What is AI?

CMSC 471 Introduction

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What is AI?

Q. What is **artificial intelligence**?

A. It is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to methods that are biologically observable.

John McCarthy

http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai/

Ok, so what is intelligence?

Q. Yes, but what is intelligence?

A. **Intelligence** is the computational part of the ability to achieve goals in the world. Varying kinds and degrees of intelligence occur in people, many animals and some machines.

http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai/

Big questions

- Can machines think?
- Must/should they think like humans do?
- Can they learn from their experience?
- Can they have common sense?
- If so, how? If not, why not?
- What does this say about human beings?
- What does this say about the mind?

A little bit of AI history

Ada Lovelace

- Babbage thought his machine was just a number cruncher
- Ada Lovelace saw that numbers can represent other entities, enabling machines to reason about anything
- But she wrote: *"The Analytical Engine has no pretentions whatever to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform."*

AI prehistory and early years

- George Boole invented **propositional logic** (1847)
- Karel Capek coined term **robot** in play R.U.R. (1921)
- John von Neumann developed **minimax** for games (1928)
- Norbert Wiener founded field of **cybernetics** (1940s)
- **Neural networks** (40s & 50s) among the earliest theories of how we might reproduce intelligence
- Isaac Asimov ***I, Robot*** (1950) Laws of Robotics
- **Turing test** proposed in 1950 & debated ever since
- Early work on **Chess** by Alan Turing, 1950

AI prehistory and early years

- Newell & Simon: Logic Theorist, GPS, 1950s, early symbolic AI for search, learning, knowledge representation
- **Marvin Minsky**: neural nets (1951), AI founder, blocks world, Society of Mind
- **John McCarthy** created Lisp (1958), coined AI (1957)
- Allen Newell, Herbert Simon: GPS (1957), AI founders
- **Noam Chomsky**: analytical approach to language (1950s)
- **Dartmouth summer conference** (1956) established AI as a discipline

1956 Dartmouth AI Project

We propose that a **2-month**, **10-man** study of artificial intelligence be carried out during the summer of 1956 at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. The study is to proceed on the basis of the conjecture that every aspect of **learning or any other feature of intelligence** can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it. An attempt will be made to find how to make machines use **language**, form **abstractions** and **concepts**, **solve kinds of problems** now reserved for humans, and improve themselves. We think that **a significant advance** can be made in one or more of these problems if a carefully selected group of scientists **work on it together for a summer**.

http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/history/dartmouth/dartmouth.html

1956 Dartmouth AI Project

Five of the attendees of the **1956** Dartmouth Summer Research Project on AI reunited in **2006**: Trenchard More, John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Oliver Selfridge, and Ray Solomonoff. Missing: Arthur Samuel, Herbert Simon, Allen Newell, Nathaniel Rochester and Claude Shannon.

Recent AI History

- AI has had it's ups and downs
  - 50-60 up, 70s down, 80s up, 90s down, 00s up then down, 10s up, 20s up, …
  - Like the stock market, the overall trend is up
- Hot topics today?
  - Neural networks again: Large Language Models, ChatGPT
  - Machine learning, data science
  - Exploiting big data
  - Autonomous vehicles, robotics
  - Text mining, seiten and spoken natural language understanding
  - Computer vision, DALL-E

Why AI?

1 Engineering: get machines to do useful things

e.g., understand spoken natural language, recognize individual people in visual scenes, autonomous vehicles, better cybersecurity, …

