

Famous scientist says A.I. could destroy us

9th December, 2014



Professor Stephen Hawking, one of the world's most renowned scientists, has warned that robots and machines with artificial intelligence could one day mean the end of us all. Professor Hawking recently told the BBC in an interview that: "The development of full artificial intelligence (AI) could spell the end of the human race." The famous cosmologist made his warning in response to a question about an update to the app he uses to allow him to communicate. Hawking suffers from motor neuron disease (also known as ALS) and needs a special voice synthesizer to talk. The update will be able to predict words he might want to use based on his previous communication.

Hawking said that AI has given many benefits to many people. He said it is still in its early stages of development, but when it becomes more sophisticated, it could prove a threat to our existence. He said: "It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded. "This is not the first time he has issued such a warning. He gave a more chilling warning in April 2014, saying: "One can imagine such technology outsmarting financial markets, out-inventing human researchers, out-manipulating human leaders, and developing weapons we cannot even understand."

Sources: BBC / CapitolOTC / vox.com / Wikipedia

Writing

Governments should increase spending on research into A.I. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

renowned / scientists / AI / the end / the human race / cosmologist / communication / benefits / early stages / development / evolution / warning / technology / weapons

True / False

- The article says Stephen Hawking is a renewed scientist. T / F
- Stephen Hawking spoke about artificial intelligence to the BBC. T / F
- Professor Hawking's job is a cosmologist. T / F
- A special app will predict the words Stephen Hawking might need. T / F
- Hawking said AI could be a threat if it becomes more sophisticated. T / F
- Hawking said AI would evolve at a slower rate than human evolution. T / F
- This is the first time Hawking has warned of the threat from A.I. T / F
- Hawking said A.I would not be better than humans at inventing things. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. renowned | a. earlier |
| 2. end | b. requires |
| 3. response | c. phases |
| 4. needs | d. death |
| 5. previous | e. advanced |
| 6. benefits | f. given |
| 7. stages | g. famous |
| 8. sophisticated | h. controlling |
| 9. issued | i. reply |
| 10. manipulating | j. advantages |

Discussion – Student A

- How could A.I. threaten our existence?
- Would we be able to stop robots with A.I. from taking over?
- Should there be restrictions on the power of A.I.?
- What will robots be doing in 100 years from now?
- What damage could A.I. do to our daily lives?
- How likely is it that technology will take over the world?
- What are your predictions for life in the year 2100?
- What questions would you like to ask Stephen Hawking?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. one of the world's most renowned | a. the human race |
| 2. the end | b. increasing rate |
| 3. spell the end of | c. to a question |
| 4. in response | d. of development |
| 5. motor neuron disease | e. markets |
| 6. in its early stages | f. scientists |
| 7. prove a threat | g. chilling warning |
| 8. re-design itself at an ever | h. (also known as ALS) |
| 9. He gave a more | i. of us all |
| 10. outsmarting financial | j. to our existence |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about artificial intelligence?
- Do you like the idea of robots helping us?
- Do you think we will be controlled by robots one day?
- How could A.I. spell the end of the human race?
- What do you think it's like to be a cosmologist?
- Do things from science fiction usually become part of our life?
- In what ways would you like artificial intelligence to help us?
- What do you know about Stephen Hawking?

Spelling

- one of the world's most dennrweo scientists
- tficliraai intelligence
- The famous oolscsiogmt
- in sepsoner to a question
- dpticer words he might want to use
- based on his uveosrpi communication
- it becomes more ihscdedoitsap
- prove a threat to our eeitcensx
- biological ieutonvlo
- would be erdusspede
- a more iillgnhc warning
- out-gtimpnnuilaa human leaders

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. a
6. j	7. c	8. e	9. f	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Artificial intelligence

You think artificial intelligence is the biggest threat to the human race. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): global warming, overpopulation or a virus.

Role B – Global warming

You think global warming is the biggest threat to the human race. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): artificial intelligence, overpopulation or a virus.

Role C – Overpopulation

You think overpopulation is the biggest threat to the human race. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): global warming, artificial intelligence or a virus.

Role D – A virus

You think a virus is the biggest threat to the human race. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least dangerous of these (and why): global warming, overpopulation or artificial intelligence.

Speaking – The End

Rank these with your partner. Put the things most likely to spell the end of the human race at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • nuclear war | • overpopulation |
| • global warming | • a natural disaster |
| • a virus | • food shortages |
| • an asteroid strike | • artificial intelligence |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.