The Fourth Industrial Revolution: The Future of AI, The Past of Homo Sapiens?

Conversation with Khal Shariff and Robert J Sawyer

By Michael Welch
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(This version contains **Robert J Sawyer's** original narration. The previous version (June 17, 2023) was a second take after this version was lost. MW September 4, 2023)

"Should we let machines flood our information channels with propaganda and untruth? Should we automate away all the jobs, including the fulfilling ones? Should we develop nonhuman minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart, obsolete and replace us? Should we risk loss of control of our civilization? Such decisions must not be delegated to unelected tech leaders...

Therefore, we call on all AI labs to immediately pause for at least 6 months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4." – Future of Life Institute (March 22, 2023) [1]

"Wonder is not only a superb conclusion to a tremendous trilogy, but stands alone as one of the best books that Sawyer has ever written." – Winnipeg Free Press [2]

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Imagine a world where you can now take your problems to a computer and found that it is the best therapist you ever had! Where the companion on-line that could well be the love of your life based on your private conversations is in fact not human! Where every professor, every lawyer, every writer, every artist, every detective, physician and architect you ever met cannot match this new program at your finger tips! And how this threatens just about every upper income job in existence!

Ladies and gentlemen, it seems that this moment may finally be upon us...

The Artificial Intelligence research laboratory OpenAI, which ran on a non-profit basis, announced the release of ChatGPT, an AI chatbot on November 30, 2022. Two months later, it was used by 100 million users! And the numbers have continued to expand ever since. [3]

Then in February of 2023, Microsoft announced it was building AI technology on the same foundation as ChatGPT and incorporating it into Microsoft Bing, Edge, and other products. Then in March, the Future of Life Institute has attracted the signatures of several people specializing in Artificial Intelligence in calling for a " pause for at least 6 months" in the development of post-GPT-4 AI systems. The ability to further inflame our media with mis-information and dis-information, the disruption of the Labour landscape and yes even an attack or subversion against humanity by an artificial system that can out-think us are some of the primary concerns. [4][5]

This episode of the Global Research News Hour takes a deep dive into these various areas and both the opportunities and the perils from which we cannot turn back once we have crossed the first threshold of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

This week's guests feature individuals fully capable of engaging the host in a fifty minute long conversation: **Khal Shariff**, head of the Virtual Reality and related Technology company Project Whitecard, and **Robert J Sawyer**, the acclaimed Canadian Science fiction author and keynote speaker.

Khal Shariff *is the founder and CEO of Project Whitecard, a company dedicated to using technology for good. They use game technology for education, and the latest project is all about driver training in BC, where Project Whitecard is using AI extensively during development.*

Robert J Sawyer *is, according to multiple press organizations, the leading science fiction author in Canada. The only Canadian to receive all 3 of the world's top science fiction awards for best novel of the year, he is also the first writer to receive the Lifetime Achievement Aurora Award. His now fourteen year old series, Wake, Watch and Wonder (WWW), was his in-depth look at Artificial Intelligence and received the Hugo Award and three Aurora Awards.*

(Global Research News Hour Episode 395)

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WZBC 90.3 FM in Newton Massachusetts is Boston College Radio and broadcasts to the greater Boston area. The Global Research News Hour airs during Truth and Justice Radio which starts Sunday at 6am.

Campus and community radio [CFMH 107.3fm](#) in Saint John, N.B. airs the Global Research News Hour Fridays at 7pm.

CJMP 90.1 FM, Powell River Community Radio, airs the Global Research News Hour every Saturday at 8am.

Caper Radio CJBU 107.3FM in Sydney, [Cape Breton](#), Nova Scotia airs the Global Research News Hour starting Wednesday afternoon from 3-4pm.

[Cowichan Valley Community Radio CICV 98.7 FM](#) serving the [Cowichan Lake](#) area of Vancouver Island, BC airs the program Thursdays at 9am pacific time.

Notes:

1. https://futureoflife.org/open-letter/pause-giant-ai-experiments/
2. https://sfwriter.com/exw3.htm
3. https://www.globalresearch.ca/ai-fastest-growing-application-ever/5819668
4. Tom Dotan (February 10, 2023)'Microsoft Adds ChatGPT AI Technology to Bing Search Engine', Wall Street Journal; https://www.wsj.com/articles/microsoft-adds-chatgpt-ai-technology-to-bing-search-engine-11675793525
5. https://futureoflife.org/open-letter/pause-giant-ai-experiments/

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