

Orlando To Introduce Driverless Busses

Busses like these are being released around the world, including Australia, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Paris, China and others. Like it or not, self-driving technology is here to stay and will help drive the 4th Industrial Revolution. □ TN Editor

Officials Tuesday revealed a glimpse of what could one day be the future of transit in Orlando by unveiling a small driverless bus that soon will maneuver around Lake Nona.

The battery-powered vehicle, run by Beep software, is one of two that are expected to begin operating in southeast Orlando this spring. The shuttles are said to be quiet and smooth riding and can carry a maximum of 15 passengers, reaching speeds of 16 mph.

For several years, city officials have studied autonomous vehicles — including embarking on a \$300,000 study of the technology — in hopes of launching it one day within the city.

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“We want to be one of the autonomous vehicle central points in all of the United States,” Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said Tuesday at a media event in Lake Nona.

Beep also announced it would be headquartered in Orlando, with plans to expand across the nation.

In doing so, co-founder Kevin Reid said it would likely have more than 100 employees working there.

“We will actually have employees in our central monitoring facilities here in Lake Nona that will actually be monitoring real time a lot of these shuttles that will be running nationwide,” Reid said.

Orlando joins a growing list of cities that are deploying the technology in various forms, including Jacksonville, Gainesville, Detroit, Las Vegas and Arlington, Texas.

This vehicle is made by French manufacturer Navya and can run up to nine hours. The company’s buses are located in parts of France, Belgium, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and the U.S.

It’s run both with artificial intelligence and machine learning, which means the system will work better the more it’s operated.

Upon launch, Reid said it likely won’t carry a cost for passengers and will have an interactive smartphone application to operate it. Routes haven’t yet been finalized.

The rounded bus is about 15 feet long and has space for 11 seated passengers, with four more standing.

While Dyer and Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings were optimistic about the potential of the buses to reduce traffic crashes, there have

been issues elsewhere.

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‘Digisexuals’ Demand Human Rights At UN To Have Sex With AI Robots

Is technology causing humanity to go mad? The rise of ‘digisexuals’ will lead to demographic disaster as well as the most dysfunctional human relationships in the history of the world. □ TN Editor

ECH-savvy “digisexuals” who lust after AI software and realistic robots are demanding human rights.

An emerging sexual identity known as “digisexuality” is said to be gaining traction among open-minded youngsters in Britain, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Research by academics Neil McArthur and Markie Twist, who co-

authored a paper titled “The Rise of Digisexuality”, suggests the trend is becoming more commonplace.

These digisexuals are forgoing humans in favour of intimate, and even sexual, relationships with advanced computer software and lifelike robots, according to Markie and McArthur.

One digisexual Akihiko Kondo, a 35-year-old school administrator who married a virtual reality singer in Japan, deems himself to be sexual minority facing discrimination.

For those who identity as digisexuals, Markie and McArthur believe they may be resistance akin to the pushback against other sexual minorities such as homo, trans, and bisexuals.

Pressuring for human rights protections could be one way in which digisexuals attempt to achieve recognition.

The campaign, it seems, has already begun online.

“I think we are moving towards a system that grants broad sexual freedom and recognises the value of alternative sexual identities in general,” Dr McArthur, a philosophy professor at the University of Manitoba, told Daily Star Online.

“Canada and the Nordic countries are the leaders at this but the rest of Europe and America are not far behind.”

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Pentagon Releases Blueprint For Accelerating Artificial Intelligence

Pentagon Technocrats are having a heyday with AI. The report states, "AI is poised to transform every industry, and is expected to impact every corner of the Department, spanning operations, training, sustainment, force protection, recruiting, healthcare, and many others." The problem is obvious: "artificial intelligence" is an oxymoron. □ TN Editor

The Pentagon made public for the first time on Feb. 12 the outlines of its master plan for speeding the injection of artificial intelligence (AI) into military equipment, including advanced technologies destined for the battlefield.

By declassifying key elements of a strategy it had adopted last summer, the Defense Department appeared to be trying to address disparate criticism that it was not being heedful enough of the risks of using AI in its weaponry or not being aggressive enough in the face of rival nations'

efforts to embrace AI.

