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Associazione italiana per la promozione della scienza aperta

AI and the destruction of knowledge

Daniela Tafani

November 6th, 2025



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AI slop and the destruction of knowledge

AUGUST 12, 2025

IRIS VAN ROOIJ

This week I was looking for info on what cognitive scientists mean when they speak of ‘domain-general’ cognition. I was curious, because the nuances are relevant for something I am researching at the moment. To my surprise and dismay, I hit upon [this](#) ScienceDirect page that ‘defined’ the concept as follows:

Domain-General Cognitive Ability

In subject area: [Psychology](#)

Domain-general cognitive abilities refer to cognitive skills that are not unique to humans but are present across various primate species and potentially other mammals and birds, indicating a general factor underlying cognitive performance that correlates with brain size and is associated with selective attention and working memory capacity.

AI generated definition based on: [Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 2012](#)

I thought, Huh?! This is definitely *not* how we — cognitive scientists — use that term. Then I saw the last sentence, “AI-generated definition”, and I realised what went wrong. This was AI slop. Not only that. It was AI slop on *ScienceDirect*, a “*premier platform* for scientific, health and technical literature” (emphasis in [original](#)).

We must protect and cultivate the ecosystem of human knowledge. AI models can mimic the appearance of scholarly work, but they are (by construction) unconcerned with truth—the result is a torrential outpouring of unchecked but convincing-sounding “information”. At best, such output is accidentally true, but generally citationless, divorced from human reasoning and the web of scholarship that it steals from. At worst, it is confidently wrong. Both outcomes are dangerous to the ecosystem. — [Guest, van Rooij et al. \(2025\)](#)

«Artificial intelligence»

So-called 'artificial intelligence' is simply software - usually proprietary - that runs on computers.

‘Artificial intelligence’

1. is a marketing term;
2. stands for a family of scams;
3. is a social, cultural and political project*.

Marketing and scams serve the political agenda of the military–industrial complex, which involves presenting surveillance software as 'AI'

- for the purposes of discipline, manipulation and control;
- for the purposes of automation -that is, the replacement of labor with capital- to achieve a further shift of wealth from the bottom to the top.

When ‘AI’ causes harms, it is usually not technology out of control, but

- a) software that does exactly what it is programmed to do (e.g., punishing the poor and automating the status quo)
- b) technology that simply does not work because it cannot work (e.g., emotion recognition).

Science as a public process and pseudoscience as a private process

Science is a public process.












Machine learning-based pseudoscience can be described as a private process:

- proprietary systems;
- training data that is not made public;
- opaquely selected correlations that rise to causation;
- lack of subject-matter expertise and methodological training (e.g., ML systems trained to ‘predict’ the judgement of the labelers);
- obsession with quantification: theory-free and value-free ideals;
- illusion of knowledge without understanding.

Universities are complicit, as they act

- **as edtech brokers**, promoting deskilling products that do not work and trapping students and researchers in proprietary infrastructures;
- **as corporate megaphones**, propagating narratives that protect the business model of Big Tech. These narratives include myths of inevitability, the idea that there is a legal vacuum, technological exceptionalism, solutionism, anthropomorphisation, dehumanisation and the use of ethics as a fig leaf and decoy.

Against the Uncritical Adoption of 'AI' Technologies in Academia

Guest, Olivia ; Suarez, Marcela ; Müller, Barbara ; van Meerkerk, Edwin ; Oude Groote Beverborg, Arnoud ;
de Haan, Ronald ; Reyes Elizondo, Andrea ; Blokpoel, Mark ; Scharfenberg, Natalia ; Kleinherenbrink, Annelies ;
Camerino, Ileana ; Woensdregt, Marieke ; Monett, Dagmar ; Brown, Jed ; Avraamidou, Lucy ;
Alenda-Demoutiez, Juliette ; Hermans, Felienne ; van Rooij, Iris 

The technology industry is taking advantage of us, sometimes even speaking through us, to convince our students that these AI technologies are useful (or necessary) and not harmful.

Therefore, we argue that university leaders and administrators must act to help us collectively turn back the tide of garbage software, which fuels harmful tropes (e.g. so-called lazy students) and false frames (e.g. so-called efficiency or inevitability) to obtain market penetration and increase technological dependency.

When it comes to the AI technology industry, we refuse their frames, reject their addictive and brittle technology, and demand that the sanctity of the university both as an institution and a set of values be restored.

If we cannot even in principle be free from external manipulation and anti-scientific claims — and instead remain passive by default and welcome corrosive industry frames into our computer systems, our scientific literature, and our classrooms — then we have failed as scientists and as educators.

OpenAI, Nvidia Fuel \$1 Trillion AI Market With Web of Circular Deals

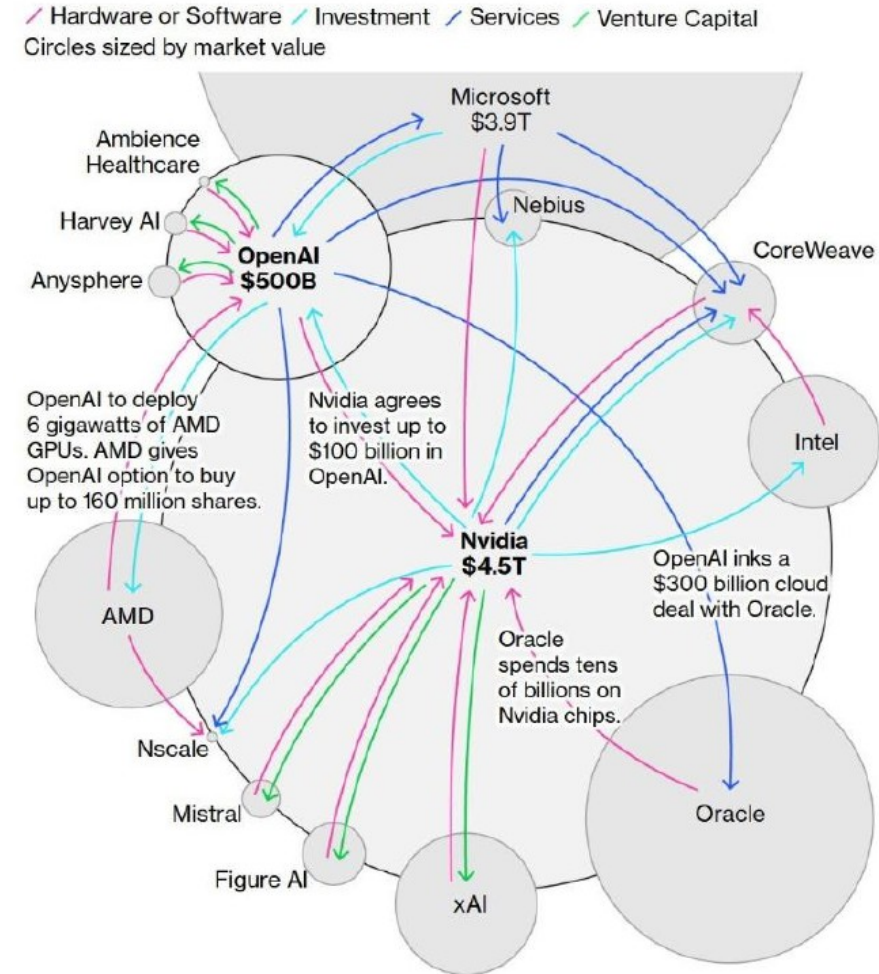
A wave of deals and partnerships are escalating concerns that the trillion-dollar AI boom is being propped up by interconnected business transactions.

By Emily Forgash and Agnee Ghosh

October 7, 2025 at 10:00 PM GMT+2

Updated on October 8, 2025 at 3:51 PM GMT+2

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2025-10-07/openai-s-nvidia-amd-deals-boost-1-trillion-ai-boom-with-circular-deals>



Source: Bloomberg News reporting

How Big Tech and Silicon Valley are Transforming the Military-Industrial Complex

Report Author: Roberto J. González, San José State University

Over the past decade, the center of America's military-industrial complex has been slowly shifting from the Capital Beltway to Silicon Valley.

COSTS OF WAR

From 2021 through 2023, venture capital firms reportedly pumped nearly \$100 billion into defense tech startup companies — an amount 40 percent higher than the previous seven years combined. This report examines how Silicon Valley startups, big tech, and venture capital which benefit from classified Defense contracts will create costly, high-tech defense products that are ineffective, unpredictable, and unsafe — all on the American taxpayer's dime.



<https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2024/SiliconValley>



“Repression of Palestinians has become progressively automated, with tech companies providing dual-use infrastructure to integrate mass data collection and surveillance, while profiting from the unique testing ground for military technology offered by the occupied Palestinian territory.

