

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 51: Understanding artificial intelligence (with Dr. Michael Finch)

Topic introduction

Today we wrestle again with the topic of rapidly changing AI technology, cultural eras, and principles of discipleship that include a view towards relationship with machines in the future with Dr. Michael Finch of Bryan College.

Key terms: intelligence, artificial intelligence, machine learning, self-learning/programming, tasks versus thinking, media ecology, technological determinism, oral culture, democratization of information, literate era, digital era

Questions

What is AI? How does it work?

How has science fiction influenced our thinking in the area of machine learning and “intelligence”?

Do machines think? Do machines learn? Do machines feel? Do machines have self-awareness? Explain your answers.

Where do we see AI at work? How is it working in our day-to-day lives?

What are good limits and how do we set them? Side note: Where can we begin practicing healthy limits in our own self-disciplines?

How is man’s creation of machines that can also create an image-bearing act? How do we keep our work in a healthy space/on a healthy trajectory? (Hint: What is our reference point for all our work? To whom do we submit it?)

What is one of the best ways we can treat AI? (What can and should we expect from it?) What would be unhealthy expectations or uses of AI?

What human processes must we carefully steward to maximize our own growth potential?

What risks are inherent to this type of technology? How does Dr. Finch’s answer about what is dangerous surprise you?

How does Dr. Finch compare AI to fast food? What does he mean with this metaphor?

Rather than opting out of this cultural moment, what does it look like for us as believers to engage well, with intention, with a sense of what is right in order to shape what will be?

How does careless interaction—even disrespectful or careless speech—with a “bot” become negative or deconstructive? Why does that even matter? What does a *generative* manner of interaction (words and actions) look like? Why would it be important to practice that with a non-sentient being? (Hint: Keep both the scope of science fiction and discipleship principles in mind.) Where do *you* think AI will be in 2045?

Scriptural anchors/provision

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. — Psalm 139:5

Listen to **Concurrently: The News Coach Podcast** wherever you listen to podcasts.
Email: newscoach@wng.org | Online: concurrentlypodcast.com