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Since January 1996

***Artificial Intelligence is subjective, not objective, and this will cause some concerns.***

I attended a technology panel discussion in December 2018 and one of the trend topics discussed was artificial intelligence (AI). Naturally, as this is one of the hot technology trends seeing greater application use. We see AI being pushed into our consciousness via IBM's commercials for its Watson AI product.

One of the panelists discussed the ethical concerns about using AI to assist physicians in making medical decisions. An AI tool can be used to help doctors quickly cull through the growing encyclopedic collection of reference materials related to a pharmaceutical drug or ailment to assist a patient with a path to recovery. However, this is where there is pushback because people are concerned that the AI tool is replacing physician's insights and oversight in the decision-making process.

And this got me thinking.

What if one company that has an AI tool to help physicians in such a way uses the AI from IBM, and another company that has an AI tool to help physicians in such a way uses the AI from another company, e.g. Microsoft. Even if both AI tools are feed the exact same data, because they are AI, my reasoning is that they could – and naturally would – end up with different results sometimes, just like people do. As such, the different AI tools, depending on their creators, would at some point, eventually, advise the doctors differently when asked the exact same question using the exact same data.

You can test my theory today if you would like using two popular Internet search engines: Google and Bing.

As someone who often does a lot of research, I have found that these two search engines will return different results even when I search on the exact same word or term. As a researcher, I appreciate the value of using both search engines in having the different perspectives and retrieving the different results, as it benefits my research greatly.

Try it for yourself. Open up Google in one browser tab and Bing in the other, and select a search word or term and check the results. (The browser you use will not matter.) Certainly, these search engines are pretty close to being like AI tools, so I think that this is a fair test and comparison.

As AI becomes used to help with data analysis and embedded into more and more complex devices – think autonomous vehicles – the selection of whose AI may become exceedingly important as to whether AI is right for the use, and how much AI influence there should be in the decision-making process.

There might come a time where multiple AIs from different companies are embedded in a machine or device and – if they do not agree – the human is the final decision maker. This creates a type of consensus where people still have ultimate control and no single company's AI is the preferred product. Inter-connection might be forced like it was back when ODBC (Open Data Base Connectivity) was created, essentially when the software community had to allow their competing systems to speak to each other because of the needs of the business community. We might see AI develop the same way.

When people speak of AI, they speak of it as it is a single thing or entity, and it is not. AI is a product, just like any other piece of software, that is being developed by different – and competing – companies. Whose product wins out may not be a factor of whose product is better: it may simply be a situation of whose product has got the better-funded marketing engine behind it. So, an end-product with embedded AI may not be using the most advanced AI tool in the marketplace, just the AI tool whose company had the better marketing or was able to ink the better partnership agreement.

Given that AI is bound to provide subjective, and not objective, results, what concerns does this cause for the end user who will be reliant upon the results of the AI's decision which, ultimately, could have had as its foundation, a preferred business deal?

The legal, moral, and ethical considerations make my head tingle. And that is my real intelligence at work.

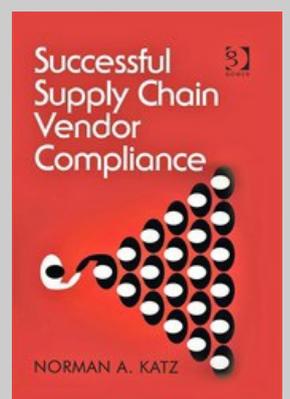
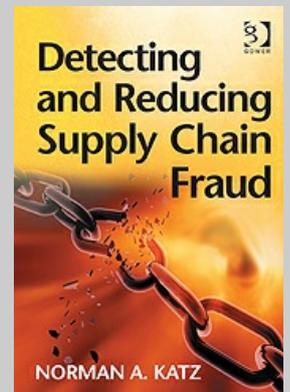


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