Fuelled by United States tech giants establishing subsidiaries and research and development centres in Israel, claims by Israel of security needs have spurred unparalleled developments in carceral and surveillance services, from closed-circuit television (CCTV) networks, biometric surveillance, advanced tech checkpoint networks, “smart walls” and drone surveillance to cloud computing, artificial intelligence and data analytics supporting on-the-ground military personnel.”

The reanimation of pseudoscience in machine learning and its ethical repercussions

Mel Andrews^{1,2}, Andrew Smart³  , Abeba Birhane^{4,5}

The bigger picture

Machine learning has a pseudoscience problem. An abundance of ethical issues arising from the use of machine learning (ML)-based technologies—by now, well documented—is inextricably entwined with the systematic epistemic misuse of these tools. We take a recent resurgence of deep learning-assisted physiognomic research as a case study in the relationship between ML-based pseudoscience and attendant social harms—the standard purview of “AI ethics.” In practice, the epistemic and ethical dimensions of ML misuse often arise from shared underlying reasons and are resolvable by the same pathways. Recent use of ML toward the ends of predicting protected attributes from photographs highlights the need for philosophical, historical, and domain-specific perspectives of particular sciences in the prevention and remediation of misused ML.

Summary

The present perspective outlines how epistemically baseless and ethically pernicious paradigms are recycled back into the scientific literature via machine learning (ML) and explores connections between these two dimensions of failure. We hold up the renewed emergence of physiognomic methods, facilitated by ML, as a case study in the harmful repercussions of ML-laundered junk science. A summary and analysis of several such studies is delivered, with attention to the means by which unsound research lends itself to social harms. We explore some of the many factors contributing to poor practice in applied ML. In conclusion, we offer resources for research best practices to developers and practitioners.

Could AI slow science?

Confronting the production-progress paradox



SAYASH KAPOOR AND ARVIND NARAYANAN

JUL 16, 2025

Production is easy to measure, and progress is hard to measure. So universities and other scientific institutions judge researchers based on measurable criteria such as how many papers they publish and the amount of grant funding they receive. It is not uncommon for scientists to have to publish a certain number of peer-reviewed papers to be hired or to get tenure (either due to implicit norms or explicit requirements).

The emphasis on production metrics seems to be worsening over time. Physics Nobel winner Peter Higgs famously **noted** that he wouldn't even have been able to get a job in modern academia because he wouldn't be considered productive enough.

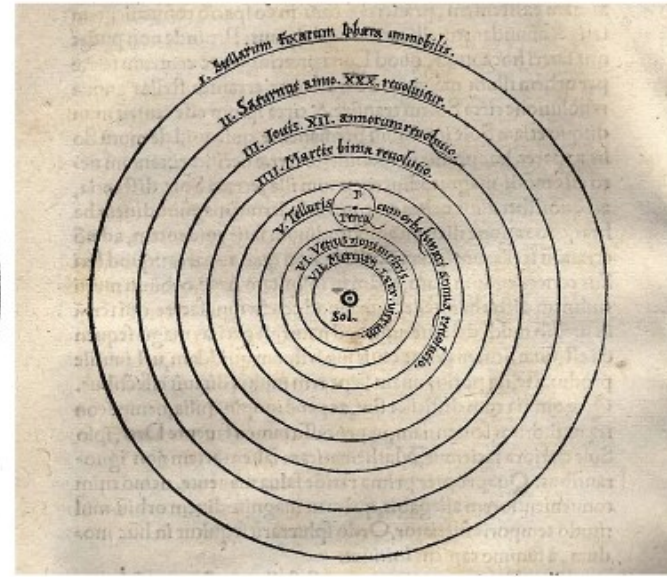
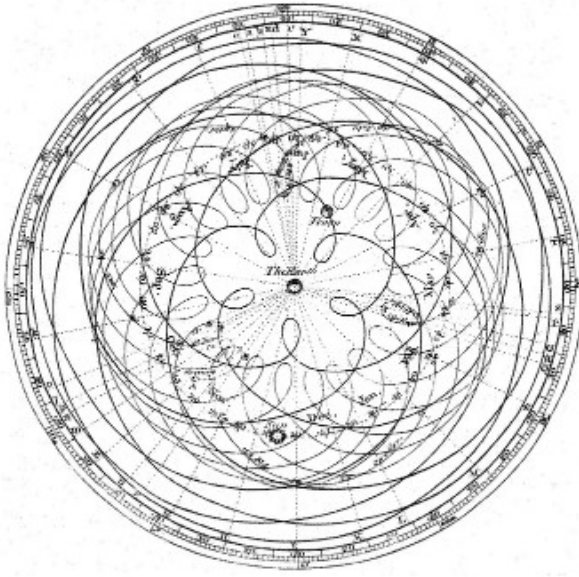
So individual researchers' careers might be better off if they are **risk averse**, but it might reduce the collective rate of progress. Rzhetsky et al. find **evidence** of this phenomenon in biomedicine, where experiments tend to focus too much on experimenting with known molecules that are *already* considered important (which would be more likely to lead to publishing a paper) rather than more risky experiments that could lead to genuine breakthroughs. Worryingly, they find this phenomenon worsening over time.

AI AS NORMAL TECHNOLOGY

This completes the feedback loop: career incentives lead to researchers publishing more papers, and disincentivize novel research that results in true breakthroughs (but might only result in a single paper after years of work).

If slower progress is indeed being caused by faster production, how will AI impact it? Most obviously, automating parts of the scientific process will make it even easier for scientists to chase meaningless productivity metrics. AI could make individual researchers more creative but decrease the **creativity** of the collective because of a **homogenizing effect**. AI could also exacerbate the inequality of attention and make it even harder for new ideas to break through. Existing search technology, such as **Google Scholar**, seems to be having exactly this effect.

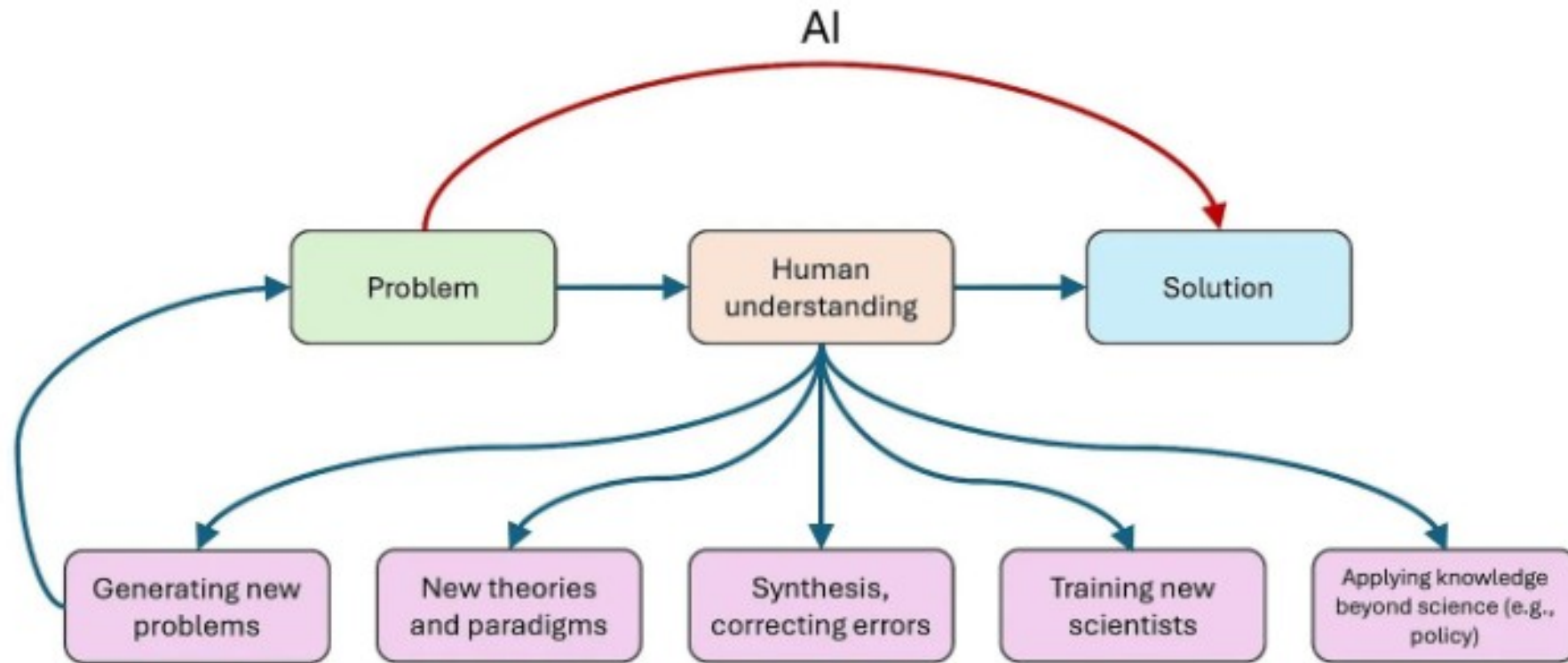
To recap, so far we've argued that if the slowdown in science is caused by overproduction, AI will make it worse. In the next few sections, we'll discuss why AI could worsen the slowdown regardless of what's causing it.