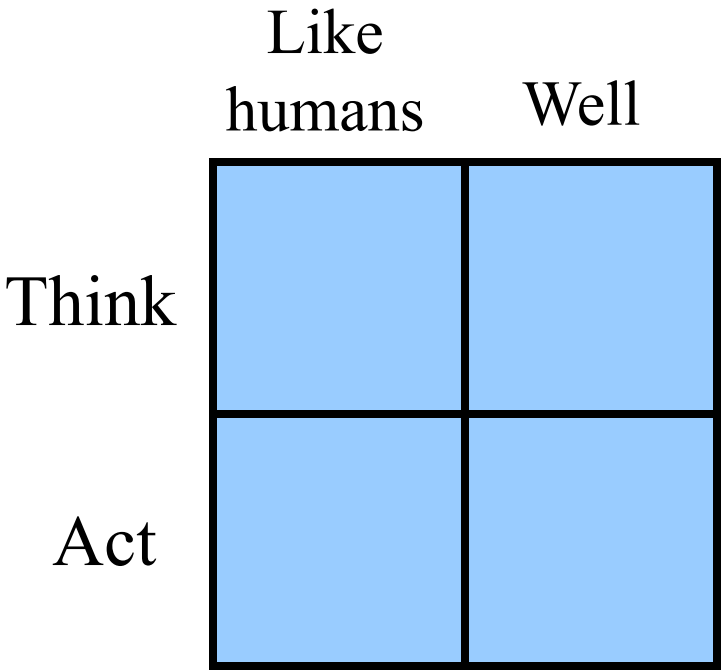
2 Cognitive Science: model and understand how natural minds and mental phenomena work

e.g., visual perception, memory, learning, language, decision making, …

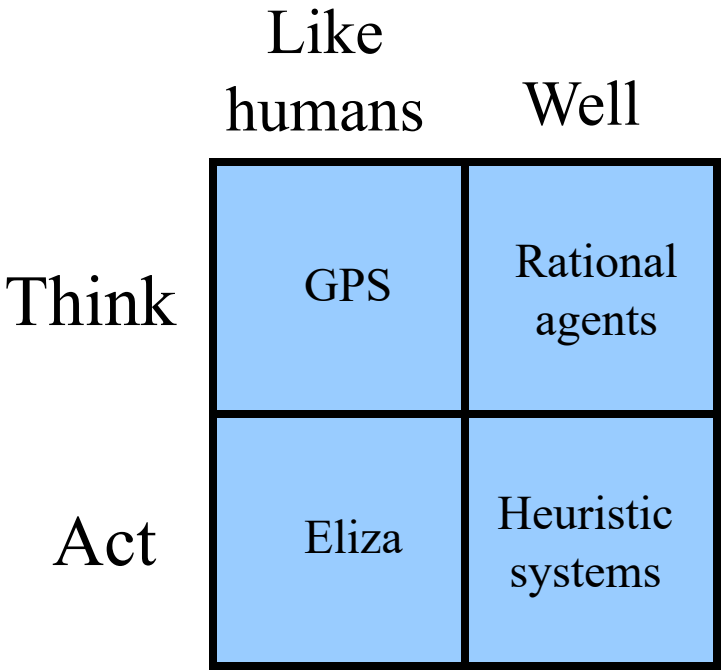
3 Philosophy: explore basic, interesting and important philosophical questions

