AI Taking away the enjoyment of finding things out

Richard Feynman:

Source: Sophie Maclean

The goal of Mathematicians is as well to build theory around it. A great example he uses is the Alan Turing example that he created a small little lemma to basically disprove Hilberts problem. If he did not create the Turing machine then we would not have had the computers today.

As a current graduate student, I kind of have studied through higher education from the era when AI was essentially useless for math to what we have now. One thing that I've noticed has changed so much in education in the last couple of years is how often I actually study with my peers. During my undergrad, I felt like in most classes that I took there would be people who were really engaged with the material and willing to work through problem sets and have deeper discussions about the math/physics we were working on. However, now I feel like my peers don't want to engage in this kind of discourse because they can get their questions answered with more rigor and efficiency by a model, rather than by learning from their peers. Even the percentage of the class that will go to professors' office hours has seemed to decrease as AI gets better and more accurate at explaining concepts. I do sometimes miss the community of problem-solving, as it seems harder to find these days.

"in so far as there is joy in doing it" hides a lot. The purpose of teaching others (why teach if AI teaches better?), economic purpose (why do it if it makes less money? the art industry is well known for having hypercompetitive hellscape job markets), prestige purpose (why do it if the machine always gets there first? who finds it impressive to learn what is already known?). Reduced purpose is reduced meaning is reduced joy.

The main problem I am having with AIs is that having "problem solving skill" and doing "problem solving" (as a human) is no longer economically efficient. AI excels at problem solving, and the joy I feel in math and programming is the problem solving itself, not the end result

"I want AI to do my laundry and dishes so I can focus on art, not for AI to do my art so I can do my laundry and dishes."

real mathematicians constantly use computers to brute force things and it has always been controversial. when computers started to brute force through unsolved problems in the 60s it was super controversial and everyone said math was dead. many people said there was no possible role a mathematician could have anymore, and would just become a monkey hammering the computer buttons and slowly lose all understanding. many people said that computer results were meaningless because it took no human ingenuity to get us there. (this was in the 60s btw)

We will want to understand the problems AI solved! That is the next frontier of mathematics. Until the moment comes that AI can also explain to mathematicians how they came up with the proof, new methods they used, to make it human understandable. But even then, you need lots of back ground knowledge to understand these higher forms of mathematics. You basically need to study the mathematics from the basics and then work your way upwords i.e calculus - > lineara algebra - > anlysis -> group theory -> topology etcetera.

And on you're analogy I think its like having someone annoying watching a movie and then telling you oh this guy dies at the end. You don't even want to continue cos the life has been sucked out of the experience

The Paradox of Efficiency

Disease treatments without understanding people would be happy with it.

We cheat the

There's so much more being lost. I'm a software developer so I think often my criticisms fall flat because people think I'm just worried about losing my job, but what I'm most worried about is losing the societal glue of having to rely on each other's skillsets since way back in our evolution, both for productivity and for passing that knowledge on. I don't want to live in a world where machines make all the breakthroughs - I want to benefit from the skills of humans who can do something I can't. I want to be able to repay that with my own knowledge. I want to be able to have art on the wall that was drawn by someone with a talent and a passion I lack.

2 years ago I felt the same about computer science. I love the journey to code, find creative solutions and combine modular parts of a system, into a whole product which is working. The last 3 months I just stopped mentally working as computer scientist anymore. I lost my whole fun and enjoyment in it and writing this makes me sad, because I have no clue how to feed my family.

There is a genuine feeling, of self-disappointment and resentment for humanity as a whole, when you realize you dont even need to think any more because we chose to make a machine that takes away all the learning and knowledge steps we had to do ourselves, to evolve as a species. All the little things that actually make you grow in a field. All the misteps and the joy of eventually overcoming them to earn our places

Doubt all you want, that doesn't mean your doubt is founded in reality. A train still runs even if no one understands how it works. Math is still correct even if humans don't understand it. Cures to diseases that AI may find will still work if we don't understand them fully just like anesthesia. Results are the only thing that matter, the rest like human understanding is egotistical.

it is not just maths but all forms of human endeavour where the journey, the process, the reflection, the struggle and creativity are what give meaning - that is where all the value in both art and science lie and maths is a far more creative pursuit than people may realise. Its like seeing som AI art that looks half-decent -raer as they are, but even then, there is no human experience, no process, no connection with the wonder that a human made it - art is just reduced to a background, to knick-knacks and nothing has meaning.

But I think it’s important to focus on the big picture. If OpenAI wanted to destroy the mathematical community, this would be a great way to go about it. Open problems are a resource that the mathematical community developed over decades or even centuries. The value they have is the value we have given them. They provide structure, a yardstick for progress and long-term goals. The advent of AI was always going to be a seismic shock, but this huge dump of papers is a tsunami that we have no time to prepare for. It’s clear that OpenAI will happily wash away our community’s structures to further their financial interests.

There is a long list of mathematical structures and norms that OpenAI seems to be intent on damaging. By refusing to name the authors of their papers, they imply that mathematics is no longer a human endeavour. They don’t submit their results to journals, which both implies that the norms of the mathematical community are defunct and makes it impossible for the community to digest their results. OpenAI haven’t shared fundamental information about how the problems are selected or the failure rates of their attempts. This information should be a necessary requirement for any serious scientific discussion of their tools. And of course there is the basic financial injustice that their hugely valuable models learned to reason by copying the very reasoning that our community made available for free through the Open Access movement.

I hope the mathematical community can adjust our practices and norms quickly enough to survive the shock of these developments, but I am fearful.

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