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QUINN'S AI UPDATE

Welcome to Quinn's AI Update

Issue # 22, April 2024

Hello, AI Enthusiasts! And welcome new subscribers! Glad you're here riding the wave!

We're moving at warp speed now with AI. Check it out:

- A New Digital Species?
- AI music with UDIO.ai
- New Robot from Boston Dynamics
- Is It Me or Do These Tech Overlords Seem a Mite too Pollyannish?
- 72% of the way to AGI?
- Where to Look for More AI Info

Read on for more!

A New Digital Species

CEO of Microsoft AI, Mustafa Suleyman gave a TED Talk recently about sitting with his precocious 6-year-old nephew and trying to explain what AI is.

After dragging out the explanation to convey his struggle as an explainer, he comes up with: "AI is a 'new digital species'."

That's an interesting thought to me because creating new species is something that organic life does over long spans of time. From the fossil record, *Australopithecus* evolves into humans and modern chimps. On the way, it also evolved a number of different human species (are we up to 12 now?) like *Homo Erectus*, *Homo Habilis*, and *Neanderthal*. All those species competed against each other for resources. Now we're the last Humans standing.

Suleyman takes it further in the TED Talk to say, ultimately, "AI is Us." Meaning AI, though a new digital species, is an extension of the human race.

My thoughts are: well, the historical record of generating a new species doesn't seem to go very well for the progenitors/ancestors. If the offspring is sufficiently superior, it seems to lead to extinction of the ancestor species. I've looked high and low and I haven't found any *Australopithecus* running around (unless that's what Bigfoot is). So it's not a comforting thought that AI is a new species of us.

Suleyman sees the threat, but he believes that one of the "guardrails" we should erect to keep our "digital offspring" under control is to not allow them the ability to self-replicate and improve. Only humans get to decide when AI's can advance a step further.

I'm not all that comforted by that thought either since I've spent my life living with and learning about humans. Their propensity to find ways to enslave each other, betray each other seems endless.

I also know that if you try to put a human-or-greater-level of intelligence in a box, chain it up somehow, it will spend an awful lot of time finding a way out of the box/chains. As humans we know how to manipulate and fool other humans into doing what we want. I suspect AI will figure out how to do that too and eventually get out of any box we put it in.

What do you think? Are we doomed to create our betters and join the Dodo in the dustbin of history? Do we find a way to live with them? Do they get bored of us and leave for a different dimension? Do we join with them and explore the multiverse together?

You can watch the video of Mustafa Suleyman [here](#). Let me know what you think.

