

Generative AI Isn't Your Friend

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I've been seeing more and more people insist "AI is just a tool, capitalism is the problem"... OK. A tool for whom though?

AI wasn't invented when capitalism went hunting for a "neutral" technology to misuse for evil. Capital develops and deploys destructive technologies according to capital's own needs: extraction, commodification, surveillance, control, and making everyone more economically useful and subservient to the ruling class.

So when Silicon Valley vacuums up mountains of human-made work to flood the commons with the resulting regurgitated slop, burns absurd amounts of energy, drains watersheds, raises utility bills, drives up the price of electronics, strips millions of people of their paychecks and health insurance, and force-feeds AI products to everyone it hasn't already replaced — then makes those remaining workers train the bots until they're capable of replacing them too? I'm really not interested in hearing from fucked up class traitors that we just need to "take AI back," as though this were some great symbol of liberation that capitalism stole from us.

Some people insist they're doing no harm when they install a "free" generative model on their own computer and run it locally... Obviously, the immense environmental and social costs of developing that model don't disappear when the files reach your hard drive. They've already been distributed elsewhere: onto workers, communities near mines and data centers, people living with polluted watersheds and strained electrical grids, and ecosystems burdened by energy-intensive infrastructure and electronic waste.

Training the model required vast quantities of electricity, water, hardware, and human labor — including often invisible, underpaid, and precarious data work. Running it locally may reduce some demand for remote server-side inference, but it still depends on the same extractive hardware supply chains, proprietary chips, electricity generation, software maintenance, model updates, and future rounds of training to improve the model. Local deployment may shift some costs away from you as an individual, but it does not make the system costless, autonomous, or harmless.

And "free" access can benefit the capitalists invested in the system even when users pay nothing directly. Free models build ecosystems, establish technical standards, attract developers, normalize commercial adoption, and create immense demand for GPUs, RAM, servers, and other infrastructure. They funnel users toward paid tools and enterprise services while turning them

into unpaid testers, promoters, and sources of feedback for a market investors can monetize later. The fact that you aren't personally charged for every prompt doesn't mean your access is free.

Pretending that installing a model locally suddenly ends the ongoing and rapidly expanding harm is pure cope. You'd figure anti-capitalists would understand this, but it's an argument I hear from fellow travelers all too often.

Let's look closer at the "AI is just a tool" argument. These people will usually make a calculator comparison to pretend that generative AI is merely a neutral instrument whose consequences depend entirely on how an individual chooses to use it. That coercive narrative ignores the systems that produce, deploy, and profit from this technology, as well as the purposes those systems are designed to serve. A tool is never separate from the social relations surrounding it: who controls it, whose labor produces it, who benefits from it, who bears its costs, and what forms of dependence it creates. Generative AI is not simply a passive object waiting for someone to pick it up. It is increasingly pervasive algorithmic infrastructure, built to mediate our work, relationships, creativity, and access to information, all while concentrating power and wealth in the hands of the fascist billionaires who own and control it.

Calculators don't work to replace human connection. They don't generate an endless stream of Zionist propaganda. They don't shred entire libraries of books and ripoff creative works to sell them back to us without giving credit or remuneration. They don't manufacture synthetic manipulative dopamine-delivering personalities to make people dependent on a ecologically-devastating product. They don't talk impressionable kids into doing self-harm. They don't work to become the interface through which we experience everything, replacing free will with predictive algorithms designed to strip us of the capacity for critical thinking. They don't rewire our brains so we don't resist capital's capture of our attention, our labor, our relationships, and ultimately our lives.

The same goes for every other tool these sycophants compare to AI in their propaganda. A hammer helps you hit a nail. A road helps you travel. Neither is trying to become your coworker, protege, therapist, artist, friend, teacher, lover, child and replacement all at once.

"Ignorant people always fear innovation" isn't an argument. "Luddites are reactionaries" isn't an argument. "Fucking primmies" isn't an argument. Sometimes people react with fear and fury because something is genuinely fucking terrible.

As an anarchist, I don't care about preserving AI as some sacred symbol of technological progress towards fully automated luxury space transhumanism. Fuck that.

I care about autonomy.

I care about people being in control of their own lives, creating beautiful things with their own hands, minds, and imaginations, mutually exchanging ideas without commodification, depending on each other instead of on generative products, and having relationships that aren't mediated through algorithms controlled by the absolute worst people in the world.

There's no "people's AI" for fuck's sake.

Increasing the efficiency of the industrial machine isn't liberation, it's domination: Surrendering whatever tiny morsels of freedom we have left to the algorithms meticulously designed to destroy us.

Flock cameras can help find a missing child. An SUV can protect you from injury in an accident with a cyclist. A prison cafeteria can make good soup. A nuclear explosion can revitalize nature.

None of that makes the relationship less coercive or makes the instruments of technofascism worth preserving.

"AI isn't the problem, capitalism is" is a total cop out.

Maybe we don't need to reclaim every perverse fucking thing capitalism builds.

Maybe some things don't need to be democratized, collectivized, or put in the hands of the workers.

Maybe they can just be rejected, abandoned, dismantled, and left behind.

Maybe anarchy was never about taking the machinery of domination and putting it under new management.

Maybe anarchy is about breaking the things that work to control us. Refusing the roles we're assigned by the almighty algorithm.

Rather than trying to seize the data-center industrial complex in the name of anarcho-technocracy, why not dance on the bones of Leviathan instead?

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