Future of pseudo-humans in the cards?

by Mark Pavilons

The preamble to a new sci-fi series offers some pretty stark warnings.

Set in 2120, a mere century from now, huge corporations not only dominate the world, they control it and by extension the future of humankind.

Apparently, our survival and evolution will be dependent on these areas: Cyborgs, cybernetically enhanced humans. Synths, or artificially intelligent beings (androids or robots), and finally, hybrids, synthetic beings (robots) downloaded with consciousness.

It seems our long-term goal to cheat death and ensure the longevity of our species depends on technology. While we've seen images of talking robot heads and androids walking and jumping over obstacles, we're still a long way off from having cyborgs bring us drinks by our pools.

There's no question these creations will figure prominently in our future.

According to an article by Jacob Biba in builtin.com, the ?humanoid robot market? was valued at $2.03-billion in 2024 and is predicted to increase to more than $13 billion by 2029, according to research firm MarketsandMarkets.

?Fueling that growth and demand will be advanced humanoid robots with greater AI capabilities and human-like features that can take on more duties in the service industry, education and healthcare.?

There have been many recent investments in this tech, and we've seen the dawn of some very complex humanoid robots.

We already have Tesla's Optimus; Tiangong Ultra's X-Humanoid (won a half-marathon); Xiaomi's CyberOne; Engineered Arts' Ameca and Apptronik's Apollo, to name a few. Most of these can do some complicated tasks and would make for great human assistants. Manufacturing, dangerous work, surveillance and health care are just three areas where their abilities would come in handy.

There's no question that with continued research, we may very well see some human-like AI units in the next 10 to 20 years, if not sooner.

At a Canadian conference, the ?godfather of AI? says what's lacking is a ?maternal instinct??in these creations.

Geoffrey Hinton shared that maternal instincts must be built into AI models to avoid future AI systems controlling humans. An Edmonton-based company has been developing a matriarchal AI platform since 2021.

?To hear someone so influential in the AI space not only agree but endorse that AI needs to come from the perspective of a nurturing mother was very exciting,? said Shani Gwin, Founder and CEO of wâsikan kisêwâtisiwin. ?When you think of an ideal mother relationship, you see we are invested in your well-being, in your success and safety ? we are responsible for you because we brought you to this planet. Matriarchal AI is about fairness, accountability, everybody having space in the Circle and the human right to be part of the collective.?

wâsikan kisêwâtisiwin, an AI-powered language assistant developed with a matriarchal perspective, is overseen by an Elders Advisory Circle. This ensures the AI reflects Indigenous matriarchal perspectives and supports data collection from reliable sources connected directly to Indigenous communities. The large language model (LLM) is created by Indigenous Peoples and described as ?AI with heart.?

wâsikan kisêwâtisiwin sets a new standard for inclusive technology, ensuring this critical piece of infrastructure is designed to build trust with vulnerable groups rather than perpetuate systemic bias. This solution will provide city planners, teachers, business leaders and a variety of sectors with a people-?rst approach to strategize, build plans and communicate.

I find it fascinating that such an idea arose from our Indigenous peoples, in an attempt to lessen ?digital harm? to First Peoples.

As such, they are keenly aware of being in touch with Mother and Turtle Island.

Indigenous peoples date back much further than previously thought and may very well be the first to leave footprints behind on the North American continent.

That, in itself, gives them a keen edge, a lineage of tradition, storytelling, myths, legends and perhaps even contact with extraterrestrials.

While aimed at lessening unconscious bias and racism, this people-first tool is something likely overlooked by most tech companies.

Why build a heart and soul into our machines?

For many, it's the search for some sort of immortality that drives them.

Humans, for hundreds of thousands of years, were vital for collecting, storing and passing on knowledge. Through paintings, storytelling and song, our world was described and explained to generation upon generations.

Even through the Middle Ages and Renaissance, we created, built and revealed our abilities and creativity. We made marvels ? the culmination of our evolution.

Fast forward to today and we are at our pinnacle of knowledge and technology. However, we are aided by massive computer programs, storage devices and the internet of everything. If humans vanished tomorrow, this knowledge would still survive, and live on in memory banks around the world.

Some of these AI systems could grow on their own and create their own stories. Perhaps, humans would be deemed irrelevant.

We've all seen sci-fi thrillers about some armageddon or dystopian future. In many scenarios, we destroyed ourselves and have to start over.

Not a very successful quest for immortality, is it?

Our current quest for life everlasting has shifted into a search for ways to extend human lifespan, eliminate diseases, and even reverse the aging process. We've moving ahead, full-steam, in pursuing life extension and immortality. And what of the ethical and philosophical implications?

The very vessels of our salvation may turn out to be our biped AI brothers and sisters.

All the more reason to install a brain, heart and courage, not unlike the gifts bestowed upon Dorothy's best friends.