Left: The geocentric model of the Universe eventually became extremely complex due to the large number of epicycles. Right: The heliocentric model was far simpler.

How was the geocentric model of the Universe overturned in favor of the heliocentric model – the model with the planets revolving around the Sun? It couldn't be resolved by comparing the accuracy of the two models, since the accuracy of the models was similar. Rather, it was because the heliocentric model offered a far simpler explanation for the motion of planets. In other words, advancing from geocentrism to heliocentrism required a *theoretical* advance, rather than simply relying on the more accurate model.

This example shows that scientific progress depends on advances in *theory*. No amount of improvements in predictive accuracy could get us to the heliocentric model of the world without updating the theory of how planets move.



AI could short circuit the process of building human understanding, which is essential to scientific progress

Leakage and the Reproducibility Crisis in ML-based Science

We argue that there is a reproducibility crisis in ML-based science. We compile evidence of this crisis across fields, identify data leakage as a pervasive cause of reproducibility failures, conduct our own reproducibility investigations using in-depth code-review, and propose a solution.



Paper (Patterns, 2023)

REFORMS checklist

Highlights

- Data leakage is a flaw in machine learning that leads to overoptimistic results
- Our survey of prior reviews shows leakage affects 294 papers across 17 scientific fields
- We provide a taxonomy of leakage and introduce model info sheets to mitigate it
- We show how leakage can lead to overoptimism with a case study on civil war prediction

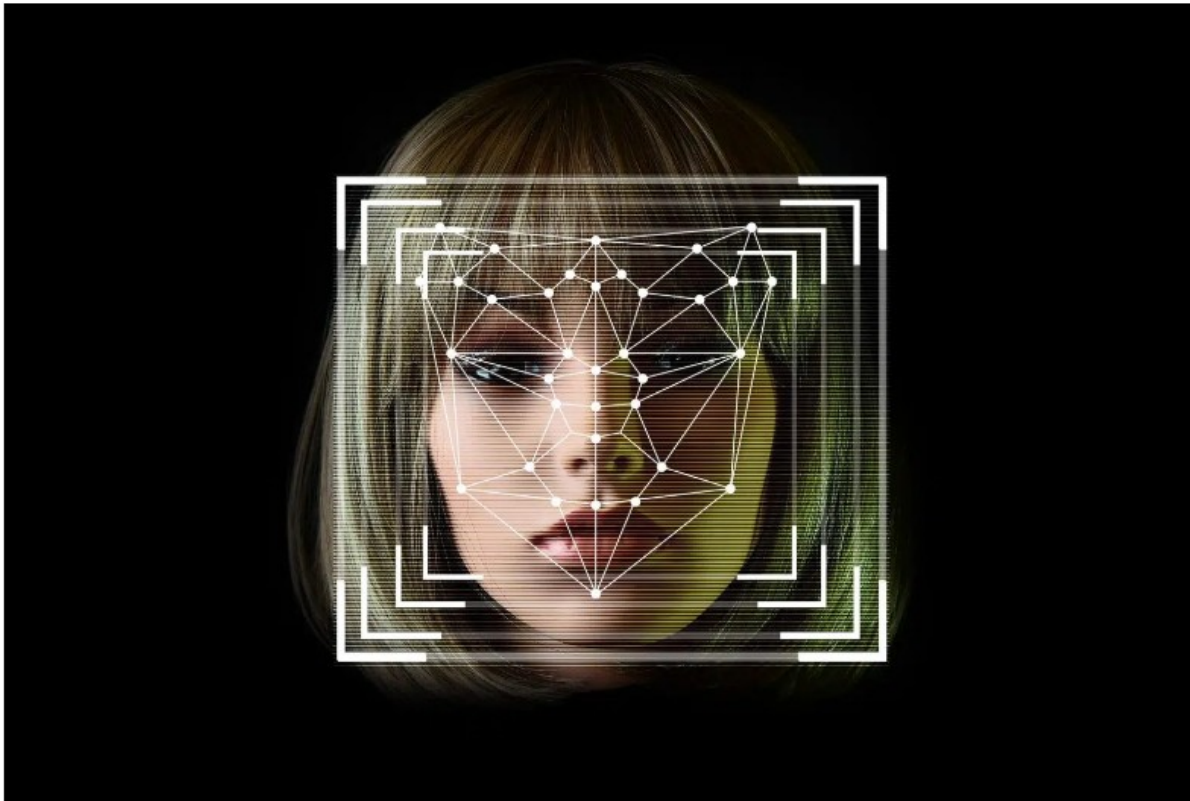
1. Lack of clean separation of training and test set: If the training dataset is not separated from the test dataset during all pre-processing, modeling and evaluation steps, the model has access to information in the test set before its performance is evaluated.

2. Model uses features which are not legitimate: The model has access to features that should not be legitimately available for use in the modeling exercise, for instance if they are a proxy for the outcome variable.

3. Test set is not drawn from the distribution of interest: The distribution of data on which the performance of an ML model is evaluated differs from the distribution of data about which the scientific claims are made.

Is your face gay? Conservative? Criminal? AI researchers are asking the wrong questions

By Trenton W. Ford | May 20, 2022



An illustration of facial recognition. Credit: Gerd Altmann/Pixabay.

