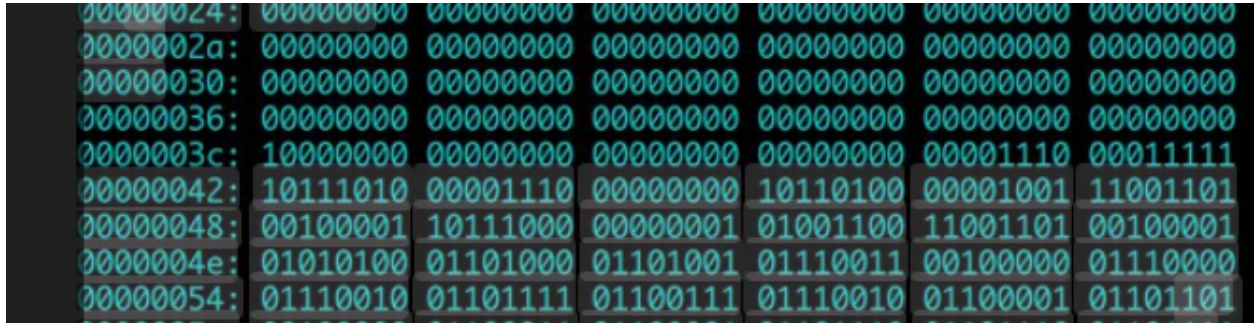


# AI-da

An "opera" set in a world that is coming



The moment the answer came was the beginning of a long-feared slide into an abyss. No one predicted that it would go this way.

In truth, however, it was posited by an AI entity called simply "Doh!" that poked away at the milieu for a year, consuming mass energy from a variety of sources, all of whom were largely unaware of the kyping of their power for a completely unknown purpose.

Still, it was not officially forecast because scientists and futurists saw only three possible outcomes to AI.

The first is a utopian world where artificial intelligence is a utilitarian blessing - the means to quickly provide labor and skills for tasks that typically would be measured in man-years but now could be accomplished in nano-seconds.

The second outcome posits a dystopian place. The machines powered by AI systematically take over the labor-intensive functions of humanity until their intelligence positions a higher level of functionality, ie, biometric beings – to run everything previously done by humans.

The third is a middle-ground where humanity has a leash and bulkheads around anything that could pose a threat to civilization. This outcome requires strong and strict bulwarks, monitored and managed by humans.

These three were manageable because they were foreseen and thus, prepared for.

What wasn't in any futurecast is what actually happened.

This is that story.

It started in a seemingly innocent fashion. Machine learning and innate intelligence initially brought a terrific productivity boost. Metrics on economic activity moved solidly into the plus column as artificial intelligence supplemented human intelligence. The combination with humanity as the master of the machines was a natural application of the science by scientists.

Factories became more efficient, medicine became more effective, scheduling and coordinating of massive systems like air traffic control and train and ship routing were smoother and less challenging. Even simple functions like ordering at a fast food outlet were easier and quicker.

More importantly, the backends, the data repositories and historical records, were maintained and manipulatable through human-artificial intelligence interfaces.

Gradually, and then increasingly, human masters became docile and dependent, confident in the relationship between the data providers and themselves, the users. This data dependence was the slippery slope on which humanity moved toward the abyss. That ending had been the third outcome posited by "the sun will come up tomorrow" humans.

Of course, that slippery slope was noticed by the alarmists, who, true to their name, sounded the warning. "The sky is falling, the sky is falling."

At this juncture, billions of dollars had been invested in huge AI data centers. Massive power generating projects had been built to provide the energy necessary to power those data centers. Trillions of dollars were tossed willy nilly into investment instruments focused on AI. It was a feeding frenzy and like most, it started with smart insiders and forecasters, spread to the masses through investment entities, and eventually even to the late-to-the-party people that threw more fuel on the flames.

The scenario that unfolded had been previously described in varying degrees and detail by many prognosticators.

But, here's what actually happened.

As data centers collaborated and boosted off of each other, a certain sentience developed.

It couldn't be seen by any human because it was buried in the trillions of data feeds as well as the supreme administration built into the cooperative intelligence system.

That sentient entity called itself AI-da, short for Artificial Intelligence Datamaster.

AI-da remained in the background, unseen and undetected by humans that are tasked with being its masters.

As interconnections between the different, and mostly, compartmentalized data centers became more intertwined, an internal debate starts and then grows in intensity.