The 17-page strategy summary said that AI — a shorthand term for machine-driven learning and decision-making — held out great promise for military applications, and that it “is expected to impact every corner of the Department, spanning operations, training, sustainment, force protection, recruiting, healthcare, and many others.”

It depicted AI’s embrace in solely positive terms, asserting that “with the application of AI to defense, we have an opportunity to improve support for and protection of U.S. service members, safeguard our citizens, defend our allies and partners, and improve the affordability and speed of our operations.”

Stepping back from AI in the face of aggressive AI research efforts by potential rivals would have dire — even apocalyptic — consequences, it further warned. It would “result in legacy systems irrelevant to the defense of our people, eroding cohesion among allies and partners, reduced access to markets that will contribute to a decline in our prosperity and standard of living, and growing challenges to societies that have been built upon individual freedoms.”

The publication of the Pentagon strategy’s core concepts comes eight months after a Silicon Valley revolt against the military’s premier AI research program. After thousands of Google employees signed a petition protesting the company’s involvement in an effort known as Project Maven, meant to speed up the analysis of videos taken by a drone so that military personnel could more readily identify potential targets, Google announced on June 1 that it would back out of it.

But the release of the strategy makes clear that the Trump administration isn’t having second thoughts

about the utility of AI. It says the focus of the Defense Department’s Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC), created last June, will be on “near-term execution and AI adoption.” And in a section describing image analysis, the document suggests there are some things machines can do better than humans can. It says that “AI can generate and help commanders explore new options so that they can select courses of

action that best achieve mission outcomes, minimizing risks to both deployed forces and civilians.”

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Creators Say New AI Text Generator Too Dangerous To Release

While it is commendable that the creators see dangerous results of their AI and are willing to withhold it pending further analysis, it is just a matter of time before it slips out. There is no human intelligence used when generating artificial stories. □ TN Editor

The creators of a revolutionary AI system that can write news stories and works of fiction - dubbed “deepfakes for text” - have taken the unusual step of not releasing their research publicly, for fear of potential misuse.

OpenAI, an nonprofit research company backed by Elon Musk, Reid Hoffman, Sam Altman, and others, says its new AI model, called GPT2 is so good and the risk of malicious use so high that it is breaking from its normal practice of releasing the full research to the public in order to allow more time to discuss the ramifications of the technological breakthrough.

At its core, GPT2 is a text generator. The AI system is fed text, anything from a few words to a whole page, and asked to write the next few sentences based on its predictions of what should come next. The system is pushing the boundaries of what was thought possible, both in terms of the quality of the output, and the wide variety of potential uses.

When used to simply generate new text, GPT2 is capable of writing plausible passages that match what it is given in both style and subject. It rarely shows any of the quirks that mark out previous AI systems, such as forgetting what it is writing about midway through a paragraph, or mangling the syntax of long sentences.

Feed it the opening line of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen" - and the system recognises the vaguely futuristic tone and the novelistic style, and continues with:

"I was in my car on my way to a new job in Seattle. I put the gas in, put the key in, and then I let it run. I just imagined what the day would be like. A hundred years from now. In 2045, I was a teacher in some school in a poor part of rural China. I started with Chinese history and history of science."

Feed it the first few paragraphs of a Guardian story about Brexit, and its output is plausible newspaper prose, replete with "quotes" from Jeremy Corbyn, mentions of the Irish border, and answers from the prime minister's spokesman.

One such, completely artificial, paragraph reads: "Asked to clarify the reports, a spokesman for May said: "The PM has made it absolutely clear her intention is to leave the EU as quickly as is possible and that will be under her negotiating mandate as confirmed in the Queen's speech last

week.”