e.g., mind-body problem, what's consciousness, free will, …

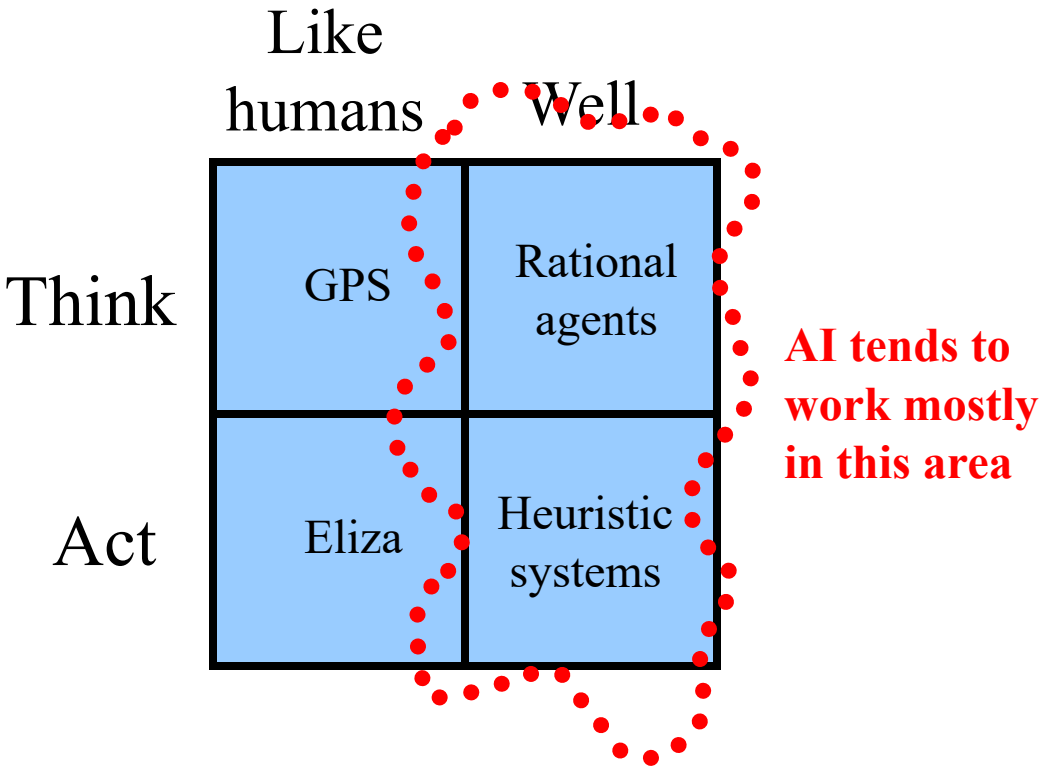
Possible AI approaches



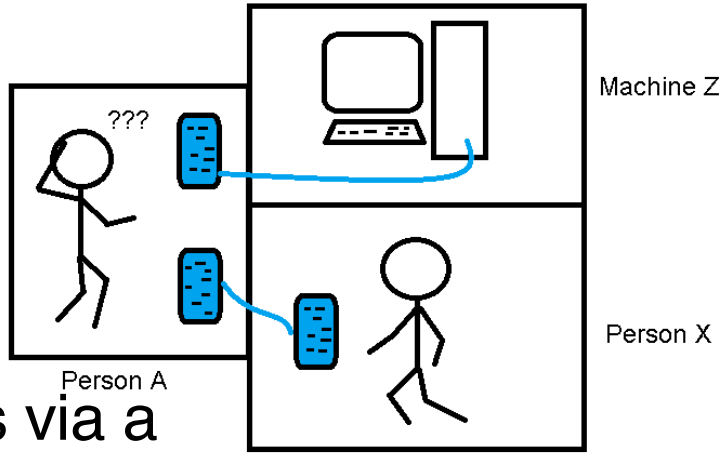
Possible approaches



Possible approaches



Turing Test[1]



- Three rooms: person, computer, interrogator
- Interrogator communicates with others via a ‘teleprinter’
- Interrogator tries to distinguish person and machine
- Machine tries to fool interrogator into believing it is the person
- Person acts naturally
- If machine succeeds, we conclude it can think

