Artificial Intelligence at School

Learning Café

October 17, 2023

Past Learning Cafes:

- **Spring 2016**   Assessments in School
- **Fall 2016**   Our Learning Commitment
- **Spring 2017**   Our Learning Commitment
- **Fall 2017**   When the News Enters the Classroom
- **Spring 2018**   Intellectual Engagement in the Classroom
- **Fall 2018**   Feedback: In School & At Home
- **Spring 2019**   Diversity: In School, at Home, in our Community
- **Fall 2019**   John Jay Mascot and Moving Forward Together
- *Spring 2020 – Spring 2021 COVID*
- **Fall 2021**   Learning from the Pandemic Experience
- **Spring 2022:**   Inclusion
- **Fall 2022:**   Belonging
- **Spring 2023**:   Sustainability at KLSD

Structure of Tonight's Cafe

- 3 brief presentations
- 3 rounds of conversations
- Note takers at each table so District holds on to:
  - The conversations
  - The thinking
  - The feedback

Inclusive Listening Practices

Recognize that we likely all arrived with somewhat different hopes and expectations for tonight

Assume good intentions

Monitor your own expectations and your "air-time"

Remain mindful of body language and facial expressions, whole body listening

Expect and accept non-closure

Tonight is an effort to understand what is important to each person in this room, to think together, and to gather thoughts that help shape our future thinking

Tonight's 3 Rounds

- Round One: What are we talking about when we talk about AI in school?

- Round Two: Cause for Concern?

- Round Three: Cause for Optimism?

The Humility that comes with knowing we have far more questions than answers!

Round One:

What do we mean by "Artificial Intelligence" at school?

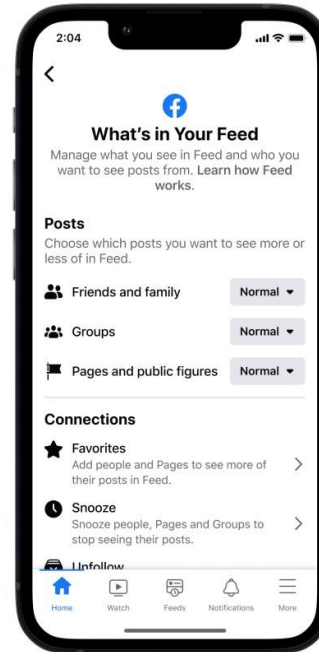Machine Learning is not new and it is all around us:

Hey, Siri

Google Maps

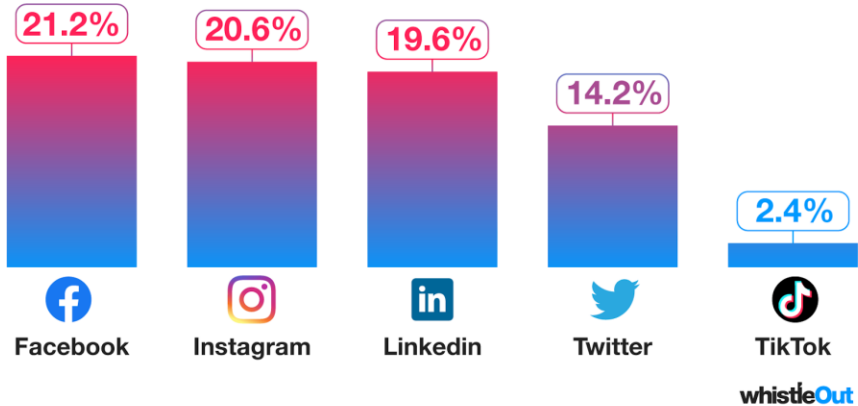THE YOUTUBE ALGORITHM

Instagram

Our experiences and preferences are already significantly impacting how we interact with and navigate through the world:
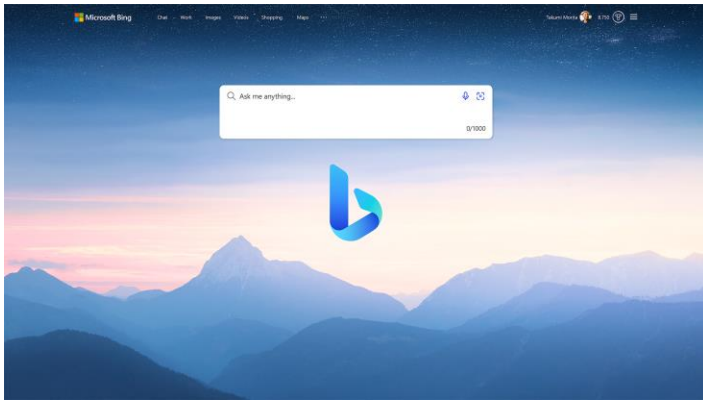
The presence of algorithms in our lives will only continue to grow:

Generative A.I.

What can generative AI already do?

For students?

For teachers?

For parents?

Demonstration

Round One Discussion Questions

- Introduce yourselves

- What brought you to tonight's Café?

- What are your initial thoughts about the role of AI at school and in the learning process?

Time to Move (and get a snack)

Round 2: Cause for Concern

Concern and hesitancy about technological evolutions is not a new phenomenon.

"This discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves."

Socrates on …

Writing!

A respected Swiss scientist, Conrad Gessner, might have been the first to raise the alarm about the effects of information overload. In a landmark book, he described how the modern world overwhelmed people with data and that this overabundance was both "confusing and harmful" to the mind.