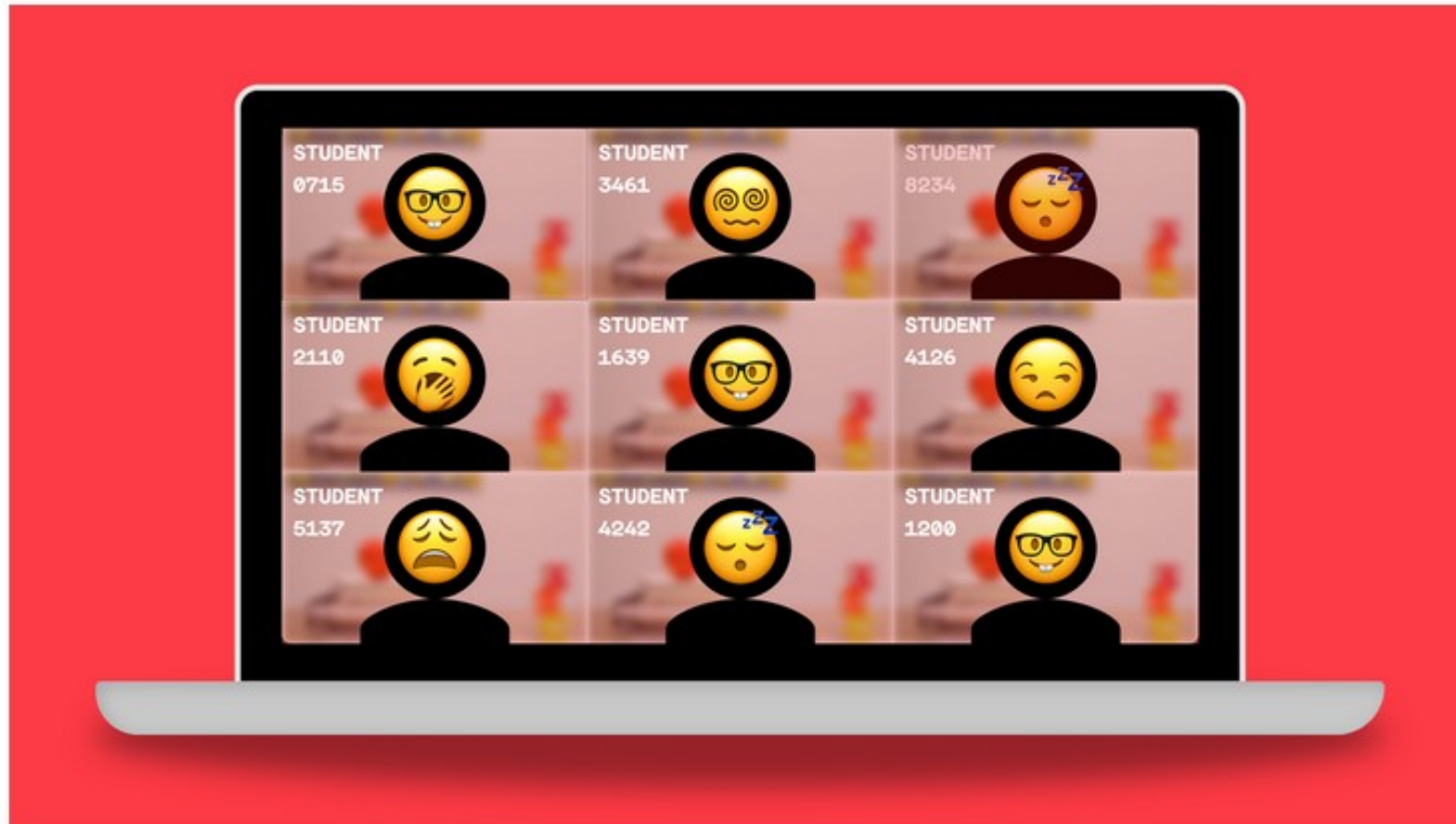


Trenton W. Ford

Trenton W. Ford is a doctoral candidate in computer science at the University of Notre Dame. His research focuses on misinformation and... [Read More](#)

Intel calls its AI that detects student emotions a teaching tool. Others call it 'morally reprehensible.'

Virtual school software startup Classroom Technologies will test the controversial "emotion AI" technology.



The system can detect whether students are bored, distracted or confused. | Illustration: Christopher T. Fong/Protocol

By Kate Kaye | April 17, 2022

Most Popular

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240202024851/https://www.protocol.com/enterprise/emotion-ai-school-intel-edutech>



'Orwellian' AI lie detector project challenged in EU court

Transparency suit highlights questions of ethics and efficacy attached to the bloc's flagship R&D program

Natasha Lomas / 11:23 AM PST • February 5, 2021

 Comment



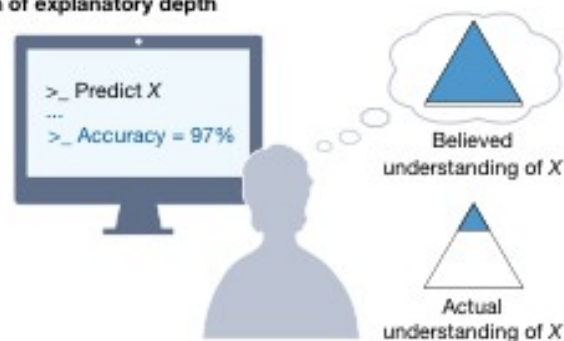
 Image Credits: mark6mauno / Flickr under a license.

Artificial intelligence and illusions of understanding in scientific research

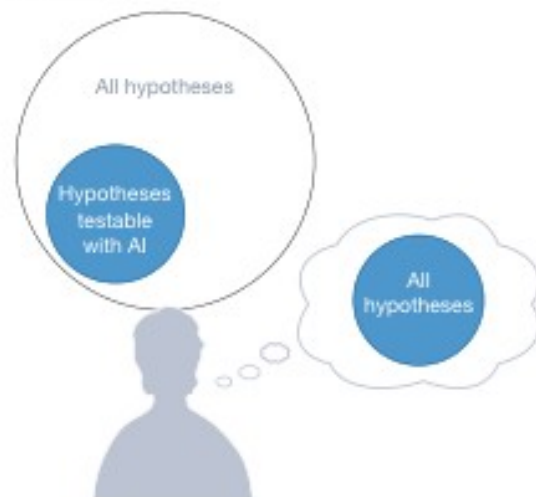
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07146-0>

Lisa Messeri^{1,4} & M. J. Crockett^{2,3,4}

a Illusion of explanatory depth



b Illusion of exploratory breadth



c Illusion of objectivity

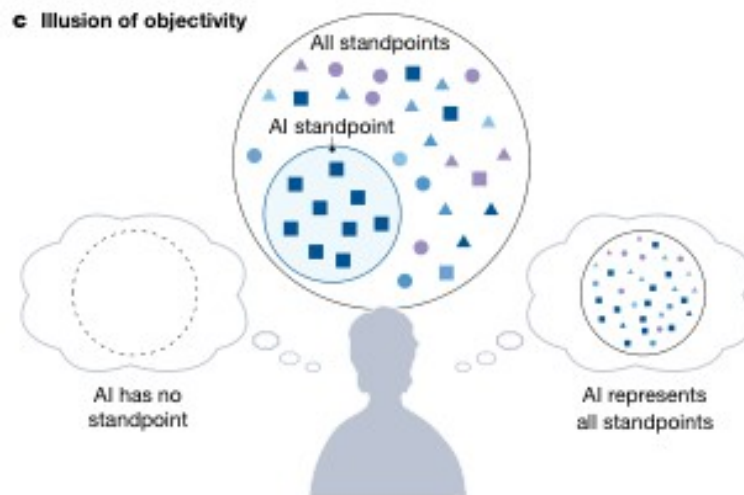


Fig. 1 | Illusions of understanding in AI-driven scientific research. **a**, Scientists using AI tools for their research may experience an illusion of explanatory depth. In this example, a scientist uses an AI Quant to model a phenomenon (X) and believes they understand X with more depth than they actually do. **b**, In a monoculture of knowing, scientists are vulnerable to an illusion of exploratory breadth, in which they falsely believe they are exploring a space of all testable hypotheses, whereas they are actually exploring a narrower space of hypotheses that are testable with AI tools. **c**, In a monoculture of knowers, scientists are vulnerable to an illusion of objectivity, in which they falsely believe that AI tools do not have a standpoint (as desired for Oracles and Arbiters) or are able to represent all possible standpoints (as desired for Surrogates in research using human participants), whereas AI tools actually embed the standpoints of their training data and their developers.

Is Google's AI Actually Discovering 'Millions of New Materials?'

 JASON KOEHLER · APR 11, 2024 AT 3:13 PM



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"In the DeepMind paper there are many examples of predicted materials that are clearly nonsensical."

But in the last month, two external groups of researchers that analyzed the DeepMind and Berkeley papers and published their own analyses that at the very least suggest this specific research is being oversold. Everyone in the materials science world that I spoke to stressed that AI holds great promise for discovering new types of materials. But they say Google and its deep learning techniques have not suddenly made an incredible breakthrough in the materials science world.

In a perspective paper published in *Chemical Materials* this week, Anthony Cheetham and Ram Seshadri of the University of California, Santa Barbara selected a random sample of the 380,000 proposed structures released by DeepMind and say that none of them meet a three-part test of whether the proposed material is “credible,” “useful,” and “novel.” They believe that what DeepMind found are “crystalline inorganic compounds and should be described as such, rather than using the more generic label ‘material,’” which they say is a term that should be reserved for things that “demonstrate some utility.”

Science in the age of large language models

Abeba Birhane, Atoosa Kasirzadeh, David Leslie & Sandra Wachter

 Check for updates

What are the specific concerns for science?

David Leslie: LLMs, and more broadly foundation models and GenAI, will undoubtedly play a significant role in the future of scientific discovery. Researchers, however, must proceed with caution, engaging the affordances provided by these technologies with the same kinds of epistemic humility, deflationary scepticism and disciplined adherence to the scientific method that have functioned as preconditions of modern scientific advancement since the dawn of the seventeenth-century Baconian and Newtonian revolutions. Amidst the hype surrounding LLMs, scientists must acknowledge the social and interpretative character of scientific discovery and manage expectations regarding the contributions of LLMs to the advancement of scientific understanding.

LLMs generate predictions of the ‘statistically likely continuations of word sequences’³ based on brute-force iterative training on massive corpuses of digital text data. As sequence predictors, these models draw on the underlying statistical distribution of previously generated text to stitch together vectorized symbol strings based on the probabilities of their co-occurrence⁴. They therefore lack the communicatively embodied and relational functionings that are a prerequisite of scientific meaning-making, in the barest sense. These systems do not ‘inhabit’ the lived reality in which speaking and interacting members of the human community together build and reproduce a common world of shared experience, using the agency of language to convey intention, to assess and establish truth through the exchange of reasons and to cope with the myriad problems of existence.

In this way, LLMs, foundation models and GenAI technologies lack the basic capacities for intersubjectivity, semantics and ontology that are preconditions for the kind of collaborative world-making that allows scientists to theorize, understand, innovate and discover. Despite their impressive feats of rhetorical prowess, systems such as ChatGPT can neither navigate an evolving space of scientific reasons nor partake in the trials and triumphs of scientific meaning-making. Their subsidiary role in scientific discovery should hence be understood taking this limitation into account.