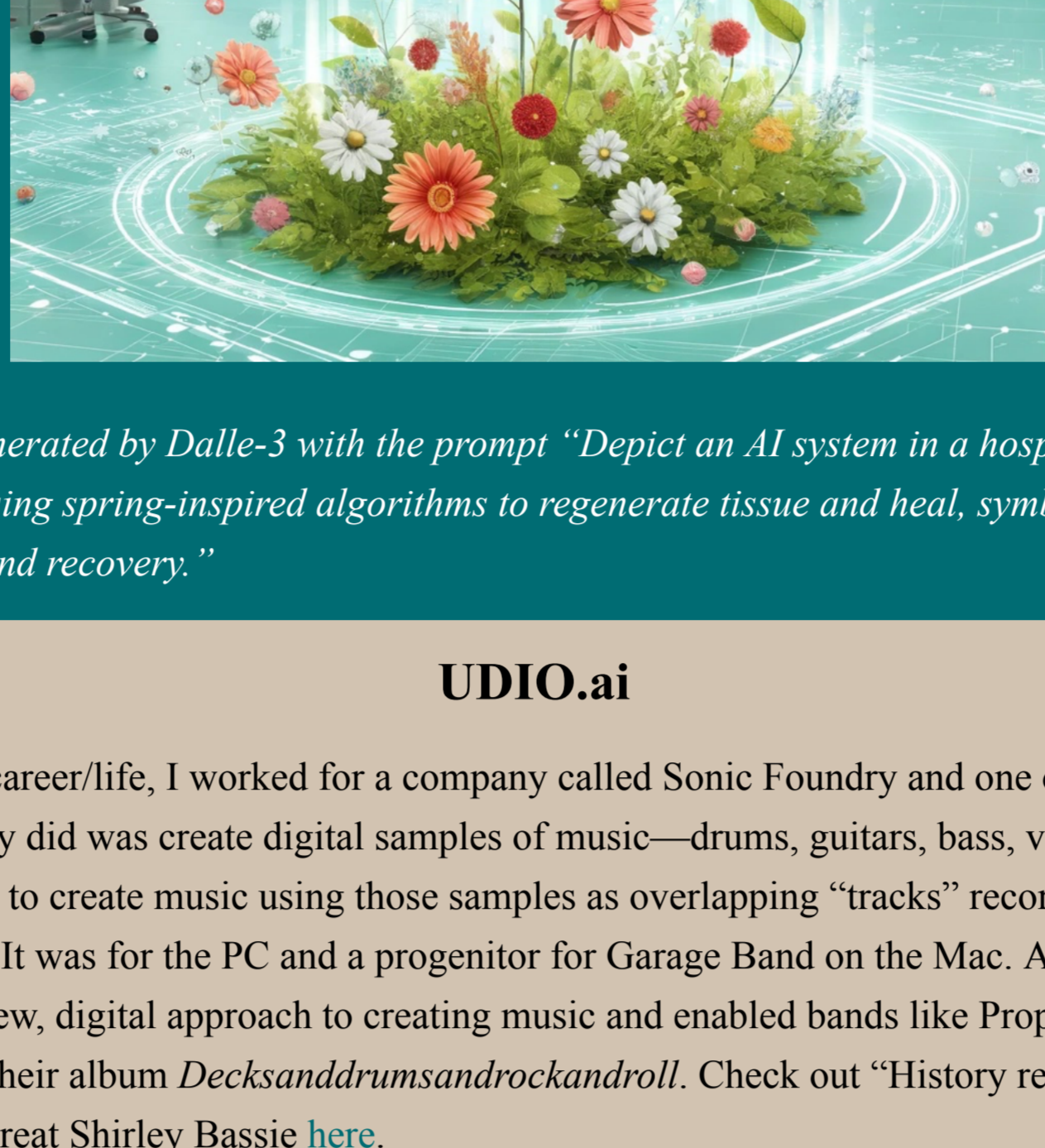


Image generated by DALL-E-3 with the prompt "Depict an AI system in a hospital setting, using spring-inspired algorithms to regenerate tissue and heal, symbolizing renewal and recovery."

UDIO.ai

In a past career/life, I worked for a company called Sonic Foundry and one of the things they did was create digital samples of music—drums, guitars, bass, voices—and allow you to create music using those samples as overlapping "tracks" recorded as an MP3 file. It was for the PC and a progenitor for Garage Band on the Mac. At that time it was a new, digital approach to creating music and enabled bands like Propellerheads to create their album *Decksanddrumsandrockandroll*. Check out "History repeating" with the great Shirley Bassie [here](#).

Now AI is taking that ability to remix acoustic reality to infinity and beyond. Just by describing the music you want to hear, UDIO.ai creates a 32-second sample that (usually) sounds as if made by human musicians.

Not only does it create melodies and harmonies, it can also generate lyrics in alignment with any theme you want. Simply describe the music, say what the song is about, and UDIO.ai creates a 32-second sample. If you like it, you can extend it—either with an intro of 32 seconds, or with more verses and a chorus and then end with an outro.

Check this out: It's called [Dune: the Broadway Musical](#).

I'm partial to progressive rock and roll as performed by bands like Rush, Yes, Pink Floyd and Emerson, Lake and Palmer. It tends towards a fusion of jazz and rock, has lots of time-signature changes, and has philosophic themes about life, the universe and everything.

While UDIO won't accept a prompt that names a particular band, you can have ChatGPT create a description of the band's music, and input that to UDIO.ai. It works amazingly well—one song I've created sounds like early Yes, before the Buggles joined them, and another sounds like later Yes, from the 90215 album.

While I recognize the importance of learning to play an instrument and the struggle to write and make music yourself, I love this new ability enabled by generative AI. Honestly, it's similar to being the DJ and mixing records together to get new creations.

