

# How to burst the AI bubble: Strike at its roots

Once you put it that way, it's very easy to see why some workers would say, "Oh yeah, I found a thing that AI is good for and I use it, and that's fine. I'm even excited about it." And why other workers would be like, "This is making me miserable." It's the difference between the words on the Greek temple, "Know thyself," and your boss shining 16 cameras in your face and going, "I know you better than you do. And by the way, I think you could work an extra hour a day without breaking a sweat."

**Ars Technica:** You make a point of emphasizing that you are not fundamentally anti-AI, despite sharply criticizing the industry.

**Cory Doctorow:** I have many comrades who describe themselves as anti-AI, and I've had some very spirited, productive, but heated debates with those people because I don't think AI is exceptional. That means that I don't think it's exceptionally evil. The argument that it's the fruit of the poisonous tree, that it was made by bad people in bad ways, so you shouldn't use it—I think it's very foolish. That is not the merit on which we judge technology.

You can talk about whether giving money to these companies is bad. I think it is. You can talk about whether the environmental impact of using foundation models is unsustainable and unsupportable. I think, by and large, it is. But that is not to say that statistical inference using convoluted deep neural networks is bad or—and this is where I get into many arguments—that scraping the web to train a convoluted neural network is bad. I think it's fine. Scraping

is good, actually.

I think it's very dangerous to say, "The way that we're going to fix the problems we have with AI is to make it illegal to make a record of what's on the Internet." I think that's catastrophic. That's how we never again will know what was on CBS News before it turned into Chud News. Everything Nate Silver ever published on his website was just zeroed out by Disney. You can only see it at the Internet Archive because we scrape. It's just bonkers to say, "It is theft to make transient copies of works, to analyze those transient copies, to publish the results of your analysis."

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