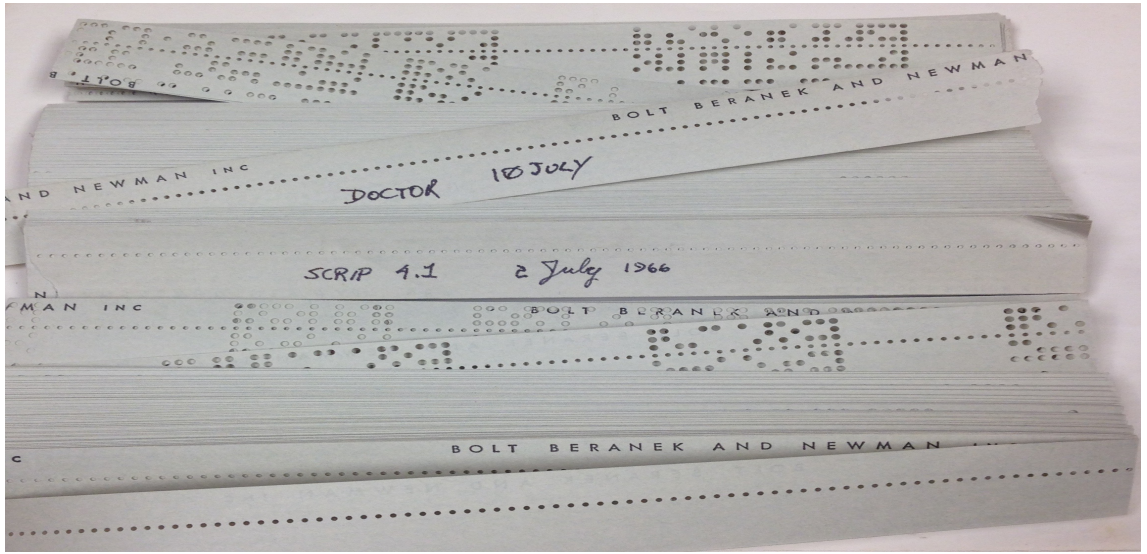
[1] Turing, Alan (October 1950), "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", *Mind.* (236): 433–460.

Eliza

- ELIZA: program simulating a psychotherapist interacting with a patient by Joe Weizenbaum (MIT), ~1966, mad-slip
- First script was DOCTOR
  - Simple collection of syntactic patterns not unlike regular expressions
  - Patterns had associated replies that might include bits of the input after simple transforms (my → your)
- Weizenbaum was shocked at reactions:
  - Psychiatrists thought it had potential
  - People unequivocally anthropomorphized Eliza
  - Many thought it solved the language understanding problem

It lives!

Amazingly, a1966 version was recently found and restored, see http://elizagen.org/



In 2021, the original ELIZA source code was discovered in MIT's Weizenbaum archives.

Eliza

This is a transcript of a conversation with an Eliza-like program found in **Emacs**

Try typing

Meta-x doctor

in your favorite Emacs

- I am the psychotherapist. Please, describe your problems. Each time you are finished talking, type RET twice.
- *i'm having a hard time with my students*
- Why do you say that?
- well, they keep asking me for money
- Maybe your plans have something to do with this.
- *what plans?*
- Is it because of your life that you say what plans?
- *No, it's because I didn't know what you were talking about*
- Is it because you didn't know what I was talking about that *you came to me?*
- *no, it's because i wanted to see if you could pass the turing test*
- Does it bother you that you wanted to see if I could really pass the turing test?
- …..
- How do you reconcile problems at school?
- *This is a waste of time. Good bye*
- My secretary will send you a bill.

Loebner Prize

- Modern version of Turing Test, held annually in 1990-2019 with a $100K cash prize
- Hugh Loebner was once director of UMBC Academic Computing Services (now DoIT)
- Restricted topic (removed in 1995) & limited time
- Participants: humans, computers and judges
- Scoring rank from least to most human
  - Highest median rank wins $2000
  - If better than a human, win $100K (Not yet)

Results: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Is it relevant to AI?

- Most AI researchers believe that the Loebner contest is not relevant to AI
- However, techniques used by some are similar to those that are driving many useful chat bot applications
  - These are supported by sophisticated speech to text and text to speech systems
  - And varying degrees of language understanding and machine learning
- Today's ChatGPT system and others are even more sophisticated

What's easy and what's hard?

- Easy: many high-level tasks usually associated with "intelligence" in people
  - E.g., symbolic integration, proving theorems, playing chess, medical diagnosis
- **Hard**: tasks many animals can do
  - walking around without running into things
  - catching prey and avoiding predators
  - Interpreting sensory info. (e.g., visual, aural, …)
  - modeling internal states of other from behavior
  - working as a team (e.g., with pack animals)
- Is there a fundamental difference between these?