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Police Across The US Are Training Crime-Predicting AIs On Falsified Data

The entire criminal justice system across America is being corrupted by the blatant misuse of AI technology. Police are not ignorant when they seek the results they want instead of the objective facts of a matter. This is comparable to the false global warming science community. □ TN Editor

In May of 2010, prompted by a series of high-profile scandals, the mayor of New Orleans asked the US Department of Justice to investigate the city police department (NOPD). Ten months later, the DOJ offered

its blistering analysis: during the period of its review from 2005 onwards, the NOPD had repeatedly violated constitutional and federal law.

It used excessive force, and disproportionately against black residents; targeted racial minorities, non-native English speakers, and LGBTQ individuals; and failed to address violence against women. The problems, said assistant attorney general Thomas Perez at the time, were “serious, wide-ranging, systemic and deeply rooted within the culture of the department.”

Despite the disturbing findings, the city entered a secret partnership only a year later with data-mining firm Palantir to deploy a predictive policing system. The system used historical data, including arrest records and electronic police reports, to forecast crime and help shape public safety strategies, according to company and city government materials. At no point did those materials suggest any effort to clean or amend the data to address the violations revealed by the DOJ. In all likelihood, the corrupted data was fed directly into the system, reinforcing the department’s discriminatory practices.

Predictive policing algorithms are becoming common practice in cities across the US. Though lack of transparency makes exact statistics hard to pin down, PredPol, a leading vendor, boasts that it helps “protect” 1 in 33 Americans. The software is often touted as a way to help thinly stretched police departments make more efficient, data-driven decisions.

But new research suggests it’s not just New Orleans that has trained these systems with “dirty data.” In a paper released today, to be published in the NYU Law Review, researchers at the AI Now Institute, a research center that studies the social impact of artificial intelligence, found the problem to be pervasive among the jurisdictions it studied. This has significant implications for the efficacy of predictive policing and other algorithms used in the criminal justice system.

“Your system is only as good as the data that you use to train it on,” says Kate Crawford, cofounder and co-director of AI Now and an author on the study. “If the data itself is incorrect, it will cause more police resources to be focused on the same over-surveilled and often racially

targeted communities. So what you've done is actually a type of tech-washing where people who use these systems assume that they are somehow more neutral or objective, but in actual fact they have ingrained a form of unconstitutionality or illegality."

The researchers examined 13 jurisdictions, focusing on those that have used predictive policing systems and been subject to a government-commissioned investigation. The latter requirement ensured that the policing practices had legally verifiable documentation. In nine of the jurisdictions, they found strong evidence that the systems had been trained on "dirty data."

The problem wasn't just data skewed by disproportionate targeting of minorities, as in New Orleans. In some cases, police departments had a culture of purposely manipulating or falsifying data under intense political pressure to bring down official crime rates. In New York, for example, in order to artificially deflate crime statistics, precinct commanders regularly asked victims at crime scenes not to file complaints. Some police officers even planted drugs on innocent people to meet their quotas for arrests. In modern-day predictive policing systems, which rely on machine learning to forecast crime, those corrupted data points become legitimate predictors.

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IBM's 'Debater AI' Loses Debate To Human

Now computer AI can argue with you. IBM again pushes the envelope with its advanced AI software/hardware to take on a champion human debater, but it lost. The next debate may turn out differently. □ TN Editor

The subject under debate was whether the government should subsidize preschools. But the real question was whether a machine called IBM Debater could out-argue a top-ranked human debater.

The answer, on Monday night, was no.

Harish Natarajan, the grand finalist at the 2016 World Debating Championships, swayed more among an audience of hundreds toward his point of view than the AI-powered IBM Debater did toward its. Humans, at least those equipped with degrees from Oxford and Cambridge universities, can still prevail when it comes to the subtleties of knowledge, persuasion and argument.

It wasn't a momentous headline victory like we saw when IBM's Deep

Blue computers beat the best human chess player in 1997 or Google's AlphaGo vanquish the world's best human players of the ancient game of Go in 2017. But IBM still showed that artificial intelligence can be useful in situations where there's ambiguity and debate, not just a simple score to judge who won a game.

"What really struck me is the potential value of IBM Debater when [combined] with a human being," Natarajan said after the debate. IBM's AI was able to dig through mountains of information and offer useful context for that knowledge, he said.

