



Will Computers Revolt? Preparing for the Future of Artificial Intelligence, 2nd Edition

Charles J. Simon

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The full realization of artificial intelligence (AI) isn't here yet, but will be soon. That's according to tech entrepreneur Charles J. Simon's study, first published in 2018 and now enjoying a second edition, which also argues that, in order to understand what AI will mean for humankind, we need to carefully consider what both human and artificial intelligence really mean.

Books on this subject aren't exactly rare, but Simon's benefits from having an attitude toward AI that is neither apocalyptic nor rose-tinted. His main predictions are that, in light of the current rate of progress in computing, fully conscious AI is on course to become functional within decades, and that, considering the general human inability to resist new technologies, once it arrives, it will be here to stay.

Science neophytes will especially appreciate Simon's helpful primer to the human brain and how it compares to a computer, as when he writes that "computers follow programs which explicitly determine what [they] will do" while "brain functionality is more amorphous and susceptible to improvement." Science mavens, however, may find these passages slow-going. Both groups should appreciate that he goes light on jargon, and only briefly discusses the so-called "singularity," the much-theorized-about point at which computers attain humanlike consciousness.

Simon spends far more time on his Brain Simulator II software program, using it to illustrate how AI can simulate human abilities, such as building an "internal "mental model" of the world around it. (The author notes that this software is free and open-source.)

Simon's work is grounded and fact-based, which gives his few speculations more credibility. A final section devoted to these projections runs through different scenarios, from AI turning against humans, to humans rising up against AI. Most likely, Simon writes, supercomputers will simply become too intelligent to care much about us. Cold comfort, perhaps, but Simon's scrupulous explanations will leave readers feeling more clear-sighted regarding the shape of things to come.

Also available as an ebook.