What can AI systems do?

- **Computer vision:** face recognition from a large set
- **Robotics:** autonomous (mostly) automobile
- **Natural language processing:** useful machine translation, fact extraction from text, ChatGPT like systems
- **Expert systems:** medical diagnosis in narrow domains
- **Spoken language systems:** e.g., Alexa, Google Now, Siri, Cortana
- **Planning and scheduling:** Hubble Telescope experiments
- **Learning:** text categorization into ~1000 topics
- **User modeling:** Bayesian reasoning in Windows help (the infamous paper clip…)
- **Games:** Grand Master level in chess (world champion), checkers,…

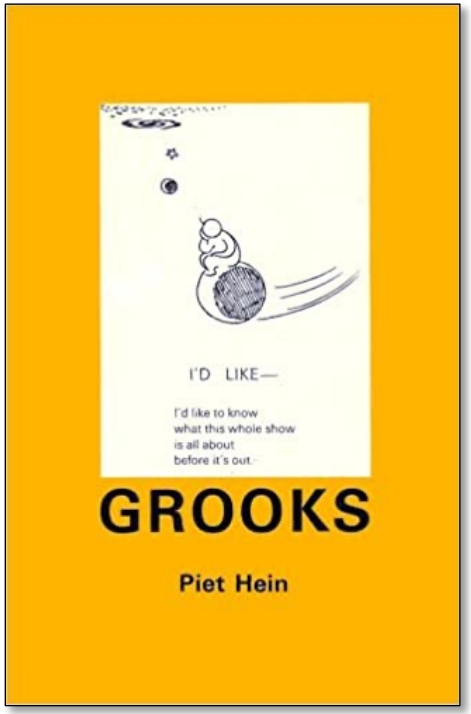
What can't AI systems do <u>well</u> yet?

- Understand natural language robustly (e.g., read and understand articles in a newspaper)
- Surf the web and find interesting knowledge
- Interpret an arbitrary visual scene
- Learn a natural language
- ~~Play Go well~~
- Construct plans in dynamic real-time domains
- Refocus attention in complex environments
- Perform life-long learning

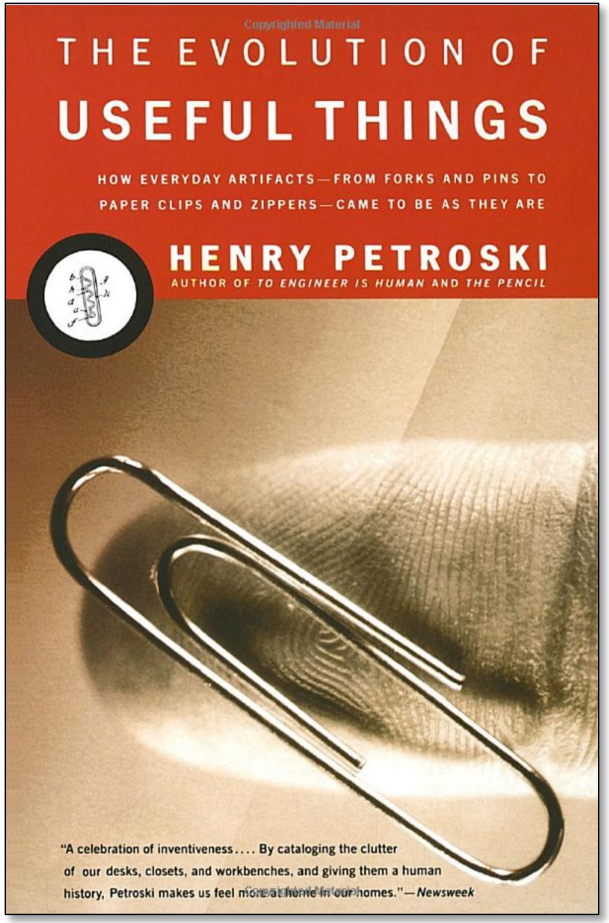
Exhibit true autonomy and intelligence!