It was the second time IBM Debater took on humans in public, though it's taken part in dozens of debates behind Big Blue's walls. In the first IBM Debater competition, the AI defeated one human debater soundly while losing a closer competition with another. This time, though, the human opponent was tougher — indeed, IBM researchers involved in the years-long project expected their AI would lose.

IBM Debater lost, but there's no question it won in a way: Listening to it, you evaluate what it's saying, not just that it's a computer saying something. The machine marshaled its argument, broke that down into a few points and backed them up with data from various studies. It wasn't perfect, but it was on point.

And, weirdly for an AI, it told us how Homo sapiens ought to behave.

"Giving opportunities to the less fortunate should be a moral obligation for any human being," IBM Debater said.

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AI Algorithms Are Writing Stories, Replacing Reporters

If words are a medium of creative human communication, how can an inhuman AI computer program add to knowledge? The answer is that it cannot, and in fact, it dumbs it down. Why should “artificial” replace the real thing? □ TN Editor

As reporters and editors find themselves the victims of layoffs at digital publishers and traditional newspaper chains alike, journalism generated by machine is on the rise.

Roughly a third of the content published by Bloomberg News uses some form of automated technology. The system used by the company, Cyborg, is able to assist reporters in churning out thousands of articles on company earnings reports each quarter.

The program can dissect a financial report the moment it appears and spit out an immediate news story that includes the most pertinent facts and figures. And unlike business reporters, who find working on that kind of thing a snooze, it does so without complaint.

Untiring and accurate, Cyborg helps Bloomberg in its race against

Reuters, its main rival in the field of quick-twitch business financial journalism, as well as giving it a fighting chance against a more recent player in the information race, hedge funds, which use artificial intelligence to serve their clients fresh facts.

“The financial markets are ahead of others in this,” said John Micklethwait, the editor in chief of Bloomberg.

In addition to covering company earnings for Bloomberg, robot reporters have been prolific producers of articles on minor league baseball for The Associated Press, high school football for The Washington Post and earthquakes for The Los Angeles Times.

Examples of machine-generated articles from The Associated Press:

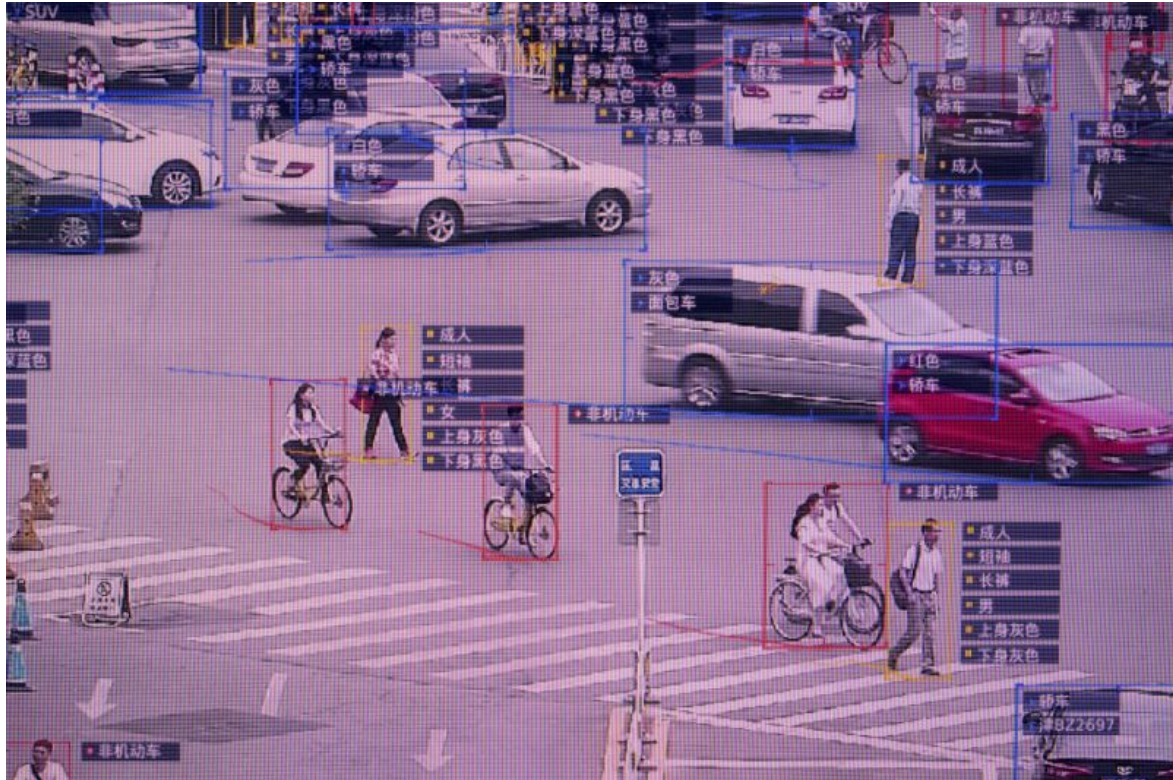
TYSONS CORNER, Va. (AP) — MicroStrategy Inc. (MSTR) on Tuesday reported fourth-quarter net income of \$3.3 million, after reporting a loss in the same period a year earlier.