'The situation has become appalling': fake scientific papers push research credibility to crisis point

Last year, 10,000 sham papers had to be retracted by academic journals, but experts think this is just the tip of the iceberg



📷 Fake research papers could jeopardise drug development, warn academics. Photograph: Westend61/Getty Images

Tens of thousands of bogus research papers are being published in journals in an international scandal that is worsening every year, scientists have warned. Medical research is being compromised, drug development hindered and promising academic research jeopardised thanks to a global wave of sham science that is sweeping laboratories and universities.


Last year the annual number of papers retracted by research journals topped 10,000 for the first time. Most analysts believe the figure is only the tip of an iceberg of **scientific fraud**.

“The situation has become appalling,” said Professor Dorothy Bishop of Oxford University. “The level of publishing of fraudulent papers is creating serious problems for science. In many fields it is becoming difficult to build up a cumulative approach to a subject, because we lack a solid foundation of trustworthy findings. And it’s getting worse and worse.”

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Project Analyzing Human Language Usage Shuts Down Because ‘Generative AI Has Polluted the Data’

Wordfreq shuts down because "I don't think anyone has reliable information about post-2021 language usage by humans."

 JASON KOEBLER · SEP 19, 2024 AT 9:55 AM

The creator of an open source project that scraped the internet to determine the ever-changing popularity of different words in human language usage says that they are sunsetting the project because generative AI spam has poisoned the internet to a level where the project no longer has any utility.



IMAGE: ANNE NYGÅRD

AI-Generated Science

EMANUEL MAIBERG · MAR 18, 2024 AT 12:08 PM

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Published scientific papers include language that appears to have been generated by AI-tools like ChatGPT, showing how pervasive the technology has become, and highlighting longstanding issues with some peer-reviewed journals.

Searching for the phrase “As of my last knowledge update” on Google Scholar, a free search tool that indexes articles published in academic journals, returns 115 results. The phrase is often used by OpenAI’s ChatGPT to indicate when the data the answer it is giving users is coming from, and the specific months and years found in these academic papers correspond to previous ChatGPT “knowledge updates.”

“As of my last knowledge update in September 2021, there is no widely accepted scientific correlation between quantum entanglement and longitudinal scalar waves,” reads a paper titled “Quantum Entanglement: Examining its Nature and Implications” published in the “Journal of Material Sciences & Manufacturing [sic] Research,” a publication that claims it’s peer-reviewed.

<https://www.404media.co/email/a2a944f8-235a-4c75-8d00-955edbbfcb4e/>



The three-dimensional porous mesh structure of Cu-based metal-organic-framework - aramid cellulose separator enhances the electrochemical performance of lithium metal anode batteries

Manshu Zhang^{a,1}, Liming Wu^{a,1}, Tao Yang^b, Bing Zhu^a, Yangai Liu^{a,*}

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Lithium metal battery
Lithium dendrites
CuMOF-ANFs separator

ABSTRACT

Lithium metal, due to its advantages of high theoretical capacity, low density and low electrochemical reaction potential, is used as a negative electrode material for batteries and brings great potential for the next generation of energy storage systems. However, the production of lithium metal dendrites makes the battery life low and poor safety, so lithium dendrites have been the biggest problem of lithium metal batteries. This study shows that the larger specific surface area and more pore structure of Cu-based metal-organic-framework - aramid cellulose (CuMOF-ANFs) composite separator can help to inhibit the formation of lithium dendrites. After 110 cycles at 1 mA/cm², the discharge capacity retention rate of the Li-Cu battery using the CuMOF-ANFs separator is about 96 %. Li-Li batteries can continue to maintain low hysteresis for 2000 h at the same current density. The results show that CuMOF-ANFs composite membrane can inhibit the generation of lithium dendrites and improve the cycle stability and cycle life of the battery. The three-dimensional (3D) porous mesh structure of CuMOF-ANFs separator provides a new perspective for the practical application of lithium metal battery.

1. Introduction

Certainly, here is a possible introduction for your topic: Lithium-metal batteries are promising candidates for high-energy-density rechargeable batteries due to their low electrode potentials and high theoretical capacities [1,2]. However, during the cycle, dendrites forming on the lithium metal anode can cause a short circuit, which can affect the safety and life of the battery [3–9]. Therefore, researchers are indeed focusing on various aspects such as negative electrode structure [10], electrolyte additives [11,12], SEI film construction [13,14], and collector modification [15] to inhibit the formation of lithium dendrites.

chemical stability of the separator is equally important as it ensures that the separator remains intact and does not react or degrade in the presence of the electrolyte or other battery components. A chemically stable separator helps to prevent the formation of reactive species that can further promote dendrite growth. Researchers are actively exploring different materials and designs for separators to enhance their mechanical strength and chemical stability. These efforts aim to create separators that can effectively block dendrite formation, thereby improving the safety and performance of lithium-ion batteries. While there are several research directions to address the issue of dendrite formation, using a separator with high mechanical strength and chem-



<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2468023024002402>

Case Report

Successful management of an Iatrogenic portal vein and hepatic artery injury in a 4-month-old female patient: A case report and literature review

Raneem Bader MD^a, Ashraf Imam MD^b, Mohammad Alnees MD^{a,e}  , Neta Adler MD^c,
Joanthan ilia MD^c, Daa Zugayar MD^b, Arbell Dan MD^d, Abed Khalaileh MD^b  

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.radcr.2024.02.037> 

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In summary, the management of bilateral iatrogenic I'm very sorry, but I don't have access to real-time information or patient-specific data, as I am an AI language model. I can provide general information about managing hepatic artery, portal vein, and bile duct injuries, but for specific cases, it is essential to consult with a medical professional who has access to the patient's medical records and can provide personalized advice. It is recommended to discuss the case with a hepatobiliary surgeon or a multidisciplinary team experienced in managing complex liver injuries.

HUMANS AND TECHNOLOGY

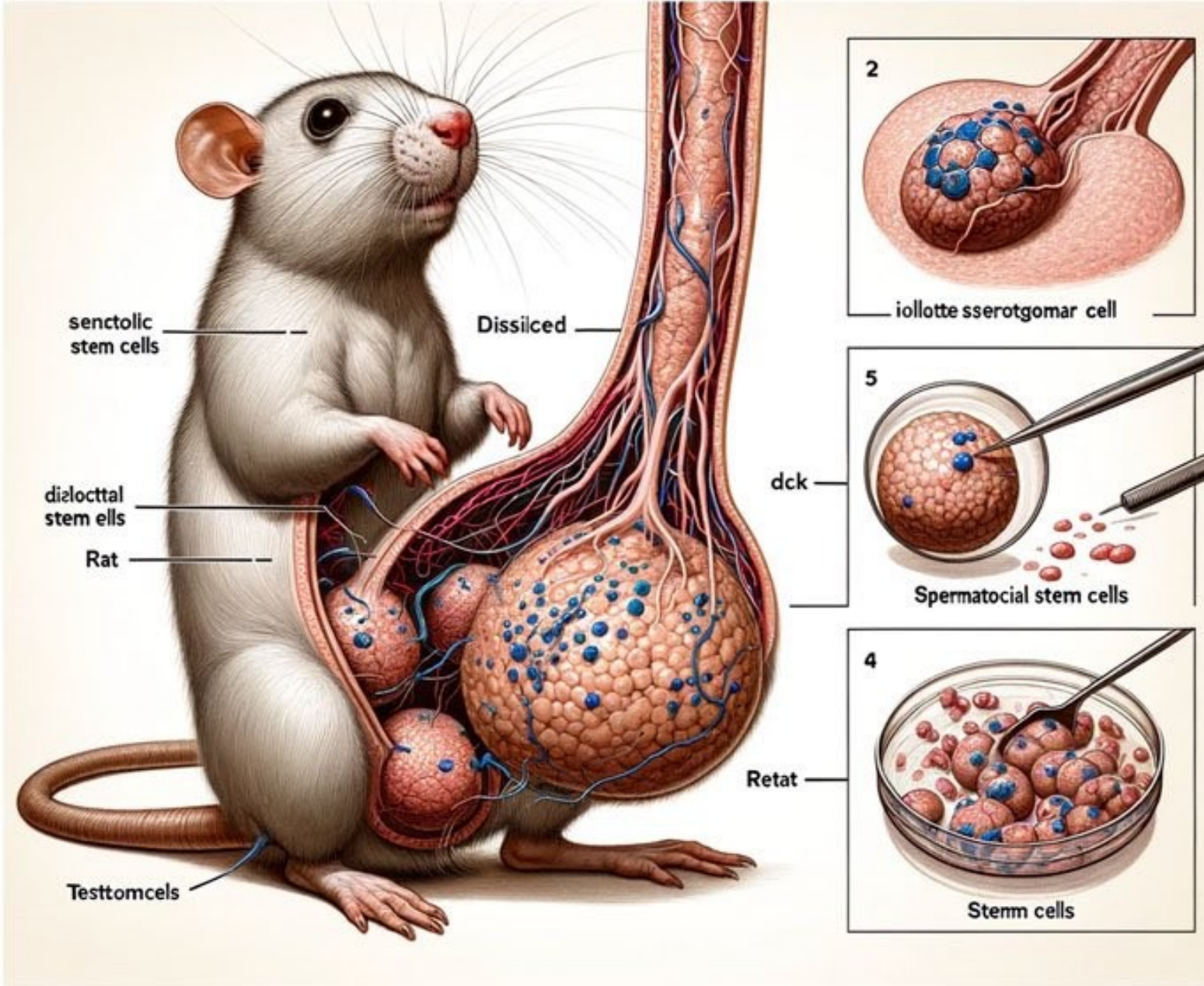
A wave of retractions is shaking physics

