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Book review

AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future

In line with this 50th anniversary edition and our successful Compact event, in which we not only looked back, but also ahead, I thought it was interesting to choose a book that really dives into the future. A book that tries to paint a picture for the coming decades. So I chose *AI 2041* by Kai-Fu Lee and Chen Qiufan. Kai-Fu Lee may be known to you, because of another book about Artificial Intelligence, called *AI Superpowers*.

In their book *AI 2014*, the authors share their view on the impact of AI in 2041 using ten (fictitious) stories. Each chapter starts with a fictitious story followed by a more theoretical analysis. For example the first story ("The Golden Elephant") explains the possible impact of deep learning on the social life of an Indian girl and her relationship with a boy of a lower cast. The seventh story (called "Quatum Genocide") dives into the impact of quantum computers, autonomous weapons and the meaning of existential threat. In my view, this is also the story which dives most deeply into the negative aspects of AI.

Personally, I found the last story the most interesting. By using a fictitious case in Australia, the authors dive into the world of Plenitude, which they consider a new phase of human life. In this phase, all people are living comfortably and work becomes optional because of the possible benefits of AI (e.g. by dramatically reducing the cost of labor). The authors consider the "Plenitude" model the successor of the "Scarcity" phase, in which the needs of people exceed the limited supply of these good (= current economic model). Although this reflection is a very optimistic way of showing the benefits of AI, it gives us some nice food for thought.

To summarize my review; this book offers an understandable explanation of the potential impact of AI on our society in the coming years and is therefore a good introduction for anyone who has an interest in this area. As in "AI Superpowers", the authors are very positive about AI and only pay limited attention to the downsides of AI, which in my view is something they could improve. The most important topic I miss is an overarching summary/conclusion from the authors. Both authors give their view in a general introduction, including a short recap of the history of AI, but the ending of the book feels a bit abrupt after the tenth story. This gave me a bit of an unsatisfactory feeling as in my view a final conclusion would allow the authors to bring their various views together to confirm that AI will really become a blessing, or may become a curse (in disguise).

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Mark Scheurwater MSc is a director at the Enterprise Solutions unit of KPMG. With more than 20 years of experience in the ERP (cloud) domain, he has gained profound expertise in this domain allowing him to act as a trusted advisor for multiple clients.