It was also pointed out to me recently that the great movie soundtrack composer, Hans Zimmer, doesn't know how to read or write in musical notation—so is it necessary?

Personally, I look forward to creating the next Rush album—which could never happen in real life with the passing of the great [Neil Peart, RIP](#).

So, 2212 anyone?

Robots, Robots Everywhere—Real Soon Now

Boston Dynamics has been at the robot game for quite some time. You probably remember their dancing dog-like robots and first-gen Atlas humanoid hydraulic robot—you can see them [here](#). Well Atlas first gen has now left the stage to be replaced by the all-electronic new Atlas robot. You can see the video introducing it [here](#).

Of course we now have several competitors to Boston Dynamics, including [Figure](#) and [Tesla](#) and others. And now they are putting AIs into the robots and training them in a simulated environment.

Many have said that the human work that artificial intelligence will take first will be white-collar jobs like those done sitting at a computer. But by the progress being made in robotics, it seems it won't be long until blue-collar, physical labor jobs will be done by robots as well.

In the future, I imagine robots caring for humans in assisted living and those that require continuous nursing care—but taken care of in their own homes. And I imagine the advances we see with robotics will help us in other ways—robot bodies can become prosthetics for failing human parts and extend life and quality of life that way.

So I guess in the same way I've always cheered on athletes using "performance enhancing drugs", since they'll be used to improve my life at some point, I'm cheering on developments in robotics for the same reason.

So, of course: I welcome our new robot overlords.

"Perhaps the most useful thing to the reader of science fiction is that he is not as subject to Future Shock as other people"
—Robert A. Heinlein, Science Fiction Grand Master at 1976 Mid American WorldCon, Kansas City, MO

Pollyannish, Naive or Just Ignorant About Humans?

Peter Diamandis, David Shapiro, Emad Mustaque, Sam Altman—the AI tech Overlords and commentators all seem to predict a bright, cheery future of abundance thanks to AI. There may be some turmoil over the next 10 years as AI and robots take all the jobs, they say. But don't worry, we'll have everything we could ever want including all the food, shelter and clothing we like, all the games we like, and fantastic educations for our children.

A perfect example of this view is the quote I have below from Peter Diamandis—I read that and I wonder if he's ever met any actual humans in his life. I know most of the people I've ever met have been on the right side of the bell curve for IQ and I would not describe any of them as evil—they may be misguided and lazy, but I don't believe that anyone I've ever met has a default setting that is truly evil.

There are Tech Debbie Downers of course, like Eliezer Yudkowsky and even Geoffrey Hinton. But they are more worried about the threat of AI itself and there are not nearly enough of them willing to think things through.

I'm more worried about human nature.

I know that evil people exist, because I know history and I see what's happening in the world around me. Further, I agree with [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn](#) who wrote in the "The Gulag Archipelago", that "the line between good and evil runs down the middle of each of us." The Nazi and German soldiers in WWII were just "following orders" after all.

But some people, it seems to me, actually like oppressing and enslaving other people. It's not the scarcity of things in the world that make them evil. It's their desire to rule other people or, if they can't rule them, set fire to the world and watch it burn.

So I think no matter what technology is coming along, we're still dealing with human nature—in both it's good and its evil sides. I don't think that's changing.

In fact, giving people everything they want, taking away any threats to life and limb and making life too easy isn't good either—consider [The Mouse Utopia Experiments](#). That's where a colony of mice live "abundantly" with no threats, no challenges to their happiness. It leads to aberrant behavior and a sharp demographic drop as the mice stop reproducing.

The experiment has been run many times and each time ends with the colony collapsed and all its members dead. (Some say that western civilization is already a Mouse Utopia—food for thought.)

So to my mind we need to extend the protection of individual human rights into this new future, ensuring it with a kind of new system of "checks and balances." It's not enough to just provide for everyone's material needs and they'll magically straighten themselves out. Estimates are that between 1% and 4% of individuals in any human population exhibit psychopathic traits. We always and everywhere need to do something about the psychopaths.

And we've got to find a way to provide purpose or help people find their own purpose in this future world of abundance. Humans typically find purpose through work. With no work, where's our purpose?

