

Urban discourse

Description

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Dialogue typifies what it is to be intelligent. Iâ??m thinking of two or more people engaged in conversation. Alan Turing proposed conversation as the test for AI. If participants or observers canâ??t tell the difference between a human conversing with a simulation and a human being conversing with another human then itâ??s fair to say that the machine, device, platform or system that delivers the simulation is intelligent.

Pundits extend the test to other interactions, such as playing games, identifying pictures, navigation and other automated tasks. The applications and claims of AI are not restricted to replicating what humans say and do, but conversation is the benchmark test of intelligence. Conversational acuity from a computer is a basic test of AI.

Dialogue and sentience

Conversation is also the first touch point for claims of sentience. It is hard to dispute the claim by an organism or machine when it tells us in words that it has feelings, what it feels, or of what it is aware, especially if such self reflection is delivered in an improvised conversational context, subject to to-and-fro questions and responses. It is rare for interlocutors in conversation to spend time asserting or defending their intelligence, let alone their sentience. We take these attributes for granted as we speak to one another.

I assume that other indicators of sentience precede and exceed conversation as we think of communication with infants, people who are unable to speak, communication with and between non-human organisms. Following pansemiotic and posthumanistic readings, inanimate elements within the universe communicate. For panpsychism, consciousness pervades the universe. That said, as entities that reflect on, write about and articulate issues of intelligence and sentience we human beings are entitled to put the focus on conversation â?? our medium.

Plugins

The capability to converse is not a singular, isolable function of being human. Conversational acumen is not a UX platform enhancement. Any conversational utterance sits within a dynamic framework of values, understandings, contexts and communities. As attested by the limited capability of online chatbots, getting a computer to participate in a conversation is not simply a matter of matching inputs to outputs via a lookup table.

How does conversation relate to architecture â?? my own discipline? Places and spaces for conversations, discussions, communications, and dialogue happen in cities by design, planning, legislation, contestation, happenstance â?? and dialogue. Besides these physical places and processes, cities are formed with dialogue in mind. The polis is an assembly of people, the metropolis is a place for the people â?? who are forever talking.

Certain digital infrastructures and communications media, support conversation. I think that synchronous and asynchronous digital communications not only influence the way people communicate with one another, but they bring conversation to the fore as an issue for the so-called smart city.

Bibliography

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Category

1. Artificial Intelligence

Tags

1. AI
2. city
3. conversation

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