Gessner died in 1565. The paragraph above is about …

the printing press.
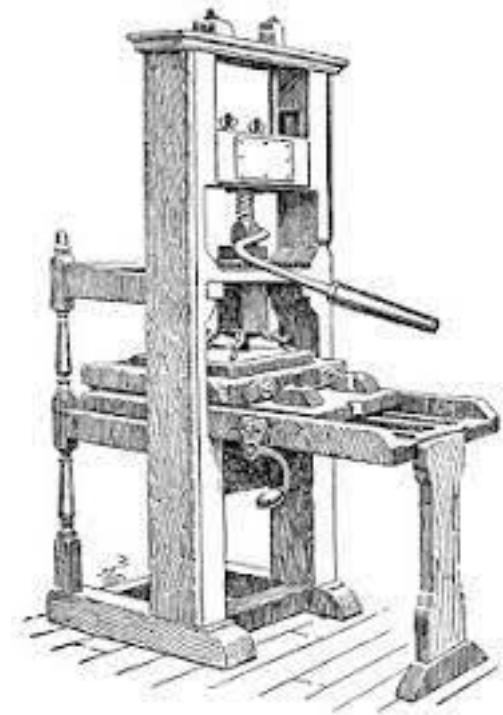
While many people were thrilled with all the new inventions, some people were afraid of electricity and wary of bringing it into their homes. They were afraid to let their children near this strange new power source. Many social critics of the day saw electricity as an end to a simpler, less hectic way of life.

History of Electricity,

National Energy Education Project

Here is a device, whose voice is everywhere. . . . We may question the quality of its offering for our children, we may approve or deplore its entertainments and enchantments; but we are powerless to shut it out . . . it comes into our very homes and captures our children before our very eyes.

The Radio

(Frank, as cited in Dennis, 1998)

Media historian Ellen Wartella has noted how "opponents voiced concerns about how television might hurt radio, conversation, reading, and the patterns of family living and result in the further vulgarization of American culture."

Slate Magazine on Television, February 15, 2010

An 1883 article in the weekly medical journal the *Sanitarian* argued that schools "exhaust the children's brains and nervous systems with complex and multiple studies, and ruin their bodies by protracted imprisonment." Meanwhile, excessive study was considered a leading cause of madness by the medical community.

As technological advances have multiplied so have the sources of concern:

- The Internet

- WiFi

- Social Media

- Artificial Intelligence

Recent headlines:

'The Godfather of A.I.' Leaves Google and Warns of Danger Ahead

For half a century, Geoffrey Hinton nurtured the technology at the heart of chatbots like ChatGPT. Now he worries it will cause serious harm.

A.I. Poses 'Risk of Extinction,' Industry Leaders Warn

Leaders from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, Anthropic and other A.I. labs warn that future systems could be as deadly as pandemics and nuclear weapons.

OPINION
EZRA KLEIN

The Imminent Danger of A.I. Is One We're Not Talking About

Feb. 26, 2023

Daniel Dennett's Been Thinking About Thinking—and AI

Where do you see AI going? Do you think that it's something we should be concerned about?

A thousand times yes. In fact, in the last few months, I've been devoting almost all my energy to this. I did a piece for *The Atlantic* called "The Problem of Counterfeit People." I'm just back from Santa Fe, where I gave a talk to a group and said the whole point of my talk was to scare the bejesus out of them.

I'm an alarmist, but I think there's every cause for alarm. We really are at risk of a pandemic of fake people that could destroy human trust, could destroy civilization. It's as bad as that. I say to everybody I've talked to about this, "If you can show that I'm wrong, I will be so grateful to you." But right now, I don't see any flaws in my argument, and it scares me.

Equity and Bias Concerns

- Who has access? Who will benefit the most from AI?

- How might algorithmic bias impact the daily lives of people who are already marginalized?

- Since AI is using existing data bases that have inherited existing biases, will it simply continue to promulgate and possibly further entrench those biases?

More
than a
Glitch

< Confronting Race, >
< Gender, >
< and Ability Bias >
< in Tech >

Meredith Broussard

Meredith Broussard is Associate Professor at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute of NYU and Research Director at the NYU Alliance for Public Interest Technology.

The word "glitch" implies an incidental error, as easy to patch up as it is to identify. But what if racism, sexism, and ableism aren't just bugs in mostly functional machinery – they're coded into the system itself?

In More than a Glitch, Meredith Broussard demonstrates how technological neutrality is a myth and why algorithms need to be held accountable.

(Inside Cover, More than a Glitch)

School Specific Concerns:

- Student over reliance on AI and lack of skill/knowledge/creativity development
- Temptation to take short cuts that reduce meaningful learning
- Privacy issues
- Impact of bias on skill and knowledge development
- Further increase in inequity of access
- Further impact on social disconnection

Round Two
Discussion Questions

- Do you think that concerns about AI are similar to the types of concerns that have arisen historically in response to new technology, or does AI feel like something altogether different and cause for a higher level of concern? Why or why not?

- At this table, do your concerns about AI outweigh your hopes, or not? And Why?

- Are their specific concerns you want to emphasize for the District to consider?

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Time to move again … (and get another snack)

Round 3: Cause for Optimism

Round Three
Discussion Questions

- Do you see (or can you imagine) the potential for AI to strengthen HI (human intelligence) as Kahn describes and/or in other ways be a positive contributor?

- What are the hopes at this table for how AI might be used in and around school?

- Are there any final thoughts or questions you'd like recorded by your note taker (for the district's benefit) tonight?

Thank you for being a part of our Learning Café!

Tell your friends to come to our Café in the Spring … Topic TBD.