find humans entertaining—so be as entertaining as you can be). But I think raising the minimum wage to a tipping point as they have in California is accelerating us into a future we need more time to get right.

"Over the last 10, 15 years almost everybody who sits on a stage like this would how tell you 'It's vital that your children learn computer science. Everybody should learn how to program.' And in fact it's almost exactly the opposite. Our job [at NVIDIA] is to create computing technology such that nobody has to program computers. And that the programming language is 'human'."

—Jensen Huang, CEO NVIDIA

What Does the Science Fiction Say?

"**Singularity Sky**" is a science fiction novel by Charles Stross, published in 2003. The novel is set in a future where humanity has spread across the stars, governed by the restrictive Eschaton, a god-like AI that emerged from a technological singularity event in Earth's past. The story kicks off when the planet Rochard's World is visited by the Festival, a mysterious and technologically advanced alien civilization (or entity). Unlike any conventional civilization, the Festival operates through a decentralized network of AI and machines, offering the inhabitants of Rochard's World any information or technology they desire, in exchange for "entertainment" - essentially, anything the inhabitants can offer that the Festival finds novel or interesting. Stross uses the alien AI as a narrative device to explore themes of freedom, the nature of intelligence, and the impact of unfettered technological advancement on societal structures. The novel ultimately presents a thought-provoking look at the future of human and AI interaction, emphasizing the transformative potential of technology and the unpredictable nature of post-singularity existences. The book is on Amazon [here](#).

"**The Butlerian Jihad**" is a novel written by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson, set in the Dune universe created by Frank Herbert. This novel is part of the Legends of Dune prequel series and delves into the events leading up to the Butlerian Jihad, a crucial conflict in the Dune saga's backstory. The Jihad represents a universe-spanning war against sentient machines and artificial intelligences, which had come to dominate and oppress humanity. AI serves as the primary antagonist, embodying the existential and philosophical threat that unchecked technological advancement poses to humanity. The struggle against the thinking machines catalyzes a fundamental shift in human society, leading to the prohibition of "thinking machines" in the Dune universe, and the law "Thou Shalt Not Make a Machine in the Image of a Human Mind." You can get the book on Amazon [here](#).

The Smart Money in AI

- [Bezos, Nvidia join OpenAI in funding humanoid robot startup](#)
- [The Virtuous Cycle of AI Investment](#)
- [AI stocks to watch](#)
- [13 AI Stocks for 2024](#)
- [6 of the Best AI ETFs](#)

The Last Word...for now.

Thanks for reading my newsletter—let me know how I can make it even better!
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Let me know what you think!



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