



Now it's ChatGPT

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January 14, 2023

All the talk is about ChatGPT.

ChatGPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer)^[1] is a [chatbot](#) launched by [OpenAI](#) in November 2022. It is built on top of OpenAI's [GPT-3](#) family of large [language models](#), and is fine-tuned (an approach to [transfer learning](#)^[2]) with both [supervised](#) and [reinforcement learning](#) techniques.

The Weekend Australian's front page article only served to increase the panic this new piece of AI has brought (Chatbot cheating alarms schools, 14.01.23).

"Schools are scrambling to control a global chatbot that uses artificial intelligence to write "cheat" assignments and essays accurate enough to trick teachers."

"Goodbye homework," was Elon Musk's tweet.

The media is only serving to feed our natural response to the unknown: fear. After three years of COVID teachers are starting 2023 with a new feeling panic and impending doom brought on by another threat. 'How are we going to control this AI in the classroom? Our very essence as a teacher is under threat.'

It is crazy to think that we have to control or block this technology, just like it is crazy to think we can effectively ban mobile phones in schools. The reality is, we have entered a new era, the era of AI. And AI has been gathering momentum for over a decade and the changes it will bring will only accelerate.

ChatGPT took us by surprise last November. Something else will come this year, mark my words. We can't keep up with the changes we will see over the next few years.

Back in 2014 St Paul's School carried out a significant piece of research, a scenario building exercise. We looked at the world of 2028 and what it would be like when our then youngest students would graduate from Year 12. It is affirming to realise that what we saw nearly eight years ago is coming to pass.

Education has to change. People have been saying this for years: "It isn't fit for purpose. It was designed for an industrial era." And yet, we haven't really done anything about it. Education is still primarily about the delivery and assessment of content knowledge: essays, assignments, exams.

Bitá goes on to say in her weekend article, "The impact of the technology is being likened to the advent of calculators and internet search engines."

Well, yes, there are similarities but the calculator didn't really evolve much beyond being a calculator and the internet is still primarily a more accessible library of information. AI is not the same. It is going to keep evolving, and fast. We can either become its slave, a victim of our incessant advancement, redundant and destined for the dust bin, or, we can embrace AI and use it to improve life.

I choose the latter. But in choosing the latter I accept that education and teaching has not to simply adapt, but change in purpose and intent.

ChatGPT will force us to realise that education can no longer be about content. Thank you ChatGPT! Education has to be about what students can do with the content they learn. How they apply it. How can they draw links between subject areas and how can they use what they learn to generate new ideas. It has to be about creative thinking.

For years educational authorities and schools have, what I would say, been giving cursory lip service to "general capabilities, critical and creative thinking". But now, more than anytime in history, is it vital to teach, and assess the skills and dispositions

necessary for creative, innovative and entrepreneurial thinking. It is now, more important than anytime in history, to develop a person's character; their values and beliefs so they can make effective ethical decisions as we try to keep up with the accelerating changes AI will bring.

If we don't change the fundamental focus and purpose of education then not only will teachers become redundant in the not too distant future, but our children will be victims of our own creation (AI) and won't be able to thrive in a world of accelerating change.

The good news is that St Paul's School embraced this challenge seven years ago and by the end of 2023 will have something to share with other schools across the globe who have been awakened by the impact of ChatGPT.

And the ironic thing? What we are building will contain AI to improve teaching practice!