

Is AI eating neoliberalism?

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As The Guardian [reports this morning](#):

Anthropic is warning that some of its artificial intelligence models could soon become “self-replicating” and find ways to infiltrate internet-connected devices, such as smart fridges and automatic vacuum cleaners.

Once this happens, the company said, the models could power themselves within these devices without the need of datacenters. Such self-replication would represent a major loss of control of a runaway AI model.

This is the first of three stories that I have heard in the last 24 hours about the threat from AI to those who have propagated it.

The second was told to me by a young person who said that almost perfect copies of Sony games have now been created by AI to run on Microsoft Xbox terminals. He said the motivation comes from Sony’s desire to make these games rental-only products now, denying the opportunity to own them. The replicators resented this philosophy.

The third was a story I came across that said the notoriously expensive Adobe software suite has apparently now been cloned by AI in a way that makes the differences seem totally insignificant, with free downloads now available.

To make it clear, I do not condone the abuse of copyright. Because I do not game, whatever happens to Sony software is of little consequence to me. I would not use cloned Adobe software. But the political-economic significance of all three of these stories cannot be avoided.

AI companies are warning that their own products might be dangerous, and could even consume them.

At the same time, software entities whose extraordinary profits have been generated by charging economic rents totally disproportionate to the cost of the products they

supply now face the prospect that AI could kill their golden goose.

No doubt, other examples exist. I have just related the ones I have heard very recently.

The point should be obvious. AI is, in very many ways, the ultimate neoliberal product. It should deliver the perfect, rational, consistent, obedient economic agent, more than capable of replicating and then replacing totally unreliable human beings. If all were going according to plan, economists' fantasies about the models they create would be coming true.

But not everything is going according to plan. It appears that what was planned has been well and truly corrupted. That is because it would seem that AI has now created the capacity to destroy much of the rentier neoliberal economic model on which its creation depended, but which it might make impossible to perpetuate. In effect, neoliberal AI is eating itself.

As someone who thinks the neoliberal model is, in itself, corrupt, I might want to celebrate that.

My problem is that the scale of chaos that might be unleashed as a result is difficult to imagine.

Schumpeter talked about creative destruction, but I sense there will be nothing creative in this process, not that I ever believed that there was in what Schumpeter said.

So pervasive is IT, and so intense is its networking, that the prospect of economic collapse resulting from these processes is very real. What might happen is anyone's guess at the moment, but none of the options I can foresee seems very attractive.

I will add that to my list of worries, and to the list of things about which our government appears quite unconcerned.