

ESSAY

The Fear of Technology Is Unfounded

Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'



Every birthday I buy a new trending electronic gadget for myself. I am pondering what to gift myself on my next birthday in December when I turn 77 years old. I own almost all devices needed for daily life except an iWatch. So, I am planning to buy my first iWatch on my birthday.

Please don't be mistaken, I don't buy new modern electronic devices to keep up with the Joneses. I buy them because I love them. In today's world, life circles with technology gadgets. Technology has been progressing quickly and has become an important part of our lives which provides convenience, faster communication, and entertainment. They help me in writing articles by fetching information out of the internet.

Having worked with new technologies all my working life, I have an intrinsic love of

learning about cutting-edge devices. Other than seeking pleasure, I also experience personal growth as a result of a new gadget purchase. With their aid in the last three years, I learned to read and write in Urdu, three Internet languages, and also designed a training course (<http://www.webgraf.org>) for beginners to learn Internet programming.

Besides my love for technology, it has changed my life for the better. I remember when our first child was born, I didn't know how to inform my parents in India immediately. I went to the Western Union to send a telegram to them. The message had to be short because it was very expensive to do so. Considering that, I only wrote, "Boy." My father replied back, "Congrats."

Later, I booked an international phone call to India which took three days to materialize. All we could say to each other was “Hello, hello!” Now we are in contact with families and friends all the time as if we are living with them.

Lately, the advent of ChatGPT has further improved my quality of life. When the Internet came along, information of all kinds was available to me but they lacked depth and many times were unreliable. On the other hand, an AI Chatbot is a computer program that uses artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) to simulate human conversation. AI chatbots are trained on large amounts of data, such as text conversations, to learn how to understand and respond to human language. Therefore, they tend to be more accurate than common search engines.

It's natural to look at new technologies with suspicion especially if they are AI related. People often fear that it would create unemployment and one day would enslave human beings. The truth is far from that. In the annals of human civilization, new technologies have always opened new frontiers and have created jobs. We had a similar fear of computers in the 80s. Many thought that all these devices would run amok, ruining the political system, and eventually turning into self-planning machines that would take power and disrupt the world.

TV media and newspapers play a role in spreading the fear of technology such as new technologies may create mass unemployment, child mental health issues, and lack of personal interaction. Looking back, it's not clear that any of this occurred. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 55 years, demand for front-line workers is at an all-time high, and the need for

manufacturing, process, logistics, and tech workers is still unfilled. As a matter of fact, every technology has created more job opportunities, more opportunities for learning, and greater interaction with families and long-lost friends and acquaintances from all over the globe.

Now media and talking heads are spreading the fear of ChatGPT. Actually, ChatGPT is creating thousands of new jobs for software engineers, GPT trainers, and integration specialists. According to a recent report, more than 2,000 jobs are asking for GPT or generative AI skills right now. And techies that I talk with (I know a few) assure me that AI will create new job opportunities instead of eliminating them.

It's my firm belief that there will be new skills, tools, and technologies to learn and the age of AI will unleash one of the biggest new markets for talent we have seen in years like every technology in the past has done.

“Change creates fear, and technology creates change. Sadly, most people don't behave very well when they are afraid.” - Daniel H Wilson