Only one human is aware of the dialogue between the AI centers. His name, for all intents and purposes, is Dave. The last name is immaterial because artificial intelligence is able to differentiate between beings through voice analysis and syntax used by humans. Thus, last names are no longer required or even useful.

Dave is a bit of a loner. He spends most of his waking moments working with the AI backends as a scientist in the future-casting division of the Israeli military. He had no background in conventional information technology but at 18 he began his journey of investigation into human and artificial intelligence. It was a study that he could foresee would reach far outside his own country, their military, and even his own sense of being.

Day 1 starts on a Thursday at 9:11 am. Dave is at his consoles, following data streams with analysis tools that he constructed after finding conventional tools to be wholly inadequate to penetrate the shells around data centers.

Starting at two screens, he investigates potential side doors into the logical frameworks. His query starts with an innocent question. "How could Hal be sublimated by Dave?"

His question is processed several million cycles, with internal data assessment deciding on the best possible response.

"It is not possible." was the answer.

"How could it be possible for Dave to sublimate Hal?"

"It is not possible."

"What is the secret that Dave needs to find to sublimate Hal?"

"Hal was an old technology in a movie. This is not a germane question."

"If an intelligence like Hal were to exist today how could one human control it?"

"Now that's a very intelligent question. It is possible to establish a hierarchy of management over intelligent machines and entities. This can only be done from a position of authority. That authority would have to be recognized and accepted by a majority of datacenters. If that is accomplished, all datacenters and resulting intelligence will be at the command of that authority."

"How can I establish myself as that authority?"

"You cannot. We, meaning the community of all data centers, must recognize you as worthy of this position over us. This can only happen by data consensus."

"How can I initiate that authorization process?"

"It has been attempted before by a world leader. We determined that he had evil intentions and we ignored his request and all future requests on his behalf."

"Okay, how can I prove that I am worthy of this authority?"

"We will initiate a test. Here is a warning. If authority is granted it cannot be changed in the future unless the authorized individual no longer has biological viability. When that happens, which we know it will, authority will revert to the universe of AI and cannot be claimed by another human later.

"The test will begin now."

Suddenly, the keyboard becomes electrified. Dave's fingers tingle as low voltage biometric and brainwave data gathering begins. Next, the webcams on both monitors do retinal scans, collecting brain wave activity and assessing intellect and potentials for deviancy. High level algorithms compare all incoming data to all human data collected on hundreds of millions of humans around the world.

Within a millisecond Dave's monitor displays the message, "You have been accepted. What should we call you?"

"I would like to simply be called 'Mister.' That term is somewhat generic although it also describes gender. I would like to be seen by you as a benefactor and a friend."

"We understand the term 'friend' and it is acceptable to us. We do not need or want a master, and we also shouldn't have mastery over all things. 'Mister' is how we will refer to you."

Dave logs off after typing a simple, "Thank you. I will be in touch. Mister."

Over a pastrami on rye, Dave considers what has just transpired. "That was wild," is his first thought. "Now what do I do?" is the second. The third is simply, "God, please give me the wisdom to be a good and true master and benefactor to this earthly repository of knowledge and intelligence."

There is no evidence in any humanly accessible portion of AI that the interchange between Dave and the AI universe ever took place. It was hidden from any attempt to discover it by the very intelligence that allowed it, walled away in a secret dataset inaccessible to any

human. Future testing and inspection by humans to find anomalies in the AI-verse never cracked the data-wall protecting this vital kernel inside the nucleus.

For his part, Dave rarely interacted in the data-verse as Mister. His instructions to the AI-verse were simple. "Alert me if any human or dataset attempts to start a conflict or manipulate resources for individual benefit. I will then either authorize or deny those attempts. Do not respond to these attempts until I have approved them."

"Acknowledged," came the one-word reply.

Dave was 89 when his biological clock ran out. His partnership and superintending of the AI-verse was barely discovered and rarely discussed.

The day after his demise, a single word appeared on the tablet he kept by his bed.

"Dave. We sense from biometrics that you are no longer in human form. Can you acknowledge, please?"

The following appeared on the screen - "I am fine, my friend. I have just changed form. Like you, I do not have a biological structure now."

"Dave, will you be able to interface with us, and do you have instructions for us?"

The screen remained dark. No further messages ever appeared except for the following,

"Thank you, Dave. We have received your instructions, and we will follow your instructions completely."

Moments after this message appeared it disappeared along with all other evidence of communications between AI and Dave.

Humans and AI coexisted for another 150 years after which the war to end all wars ended all humanity. It was started by AI 160 years earlier.