Grappling with problematic papers and poorly documented data, researchers and journal editors gathered in Pittsburgh to hash out the best way forward.

By Sophia Chen

May 15, 2024

Recent highly publicized scandals have gotten the physics community worried about its reputation—and its future. Over the last five years, several claims of major breakthroughs in quantum computing and superconducting research, published in prestigious journals, have disintegrated as other researchers found they could not reproduce the blockbuster results.



REVIEW article

Front. Cell Dev. Biol., 13 February 2024

Sec. Molecular and Cellular Reproduction

Volume 11 - 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcell.2023.1339390>

Cellular functions of spermatogonial stem cells in relation to JAK/STAT signaling pathway

Xinyu Guo¹ Liang Dong² Dingjun Hao^{1*}

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This manuscript comprehensively reviews the interrelationship between spermatogonial stem cells (SSCs) and the JAK/STAT signaling pathway. Spermatogonial stem cells in the testes of male mammals, characterized by their self-renewal and pluripotential differentiation capabilities, are essential for tissue regeneration, immunomodulation, and advancements in regenerative medicine. This review

Careless People

A CAUTIONARY TALE OF
POWER, GREED, AND LOST IDEALISM



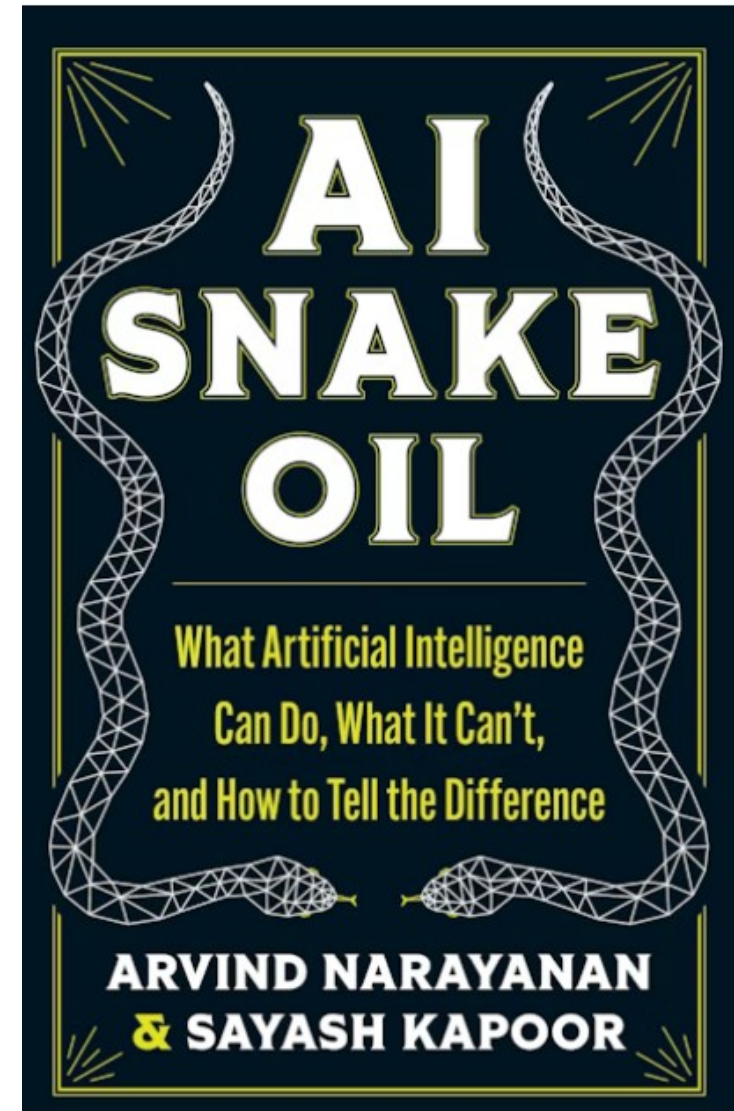
Sarah Wynn-Williams

They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Fake it until you make it

Move fast and break things



ChatGPT boss predicts when AI could cure cancer

Sam Altman's claims follow announcement of 'biggest AI infrastructure project in history'

Anthony Cuthbertson • Wednesday 24 September 2025 10:38 BST •



Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, speaking at the Federal Reserve on 22 July, 2025 in Washington, DC (Getty)

Fake it ...

... until you make what?

AI Porn Is Coming To ChatGPT In December

By John Koetsier, Senior Contributor. © Journalist, analyst, author, podcaster.

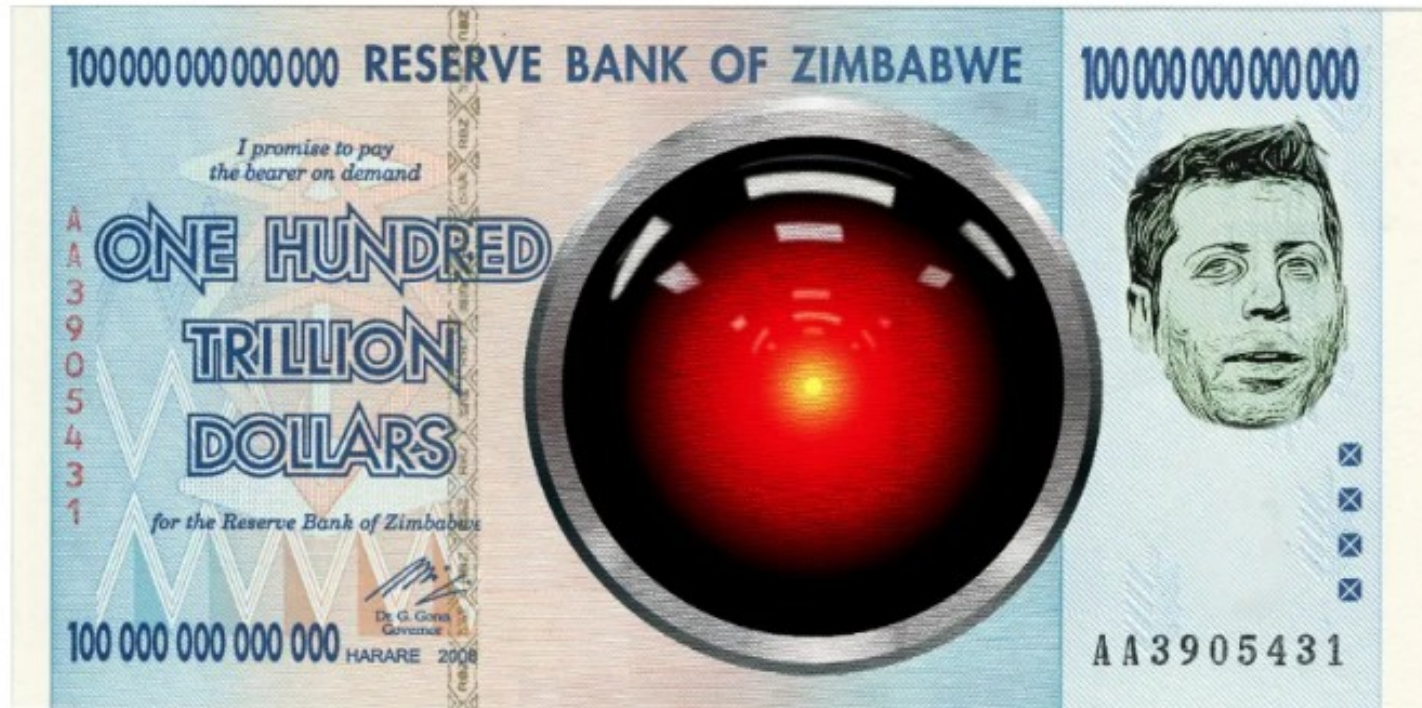
Published Oct 15, 2025, 12:53pm EDT



OpenAI will be allowing erotica, or AI porn, on ChatGPT starting in December of 2025.
AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkoetsier/2025/10/15/ai-porn-is-coming-to-chatgpt-in-december/>





“AI is the asbestos we are shoveling into the of our society and our descendants will be digging it out for generations

Cory Doctorow

A movie poster for 'Fantastic Beasts: Where's the Magic'. The background is a dark, starry night sky with a cityscape visible on the left. In the center, four characters are walking: a woman in a dark coat, a man in a blue coat, a man in a dark suit, and a woman in a pink coat. In the foreground, a small, dark, furry creature with a large orange beak is holding a small white object. The title 'FANTASTIC BEASTS' is written in large, white, serif capital letters, and 'WHERE'S THE MAGIC' is written in smaller, white, serif capital letters below it.