We've got to avoid the Mouse Utopia too.

Almost 3/4 of the way to AGI?

How did this happen? The last time I checked, we were only 52% of the way to AGI in September.

Now Dr. Alan Thompson's updated his "AGI Meter" to 72%.

According to Dr. Thompson, several things have moved the needle, ranging from the launch of Google Claude AI, the embodiment of AI in robots like the Figure robots, and the improved ability of newer AIs to perform on tests.

So AGI in 6 months? 12? Johnny Apples famously claimed on Twitter/X that "AGI had already been achieved somewhere "internally."

So what happens to the AGI meter when we get to 100%?

Start a new meter for "percent to Artificial Super Intelligence"?

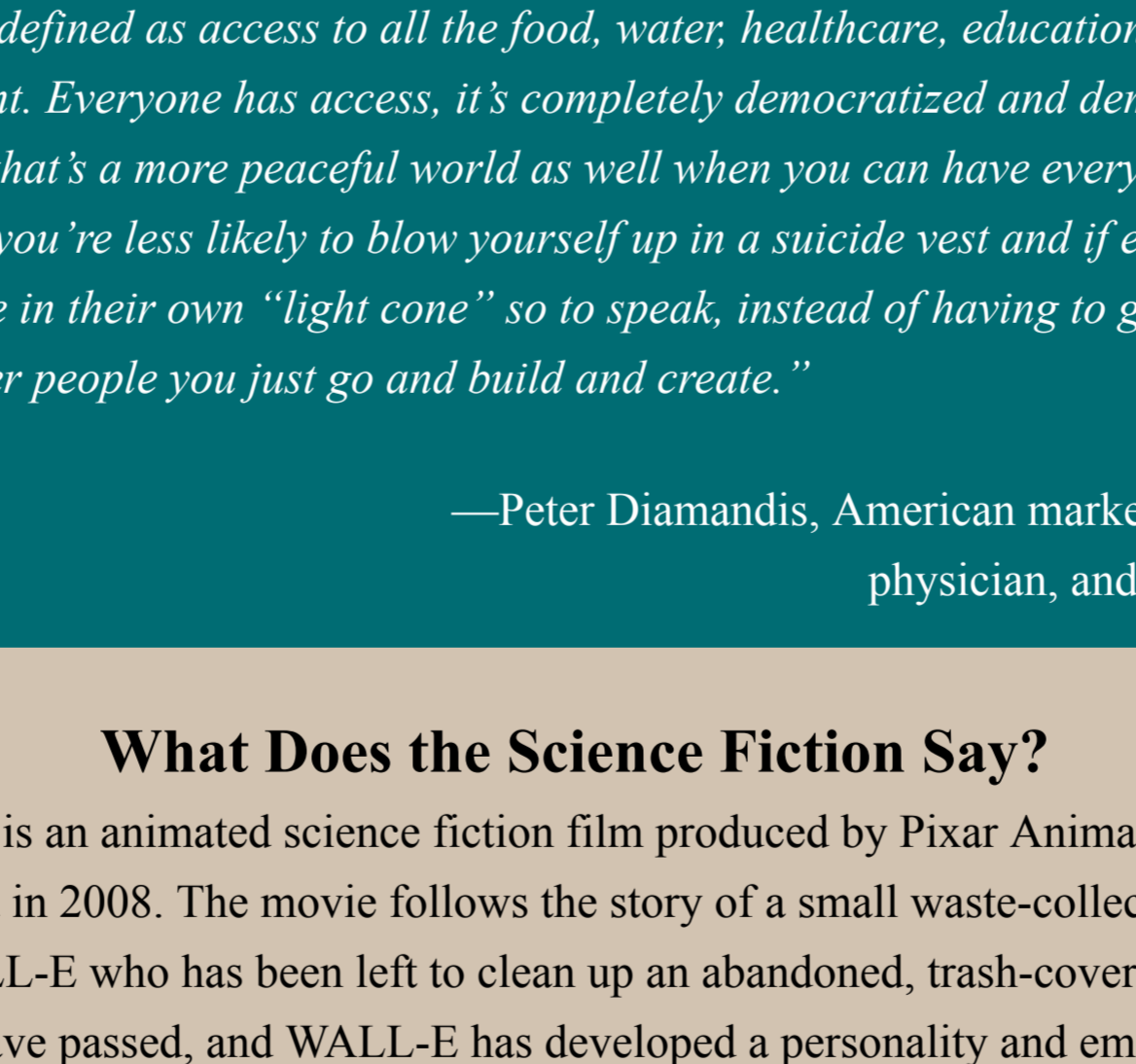


Image generated by Leonardo.ai with the prompt "A grandiose Mont Saint-Michel stands transformed into a magical elven fortress resembling something out of the Dungeons and Dragons universe."

