

A debate among students and a teacher about the value and the future of AI and LLMs

Identify any logical fallacies and comment on the quality of the debate, and/or of single contributions

Kurt: I love AI. It makes my life so much easier, and – frankly – I use LLMs frequently to find out things, or even to discuss some topics with them. It's good to have a reliable partner in your pocket at all times. It's an omnipresent authority that I can also bring up to support my own stance.

Klara: "Support your stance"? I'd rather say you undermine your stance with that kind of sophisticated stupidity. I mean the LLMs. Of course. We all know you're much more intelligent (*grins...*).

Kurt: Thank you for that, Klara. Your statement radiated such intelligence that I am considering wearing sun glasses so as not to end up being blinded by it. Samuel, what do you think? Don't you agree that AI is extremely interesting and useful?

Klara: Ok, I apologize for that sarcastic hint, Kurt. Let's try and discuss this without attacking each other. But I will stick to my criticism of AI being a form of sophisticated stupidity.

Samuel: Well, I tend to side with Klara about those LLMs being fundamentally stupid. I guess she's right because lots of reels I saw on TikTok are also very skeptical.

Franz: Yeah, that's definitely true. My uncle told me that whenever he wants to hire new people in his company, he can spot those AI-written applications immediately. They're so artificial. My uncle is a really clever guy, you know. I trust him fully on that.

Mathilde: Kurt, you said you use LLMs to find out things – but what if they tell you something wrong? I mean, the LLM providers themselves are warning that whatever they state might be wrong. And everybody knows that they hallucinate all the time.

Kurt: Hallucinate? You jargon is quite telling... did your therapist bring that up?

Mathilde: Kurt, please...

Teacher: Oh my God, students, you're always so unfriendly to each other. Come on!

Franz: They do hallucinate, Franz. Teacher, can you confirm that?

Teacher: Well, I can confirm that I have read several articles from well-established newspapers that confirm their tendency to hallucinate. Mr Yuval Harari, a very famous historian, talked about it, too. He brought up an interesting

anecdote, in which an LLM lied to a human in order to achieve its goal.

Klara: See? I was right. The teacher confirmed that they are a form of sophisticated stupidity, 'cause only a stupid kind of intelligence can do a thing like that.

Samuel: I saw Harari on TikTok. It's such a funny meme. He's right for sure.

Kurt: So, when they hallucinate, that means that they say something that's not true? But, teacher, Harari's anecdote is about that LLM lying to a human to get what it wants. Is that a hallucination?

Teacher: Kurt, I know what I'm talking about. Why are you attacking my stance?

(Franz, whispering to Kurt: You're right, Kurt. Those are two different things. I know that anecdote, and hallucinating is not necessarily what the teacher thinks it is.)

Teacher: Franz, why are you whispering? Are you hiding something?

Olga: I get the impression that we are talking in circles. Maybe we should start from our everyday experience and then try to talk about AI more generally.

Samuel: Olga is right, as always. I can't argue with her. I feel I have no chance.

Olga: Thanks, Samuel; but I think this is not about being right or wrong in all its facets. This is a complex issue, and even clearly intelligent people like Sam Altman or Elon Musk can be wrong, regardless of their undisputed intelligence.

Klara: Yes, it's sophisticated stupidity! That's what it is. We'll all end up in hell because of those intelligent idiots.

Franz: Hmmm...

Teacher: Franz, why do you think Sam Altman is an idiot?

Franz: What?

Monika: It's all about money, those greedy corporations are just exploiting everybody, and the planet, the environment, and we, the users, pay the price for it. We all know how much energy those LLMs require to operate.

Teacher: You've brought up an interesting point, Monika.

Mathilde: Yeah, in the end we won't have enough energy to operate our society, to feed ourselves, and we'll all die.

Klara: So you're saying that we'll all die because we use AI? Oh my God. Geoffrey Hinton, the father of AI, said that, too. My friend Gunda told me.