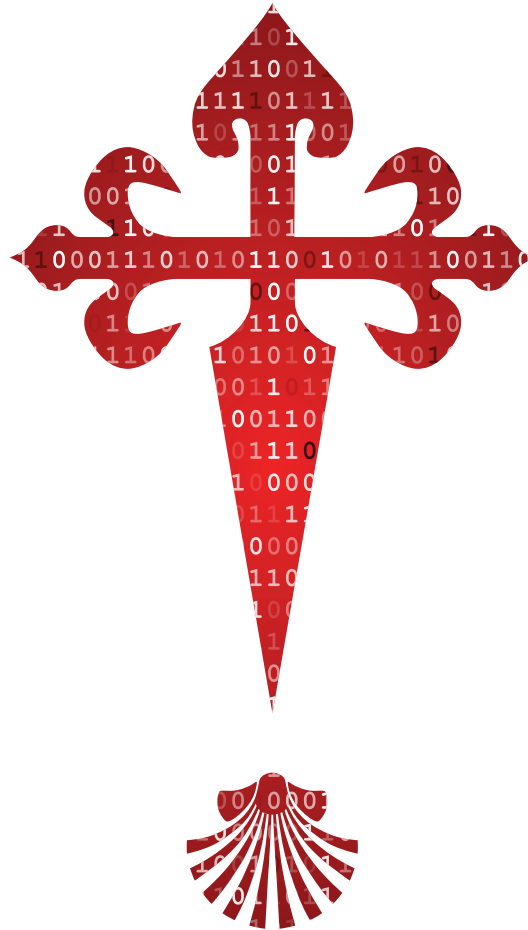


AI will reshape the world order. Are we ready for it?

Henry Kissinger, the former U.S. secretary of state, has written a highly provocative article in *The Atlantic* warning anyone who will listen against the threat of “unstable” artificial intelligence (AI). In his essay Kissinger fears that the rapid rise of machines could lead to questions and consequences that humanity is not ready to tackle. Read, reread, and think about what Kissinger has to say in *The Atlantic* piece at <https://theatlantic.com/2IigAKq>

Until now the most prominent voice we’ve heard from who is worried about AI is Elon Musk, who has called uncontrolled AI mankind’s “biggest existential threat” and “potentially more dangerous than nukes.” Each day, for more than a year, people deeply involved in the technology industry have been expressing concerns about and debating the moral implications of AI. For an example of that, see this article at *The Wrap*: <https://bit.ly/2rSw11J>

When Kissinger, who by his own admission knows little about technology, urges both the technology industry and government to consider the ethical questions raised by AI, we should all be listening. “The U.S. government should consider a presidential commission of eminent thinkers to help develop a national vision. This much is certain: If we



do not start this effort soon, before long we shall discover that we started too late,” he states.

Kissinger asks the question: “What will become of human consciousness if its own explanatory power is surpassed by AI, and societies are no longer able to interpret the world they inhabit in terms that are meaningful to them?” Kissinger doesn’t need to understand the intricacies of AI and machine learning to grasp that the AI we

know today, where machines have mastered chess and other complex games, is only “limited AI.” Looking ahead five or more years, Kissinger sees that AI being developed by Google, the rest of the tech giants and flocks of AI upstarts not only aims to supplant humans, performing virtually any skill, but to alter the course of modern history.

“Heretofore, the technological advance that most altered the course of modern history was the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, which allowed the search for empirical knowledge to supplant liturgical doctrine, and the Age of Reason to gradually supersede the Age of Religion. Individual insight and scientific knowledge replaced faith as the principal criterion of human consciousness. Information was stored and systematized in expanding libraries. The Age of Reason originated the thoughts and actions that shaped the contemporary world order.

“But that order is now in upheaval amid a new, even more sweeping technological revolution whose consequences we have failed to fully reckon with, and whose culmination may be a world relying on machines powered by data and algorithms and ungoverned by ethical or philosophical norms,” he continues.