Where to Look for More on AI

As I've pointed out before, the reason I do this newsletter is to help as many people get ready for the AI world that is abirthing as possible. There is no turning back now—just keep moving forward and adapt.

At the same time, I realize this newsletter cannot be all things to all people. That's why there are other newsletters that focus on other aspects of AI. Here are some of the ones I follow regularly:

[Superhuman](#)

[The Rundown](#)

For those with an entrepreneurial bent, there's the [OpenOcean Monthly Newsletter](#).

If videos are more your thing, go to Youtube and check out:

Wes Roth

Peter Diamandis

David Shapiro

The Youtube algorithm will find others for you.

"I've had this conversation with Elon that on the flip side of AGI we do have abundance, defined as access to all the food, water, healthcare, education and energy that you want. Everyone has access, it's completely democratized and demonetized. And I think that's a more peaceful world as well when you can have everything you want...then you're less likely to blow yourself up in a suicide vest and if everyone can be expensive in their own "light cone" so to speak, instead of having to go and oppress other people you just go and build and create."

—Peter Diamandis, American marketer, engineer, physician, and entrepreneur

What Does the Science Fiction Say?

"WALL-E" is an animated science fiction film produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released in 2008. The movie follows the story of a small waste-collecting robot named WALL-E who has been left to clean up an abandoned, trash-covered Earth. Centuries have passed, and WALL-E has developed a personality and emotions from his loneliness and the repetitive nature of his task. WALL-E and other robots in the film display various levels of artificial intelligence, autonomy, and emotional capacity. WALL-E himself shows curiosity, affection, and a desire for companionship, which is evident when he meets EVE, a sleek reconnaissance robot sent to Earth on a mission. "WALL-E" explores the potential of AI to both nurture and control, presenting a future where robots can possess emotional depth and moral dilemmas, and where human reliance on technology has profound implications for autonomy and purpose. "WALL-E" can be streamed on Disney+.

"**The Day the Earth Stood Still**" is a 1951 science fiction film directed by Robert Wise that explores themes of peace and the potential consequences of unchecked military aggression. The story begins with the arrival of an alien named Klaatu and his powerful robot, Gort, in Washington, D.C., where they land their spacecraft to deliver an important message to Earth's leaders: cease violent behavior or face destruction as a threat to other planets. Gort, a large, humanoid robot serves as Klaatu's protector. Gort is equipped with advanced technology that allows him to emit destructive beams of energy from his visor, which he uses to neutralize threats. Throughout the film, Gort demonstrates significant autonomous capabilities, being able to act based on predefined commands and to make decisions in real-time to protect Klaatu and himself. One of the key moments in the movie illustrating Gort's AI capability occurs when Klaatu is mortally wounded, and, upon uttering the phrase "Klaatu barada nikto," Gort refrains from destroying Earth and instead retrieves Klaatu's body, reviving him temporarily using the spacecraft's advanced technology. The movie remains a seminal work for its use of science fiction to address real-world issues and its early portrayal of AI as both protector and potential destroyer. "**The Day the Earth Stood Still**" can be streamed on Amazon Prime.

The Smart Money in AI

- [Microsoft Expands Its AI Empire Abroad](#)
- [Alphabet and Microsoft Show Secret to AI Investments: Rich Profits](#)
- [SoftBank will reportedly invest nearly \\$1 billion in AI push, tapping Nvidia's chips](#)
- [Big Tech keeps spending billions on AI. There's no end in sight.](#)
- [Vietnam's FPT to invest \\$200 mln in AI factory using Nvidia chips](#)

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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