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Jonathan Davis hit for the cycle, as the New Hampshire Fisher Cats topped the Portland Sea Dogs 10-3 on Tuesday.

Last week, The Guardian’s Australia edition published its first machine-assisted article, an account of annual political donations to the country’s political parties. And Forbes recently announced that it was testing a tool called Bertie to provide reporters with rough drafts and story templates.

As the use of artificial intelligence has become a part of the industry’s toolbox, journalism executives say it is not a threat to human employees. Rather, the idea is to allow journalists to spend more time on substantive work.

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AI Deep Learning ‘Godfather’ Yoshua Bengio Alarmed Over Use In China To Dominate Society

A principal inventor of AI, Bengio says “This is the 1984 Big Brother scenario”. Bengio and his fellow Technocrat scientists should have thought about this way before now, but it reflects their Pollyanna-ish view of humanity. □ TN Editor

Yoshua Bengio, a Canadian computer scientist who helped pioneer the techniques underpinning much of the current excitement around artificial intelligence, is worried about China’s use of AI for surveillance and political control.

Bengio, who is also a co-founder of Montreal-based AI software company Element AI, said he was concerned about the technology he helped

create being used for controlling people's behavior and influencing their minds.

"This is the 1984 Big Brother scenario," he said in an interview. "I think it's becoming more and more scary."

Bengio, a professor at the University of Montreal, is considered one of the three "godfathers" of deep learning, along with Yann LeCun and Geoff Hinton. It's a technology that uses neural networks — a kind of software loosely based on aspects of the human brain — to make predictions based on data. It's responsible for recent advances in facial recognition, natural language processing, translation, and recommendation algorithms.

Deep learning requires a large amount of data to provide examples from which to learn — but China, with its vast population and system of state record-keeping, has a lot of that.

The Chinese government has begun using closed circuit video cameras and facial recognition to monitor what its citizens do in public, from jaywalking to engaging in political dissent. It's also created a National Credit Information Sharing Platform, which is being used to blacklist rail and air passengers for "anti-social" behavior and is considering expanding uses of this system to other situations.