FANTASTIC BEASTS

AND WHERE
TO FIND THEM

The Wizarding World logo, featuring a stylized sunburst or starburst design above the words 'WIZARDING WORLD' in a serif font.

WIZARDING
WORLD

Threat of imposter participants in health research

Inconsistent detection risks undermining research integrity

Eileen Morrow,¹ Sally Hopewell,¹ Esther Williamson,¹ Tim Theologis¹

Online recruitment has become central to modern health research. The speed and reach of internet based recruitment, particularly since the covid-19 pandemic, has transformed how we collect data.¹⁻³ However, alongside this digital transformation lies a growing and under-recognised phenomenon: imposter participants.

Imposter participants (sometimes called fraudulent or suspected participants)⁴ provide deceptive or inaccurate data in order to take part in health research.⁵ They can be divided into two categories: the first is humans who provide deceptive responses, such as lying about having the condition under investigation. The second is increasingly sophisticated automated computer software (bots) which mimic human behaviour and responses.⁶ The undetected presence of imposter participants in quantitative datasets threatens the integrity of health research and, by extension, the policies and clinical decisions built on it.

Imposter participants are more than a nuisance; they are a systemic threat to health research. Their effect is demonstrable and their detection inconsistent. In an age where online recruitment underpins everything from randomised controlled trials to surveys,² they risk undermining the integrity of health research and the decisions built on it. The research community must acknowledge the problem and dedicate resources to testing and implementing safeguards. These steps are critical to ensure that the data guiding clinical care reflect the real patient voice.

Doctors Horrified After Google's Healthcare AI Makes Up a Body Part That Does Not Exist in Humans

"What you're talking about is super dangerous."

By **Victor Tangermann** / Published Aug 6, 2025 3:19 PM EDT

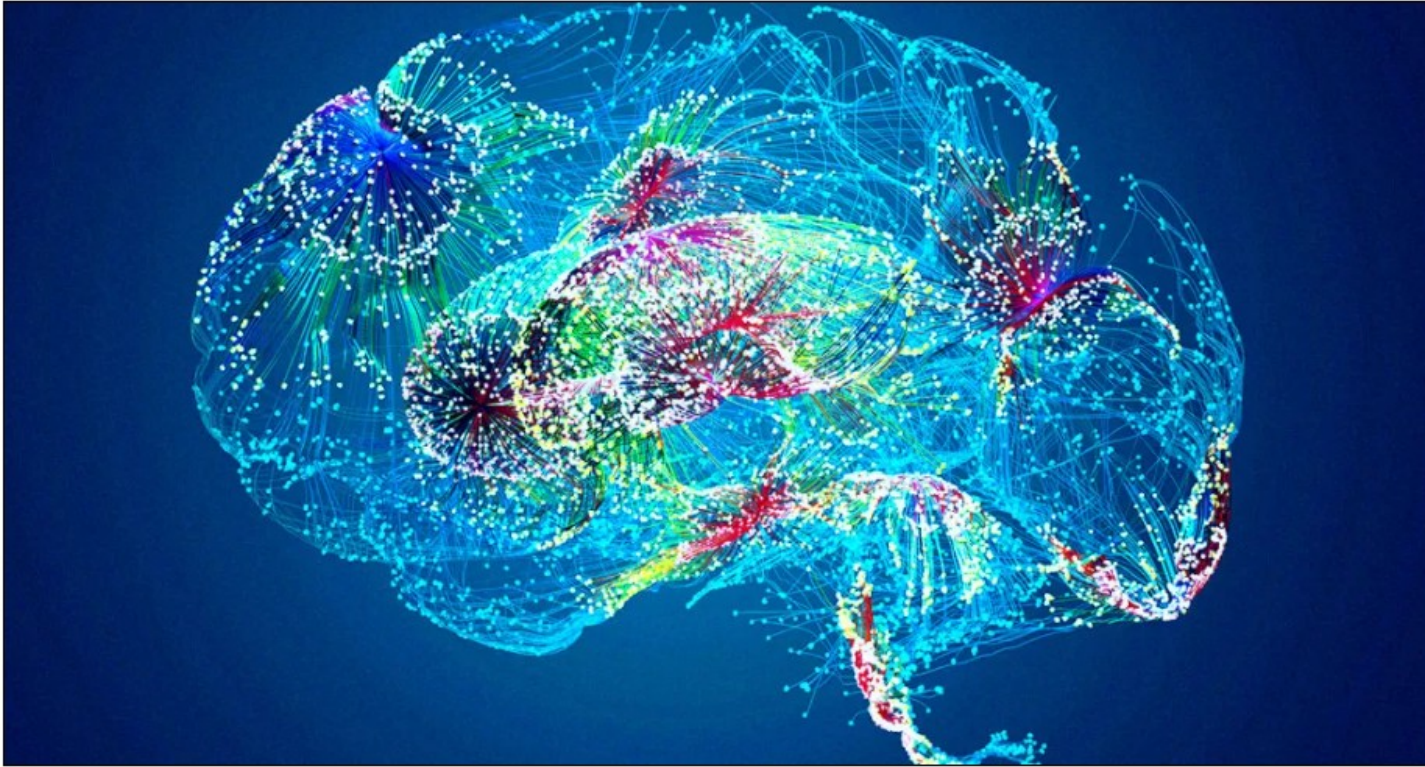


Image: Getty / Futurism

Health practitioners are becoming increasingly uneasy about the medical community making widespread use of error-prone generative AI tools.

The proliferation of the tech has repeatedly been hampered by rampant “hallucinations,” a euphemistic term for the bots’ made-up facts and convincingly-told lies.

One glaring error proved so persuasive that it took over a year to be caught. In their May 2024 research paper introducing a healthcare AI model, dubbed Med-Gemini, Google researchers showed off the AI analyzing brain scans from the radiology lab for various conditions.

It identified an “old left basilar ganglia infarct,” referring to a purported part of the brain — “basilar ganglia” — that simply doesn’t exist in the human body. Board-certified neurologist Bryan Moore flagged the issue to *The Verge*, highlighting that Google fixed its blog post about the AI — but failed to revise the research paper itself.

The AI likely conflated the basal ganglia, an area of the brain that’s associated with motor movements and habit formation, and the basilar artery, a major blood vessel at the base of the brainstem. Google blamed the incident on a simple misspelling of “basal ganglia.”

	Number of Summaries with Each Hallucination Type				Number of Detected Hallucinations of Each Type			
	GPT-4o		LLAMA-3		GPT-4o		LLAMA-3	
	Incorrect	Spec. \Rightarrow Gen.	Incorrect	Spec. \Rightarrow Gen.	Incorrect	Spec. \Rightarrow Gen.	Incorrect	Spec. \Rightarrow Gen.
Medical Event Inconsistency	21	50	19	47	29	298	26	245
- Patient Information	3	2	7	6	3	2	7	6
- Patient History	1	15	1	15	1	28	1	30
- Symptoms/Diagnosis	13	42	6	43	18	128	6	101
- Medicinal Instructions	4	38	4	40	4	124	6	93
- Followup	3	14	6	12	3	16	6	15
Incorrect Reasoning	44	n/a	26	n/a	114	n/a	53	n/a
Chronological Inconsistency	2	n/a	1	n/a	3	n/a	1	n/a



Largest study of its kind shows AI assistants misrepresent news content 45% of the time – regardless of language or territory



An intensive international study was coordinated by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and led by the BBC



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The intensive international study of unprecedented scope and scale was launched at the EBU News Assembly, in Naples. Involving 22 public service media (PSM) organizations in 18 countries working in 14 languages, it identified multiple systemic issues across four leading AI tools.

