

Outsourcing Our Thinking

Are we letting AI do the thinking for us?

In my last post I had argued that the biggest threat of AI was not the imminent job losses - those are a real risk, but the longer term threat is giving up our cognitive abilities and just take what the AI says at face value.

I am not against AI use, but there has to be a discipline to it. Just today, there was news of a publisher pulling a horror novel from circulation because they determined it was written by an AI. LinkedIn is full of posts very obviously generated using AI, and the comments as well are AI generated. If neither the author nor the reader are actually engaged with the content, what is gaining anything other than vanity metrics?

There is also a multitude of posts where the author is openly showcasing their awesome multi-agent I set up that posts to their social media feeds.

Again, if it's the bot researching trends, summarizing content, and generating posts, what is your value as the human other than approving the posts? Is it really your voice that your audience is engaging with, if you haven't digested the source material yourself?

I'm not sure about others, but at least on LinkedIn, the AI generated content has a typical style and my brain has started disengaging with it the moment it sniffs that signature.

At a personal level too, I noticed myself reaching out to the phone for any and every query I had. Now I'm consciously trying to do some primary analysis myself and use AI as a critic, Co-sounding board, and I notice that I'm having better conversation

with my AI. I have also stopped asking AI to draft things for me. Instead, I ask it to help refine my points, find additional relevant references while keeping my own voice.

However, all this thought process got triggered from one small incident. My OGgo is a curious one, like a CGo is supposed to be. But one fine day, he asked me for my phone, "I want to ask Gemini something." That was a wake up call. Since then, 'asking Gemini' is not allowed till you have a hypothesis, or at least some proof that you've done some thinking yourself.

Why blindly trusting AI is a bad idea, became apparent by a small experiment I ran over the weekend. We had planned to visit Dexonso Gardens, a popular garden north of Los Angeles for the Spring Bloom. My Pinedale lake goal

enough photos in most cases, but I do want to show some love to my now 12 year old D3200. I have moved beyond the stage where I carry the whole kit and fumble around changing lenses in the field. So I carry a single lens per photo trip. I had already decided to carry my 50mm prime, but asked the 3 experts I have on my phone about which of my lenses should I take.

Claude: 50mm Prime

Copilot: 11-16mm Ultra-wide

Gemini: 55-200mm Telephoto

On challenging each with the decision of the other two they all doubled down on why their recommendation was superior.

Once back home in the evening, I uploaded the same image attached to this post, to each of the assistants, informing I had decided to take the 50mm. Claude obviously was smug, but the other two flipped their bird, praised the

photo and 'realized' that it was the
bright decision all along and their
earlier recommendations / were flawed
due to assumptions.

I referred to the term 'Garbage in-
Garbage out' in my previous post.
Sue Barnett, my ex-manager at Directo,
who I deeply respect, commented on
my last post saying it was more
like 'Garbage In - Garbage Out'.
People do take on AI's output at
face value rather than critically
evaluating whether it makes sense
or not.

I'll end with an old Indian ad
slogan - 'Di khare par mol jao - apni
akal lagao' (Don't get dazzled by
show-offs, use your own brain)