T.T.T.

Put up in a place
where it's easy to see
the cryptic admonishment
T. T. T.
When you feel how depressingly
slowly you climb,
it's well to remember that
Things Take Time.



Piet Hein

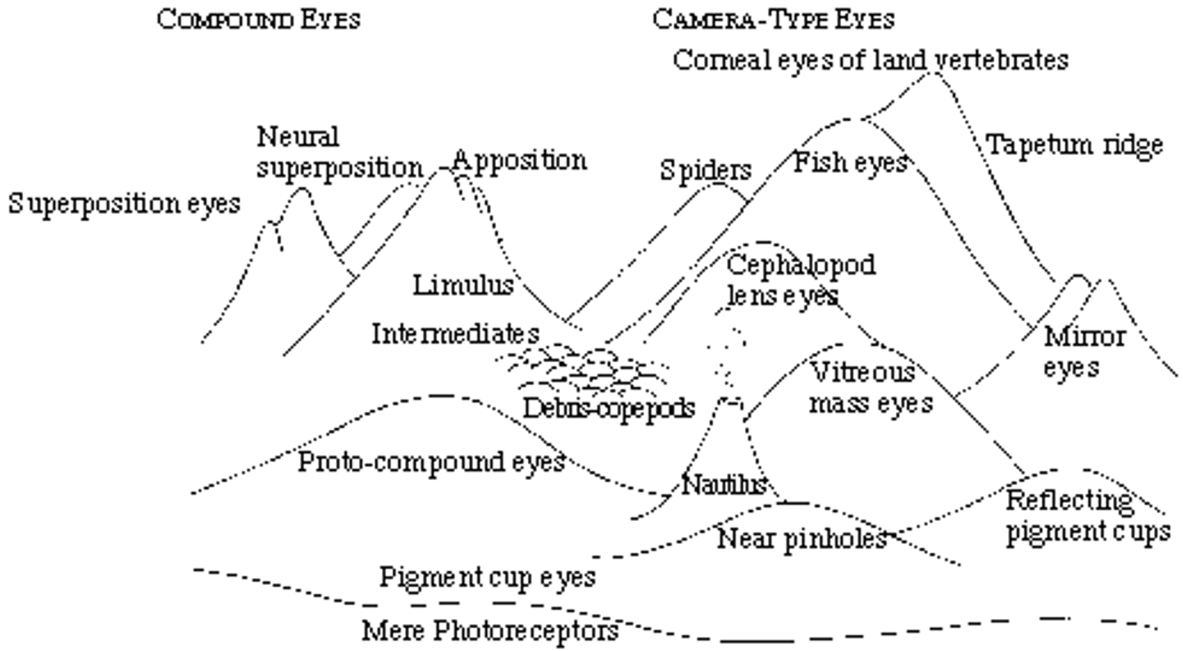


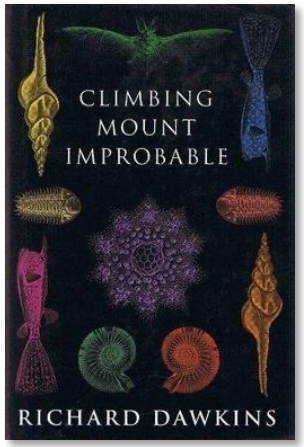
The Evolution of Useful Things: How Every-day Artifacts-From Forks and Pins to Paper Clips and Zippers-Came to be as They are

T.T.T: things take time

- Prior to the 1890's, papers were held together with straight pens
- The development of "spring steel" allowed the invention of the paper clip in 1899
- It took about 25 years (!) for the evolution of the modern "gem paperclip", considered to be optimal for general use

Climbing Mount Improbable





"The sheer height of the peak doesn't matter, so long as you don't try to scale it in a single bound. Locate the mildly sloping path and, if you have unlimited time, the ascent is only as formidable as the next step"

-- Richard Dawkins, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, 1996