Rodney's Take
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The Internet and Email Had a Baby: AI

I was in grad school in the early 1990s when email started to take over and out of grad school when Netscape made it easy to surf the nascent net. The possibilities were endless. We could communicate at the push of a button and exchange important information. Eventually, with PDFs and attachments, information zipped around the world. With web browsers, we could find the latest research on, well, anything.

When those things happened, swaths of employment were eliminated (such as the typing pool and executive secretaries), but at a cost.

Now, we're inundated with marketing every time we surf the net, and most email systems that claim to be "free" come at the cost of your data, which is sold to many marketing firms that make a living by honing their pitches to reel you in.

And it gets worse.

The dark side of the Internet and email, phishing, fleeces billions of dollars from unsuspecting consumers, and hackers maliciously find their way into "not-so-secure" environments, lock out the users, and demand ransoms. None of this is new, but none of this was top of mind when email and the Internet went public, either.

I have no doubt that AI will do some good, at least when the stakes are low. But are you willing to put your life into the hands of AI when boarding a plane or when getting recommendations for medical procedures and medication?

In the gold rush of the 1800s, it wasn't those seeking gold who got rich, it was the people making the picks and shovels. Likewise, the best thing about AI might have happened already: stock prices of companies that make the semiconductors have soared. Some uses of AI will make a few companies rich, but most are likely to fail. This isn't to say other good things will not come from AI, but so will many bad things. And for the really important things, the things on which our lives depend, we'll still want to look a person in the eye; again, think of a surgeon or a pilot.

Perhaps the next big thing on the market will be an app that can spot AI-generated reports. This should make many college students—and more than a few PhDs—very nervous.

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Got a question or comment? You can contact us at info@hsdent.com