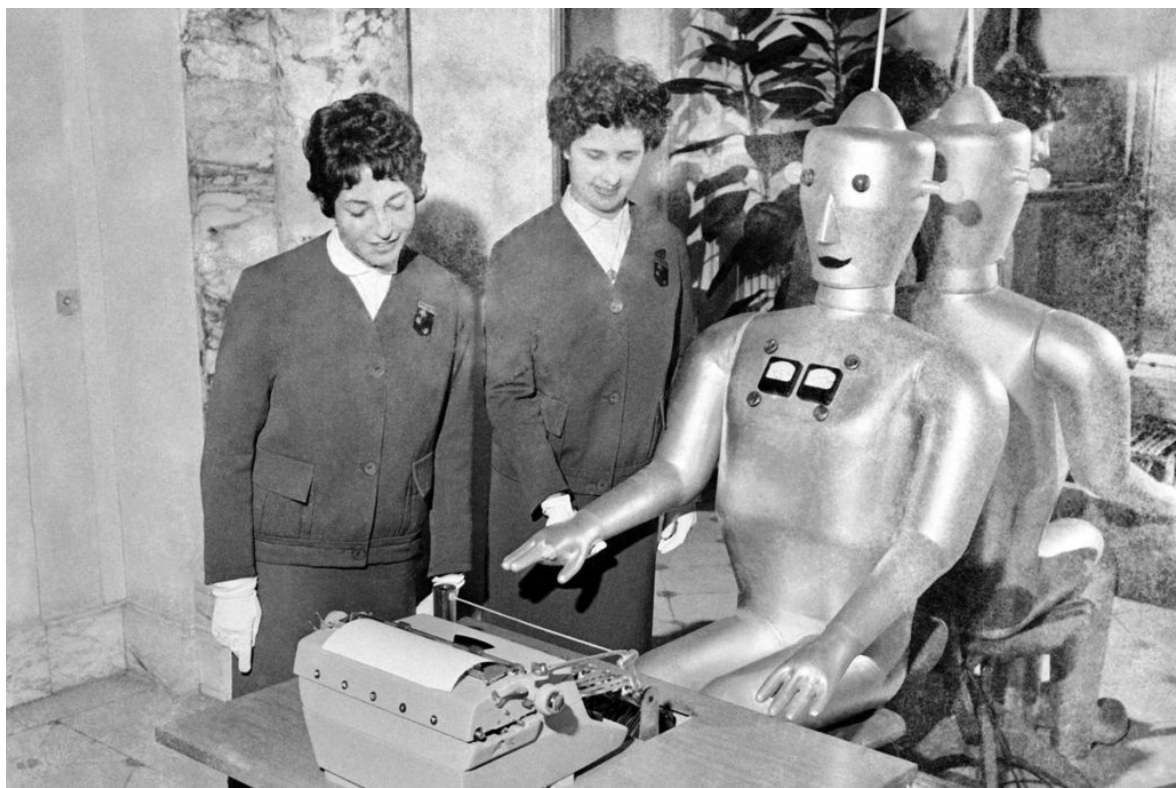
"The use of your face to track you should be highly regulated," Bengio said.

Bengio is not alone in his concern over China's use-cases for AI. Billionaire George Soros recently used a speech at the World Economic Forum on Jan. 24, to highlight the risks the country's use of AI poses to civil liberties and minority rights.

Unlike some peers, Bengio, who heads the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms (Mila), has resisted the temptation to work for a large, advertising-driven technology company. He said responsible development of AI may require some large technology companies to change the way they operate.

The amount of data large tech companies control is also a concern. He said the creation of data trusts — non-profit entities or legal frameworks under which people own their data and allow it be used only for certain purposes — might be one solution. If a trust held enough data, it could negotiate better terms with big tech companies that needed it, he said Thursday during a talk at Amnesty International U.K.'s office in London.

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The Merging Of Government With Artificial Intelligence

Technocrats are directly encroaching upon government functions. A Federal Data Strategy for AI was created in 2018 providing standards across the entire Federal government on the use of Artificial Intelligence. □ TN Editor

Private businesses already use AI to find efficiencies in their own

business and improve the return-on-investment of products and projects.

At the risk of dating myself, one of my favorite movies growing up as a kid was “WarGames” starring Matthew Broderick. I didn’t realize it at the time, but in the climactic scene, the large supercomputer ‘WOPR’ operated by the Defense Department, showed artificial intelligence capabilities. By playing tic-tac-toe against itself, it learned a lesson that prevented global thermonuclear war.

In many ways, Hollywood has warped what many think of when they first hear the term artificial intelligence, or AI. My thoughts used to go to movies like “The Terminator” or “The Matrix” where sentient machines develop the ability to think for themselves and try to overthrow humankind. While this makes for an exciting movie plot, AI has much more tangible—and less threatening—benefits, particularly for government.

