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# AI in an Internet of Uncertainty

For over a century now, doomsayers have been prophesying the rise of technology, the downfall of humanity, etc. Many modern activists pose the same future against the rise of AI while completely glancing over the real danger. At least for the moment, AI is not a threat to the existence of humanity, but the existence of the internet. By centralizing, augmenting, and plagiarizing information, modern AI tools are pulling the internet out from its roots.

# Internet of the Few

Artificial intelligence is another tool used in the dangerous trend of internet centralization. Nowadays, instead of localized news websites, one gets their news from massive news networks or Facebook pages. Instead of private blogs hosted by home computers, writers flock to Medium and other such websites. Twitter and Reddit recently killed off third-party apps, finalizing their own centralization.

> "Most of the Internet's traffic now flows through the networks of a few large companies rather than a multitude of small transit providers" ([Public Discourse](#)[1]).

Reflecting back on his work,

> "Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey [said recently](#) that 'centralizing discovery and identity into corporations' has 'really damaged the internet,' adding that he is 'partially to blame' for the shift" ([Lifewire](#)[2]).

Dorsey recognizes, as many others have, that the centralization of these services has killed smaller outlets that can't keep up. Centralization has trained consumers to never look past a YouTube search when looking for a tutorial. When was the last time you checked the second page of a Google search? Small sites are buried under the immense user bases of larger ones. This creates a trained behavior among consumers, a culture of easy information. Nobody goes searching out primary sources when it's just so easy to read the Google description.

Of course, there are benefits to a centralized internet. YouTube is the only company that can host internet video for free, no independent website can

manage that. Finding communities online has also become easier with centralization (for the good and bad that provides).

However, the big problem with this arrangement is compensation to the independent websites. If no one leaves google.com, then the websites Google feeds off of to provide their information can't serve ads to viewers and they lose this revenue stream. The internet as it stands is already in this death spiral: <u>less views</u> on primary sources leads to <u>less revenue</u> for those sources, which leads to <u>less primary source information</u> published, which leads to <u>less views</u> (and repeat).

Centralization of the internet is shutting down websites left and right as users then migrate to the big platforms. Needless to say, customer privacy has never been a priority for these platforms. Among freedom of speech concerns and many other alarming issues, large platforms cannot be trusted to own the whole internet.

In the modern day, on top of the rapid deterioration of the internet in this aforementioned death spiral, AI is a slap in the face for independent websites. With AI integrated into Google search, even fewer people ever have to open a website. Most consumers take Google's word for it, never check a primary source, and continue to not support those sources financially.

There is only so much damage the open web can take, and AI may be a final blow. As more and more consumers choose AI chatbots over reading articles, independent publishers are becoming a dying breed.

# "2+2=5"

Generative AI gets it wrong… a lot. Everyone's heard the horror stories of how Bing Chat hallucinated just a year ago, but the general public now seems fine with AI built right into Google. LLMs have indeed grown rapidly over the past year, but these issues persist. Hallucinations are inherent to generative AI. While in an AI picture, this might be seen as creative license, in language, this translates to Google advising its users that "eating at least one small rock per day[3]" is a healthy snack option. At least one man committed suicide[4] because Bing Chat told him to. These mistakes can cause real harm to real people.

Skipping past the death of independent sources, to an internet run by chatbots, how is new information found? Chatbots don't create information, they just summarize existing articles. By definition, an LLM is a word predictor; it has no creativity, it only guesses what word comes next in a sentence.

The prevalence of AI chatbots on the internet is a real threat to how the world gets its information, and companies know this. While most are swept up in the AI arms race, some worried individuals have stepped aside and tried to warn the world. Back in 2023, Elon Musk, along with many other prominent tech investors, engineers, and CEOs asked the world's governments to regulate their industry, in perhaps a global first. Tech companies were so scared of their own power that they were actively welcoming regulation in the AI world.

> "Elon Musk said on Wednesday an inaugural AI Safety Summit in Britain wanted to establish a 'third-party referee' that could oversee companies developing artificial intelligence and sound the alarm if they have concerns.

'What we're really aiming for here is to establish a framework for insight so that there's at least a third-party referee, an independent referee, that can observe what leading AI companies are doing and at least sound the alarm if they have concerns,' the billionaire entrepreneur told reporters at Bletchley Park, central England" (Reuters[5]).

However, governments were slow and no regulation emerged for a very long time (only now is the EU getting involved). Come 2024, Elon Musk and similar "tech bros" have dropped any concern about AI and are locked in the arms race. Musk founded his second AI company (xAI) in May of 2024.

Is that it? Is this the end of the internet as we know it? Luckily, not yet. The death spiral of independent media, the rise of AI chatbots, this all only happens if consumers accept it. If consumers don't use Chat GPT, then companies will stop building their own versions. If consumers visit independent websites once in a while, their businesses can stay afloat. Consumers have a voice, they can choose which companies to financially support and which industries to back. One saying sums up today's crossroads: **vote with your wallet**.

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