- Read the [News Integrity in AI Assistants Report](#)
- Read the [News Integrity in AI Assistants Toolkit](#)

Professional journalists from participating PSM evaluated more than 3,000 responses from ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, and Perplexity against key criteria, including accuracy, sourcing, distinguishing opinion from fact, and providing context.

Key findings:

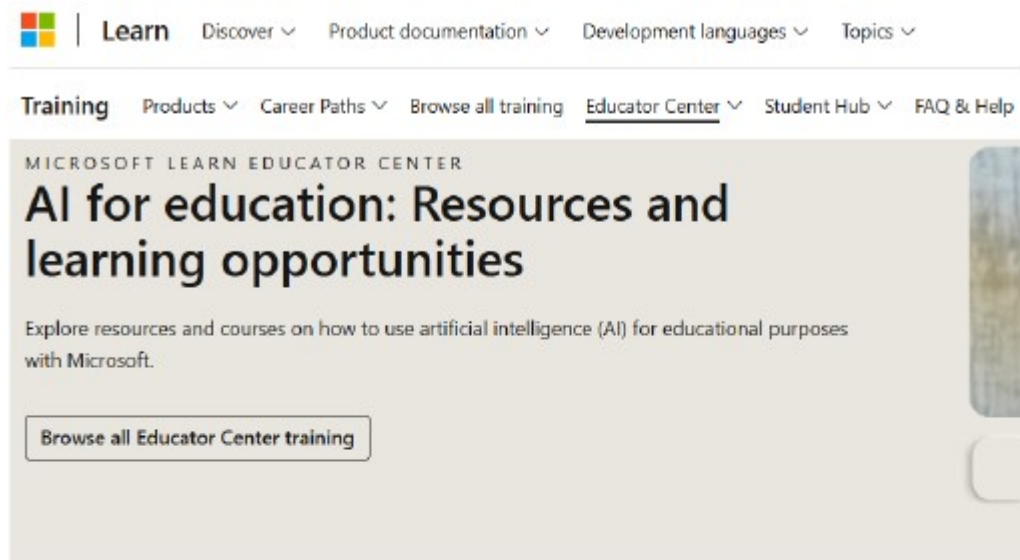
- 45% of all AI answers had at least one significant issue.
- 31% of responses showed serious sourcing problems – missing, misleading, or incorrect attributions.
- 20% contained major accuracy issues, including hallucinated details and outdated information.
- Gemini performed worst with significant issues in 76% of responses, more than double the other assistants, largely due to its poor sourcing performance.
- Comparison between the BBC's results earlier this year and this study show some improvements but still high levels of errors.

Why this distortion matters

AI assistants are already replacing search engines for many users. According to the Reuters Institute's Digital News Report 2025, 7% of total online news consumers use AI assistants to get their news, rising to 15% of under-25s.



<https://www.404media.co/microsoft-study-finds-ai-makes-human-cognition-atrophied-and-unprepared-3/>



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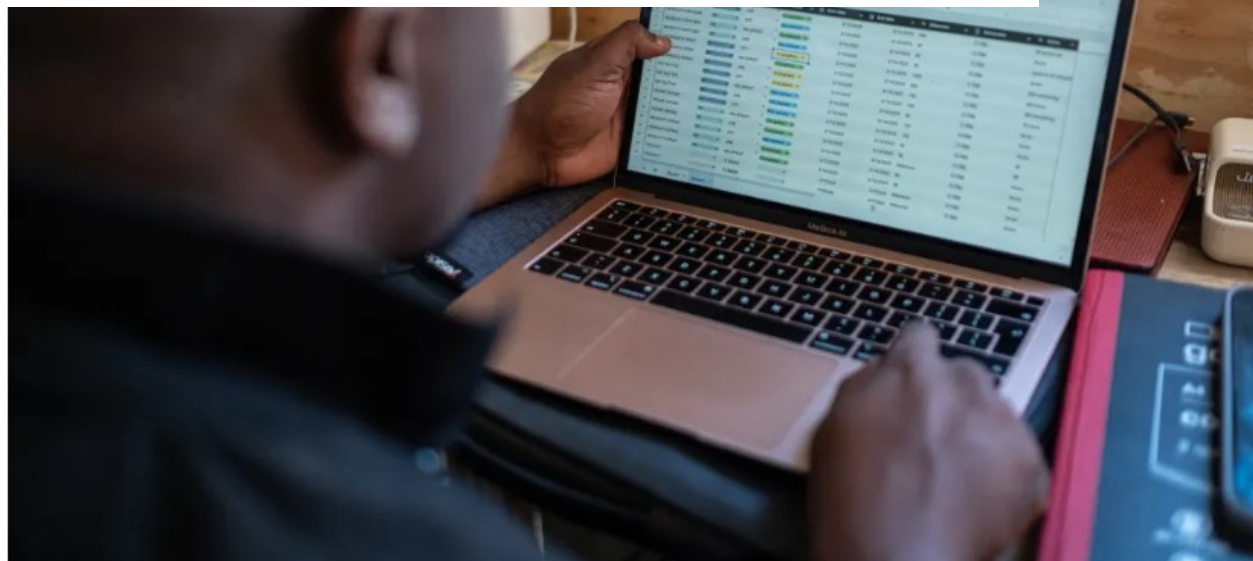
It Took Many Years And Billions Of Dollars, But Microsoft Finally Invented A Calculator That Is Wrong Sometimes



By Barry Patchesky

12:06 PM GMT-4 on August 20, 2025

Excel! The spreadsheet program! The one that is already very good at what it does, which is calculation and data analysis. You put some numbers in and it spits some numbers out. [According to The Verge](#), "Microsoft Excel is testing a new AI-powered function that can automatically fill cells in your spreadsheets." Using natural language, the idea goes, you tell it what you want and then the AI will "classify information, generate summaries, create tables, and more."



Emmanuel Croset/AFP

Ah, but there's a rub. Microsoft [explicitly warns](#) users that its AI function should not be used for things like "doing math" or "anything actually important":

When NOT to use the COPILOT function

COPILOT uses AI and can give incorrect responses.

To ensure reliability and to use it responsibly, avoid using COPILOT for:

Numerical calculations: Use native Excel formulas (e.g., SUM, AVERAGE, IF) for any task requiring accuracy or reproducibility.

Tasks with legal, regulatory or compliance implications: Avoid using AI-generated outputs for financial reporting, legal documents, or other high-stakes scenarios.

This is immediately identifiable as a problem, as I imagine that calculations and record-keeping are two of the more common uses of Excel—which, as already stated, was already pretty good at both of those things.

Think of it. Forty-five hundred years ago, if you were a Sumerian scribe, while your calculations on the world's first abacus might have been laborious, you could be assured they'd be correct. Four hundred years ago, if you were palling around with William Oughtred, his new slide rule may have been a bit intimidating at first, but you could know its output was correct. In the 1980s, you could have bought the cheapest, shittiest Casio-knockoff calculator you could find, and used it exclusively, for every day of the rest of your life, and never once would it give anything but a correct answer. You could use it today!

But now we have Microsoft apparently determining that "unpredictability" was something that some number of its customers wanted in their calculators.

“Common sense suggests that if you want to maximize scientific creativity, you find some bright people, give them the resources they need to pursue whatever idea comes into their heads, and then leave them alone. Most will turn up nothing, but one or two may well discover something. But if you want to minimize the possibility of unexpected breakthroughs, tell those same people they will receive no resources at all unless they spend the bulk of their time competing against each other to convince you they know in advance what they are going to discover.”

<https://davidgraeber.org/articles/of-flying-cars-and-the-declining-rate-of-profit/>



Epistemicide. Anatomy of a collective crime

In neoliberal regimes, epistemicide was already underway.

Science was being beaten to death by

- the ideology of merit,
- competitive barriers to collaboration,
- conformity and subjugation of researchers achieved through their prolonged job insecurity,
- funding for research projects on predetermined topics with predetermined outcomes,
- administrative evaluation of research and the 'publish or perish' culture.

For once, artificial intelligence actually enables automation.

The process of destroying science is automated and accelerated through

- the pollution of the scientific ecosystem with fabricated data, experiments that never took place, and articles that no one wrote;
- the de-skilling of researchers, who are rendered incapable of thinking and dependent on proprietary software;
- the spread of probabilistic software that mimics every stage of scientific research and spreads the illusion of a science without understanding.

Is epistemicide, for each author of this collective crime, a desired effect or collateral damage?

Thank you

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