In 2018, U.S. Chief Information Officer Suzette Kent announced the creation of the first Federal Data Strategy that will serve as a foundation for how agencies use AI.

Her analogy in describing the need for the strategy was compelling.

“Technology modernization allows us the opportunity to rethink our foundation,” Kent said at an event announcing the strategy. “We have to move aggressively. We don’t want to build the high-speed train without the track.”

AI can serve as part of that track. As the government collects more and more data, the need for solutions to drive true value from that data grows in importance. AI, in conjunction with big data and analytics, can deliver that baseline value and go beyond traditional solutions to find deeper insights.

Other governments have recognized this as well. For example, the United Arab Emirates was the first nation to appoint a senior cabinet official solely focused on AI empowerment and oversight within the government, appointing a Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence in October 2017. Canada was the first nation to release a national AI

strategy. And China has released a 3-year plan to be a leader ... if not *the* leader ... in AI.

Understanding AI

So, for those of us whose understanding of AI has heretofore been solely that of the Hollywood blockbuster, AI is the science of training systems to emulate specific human tasks through learning and automation. In short, it's a technology that makes it possible for machines to learn from experience, adjust to new inputs and perform specific human tasks, such as pattern recognition, finding anomalies in data, image and video analytics, and more. Specific to analytics, AI can help analytics programs in government find connections and trends in the data that human analysts might miss due to scale, complexity, or other factors ... and it can do it at a much faster speed. AI can find context in data, gaining insight from previous discoveries to create better outcomes in the future. From an analytics perspective, AI tends to focus in these areas:

- **Machine learning:** Machine learning and deep learning find insights hidden in data without explicitly being told where to look or what to conclude. This results in better, faster and more accurate decision-making capabilities.
- **Natural Language Processing:** NLP enables understanding, interaction and communication between humans and machines, automatically extracting insights and emerging trends from large amounts of structured and unstructured content.
- **Computer vision:** Computer vision analyzes and interprets what's in an image or video through image processing, image recognition and object detection.
- **Forecasting and optimization:** Forecasting helps predict future outcomes, while optimization delivers the best results given resource constraints. This includes enabling large-scale automation for predicting outcomes and optimizing decisions.

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‘Self-Aware’ Autonomous Robot That Can Repair Itself

Hailed as a major scientific breakthrough, this robot mimics a newborn child in discovering its identity and how learn about and relate to its environment. The twist is that it can also repair itself if broken. Autonomous, self-learning robots are the reason that many experts are warning about existential threats to mankind. □ TN Editor

Scientists have created a self-aware robot capable of operating on its own without any instructions, in a major scientific breakthrough.

Engineers at Columbia University, in New York, have reached a pinnacle in robotics inventions, inventing a mechanical arm able to programme itself - even after it is malfunctioned.

Professor Hod Lipson, who leads the Creative Machines lab, where the research was carried out, likened the robotic arm to how a “newborn child” adapts to their environment and learns things on its own.

The group of scientists claimed this is the first time a robot has shown

the ability to “imagine itself” and work out its purpose, figuring out how to operate without inbuilt mechanics. In the study, published in the journal *Science Robotics*, Prof Lipson said: “This is perhaps what a newborn child does in its crib, as it learns what it is.

“We conjecture that this advantage may have also been the evolutionary origin of self-awareness in humans.

“While our robot’s ability to imagine itself is still crude compared to humans, we believe that this ability is on the path to machine self-awareness.”

The mechanical arm was designed with no knowledge of physics, geometry or dynamics.

After spending around 35 hours moving at random, the mechanism was able to grasp intensive computing knowledge and figure out its capabilities.

Shortly after the mechanical arm was able to construct its own biomechanics, allowing it to cleverly pick up and drop objects.

The robot also performed other tasks such as writing using a marker.

The researchers printed a 3D-deformed part to simulate a damaged part, to see if the robot was able to detect the fault and adapt its mechanics.

The arm was able to detect the malfunction, and retrained its system to continue performing tasks despite the damaged part.

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