



**AGD 2017
FALL SEASON**

CON CASE



NHSDLC WeChat

*The following sample case has been prepared by the NHSDLC/AGD Academic Team. It is designed to be a **starting point** for you to construct your own cases. As you read through the case, look at its structure, as well as how each contention is broken down into a claim, warrant, and argument. We have highlighted key points with our comments on the right-hand side.*

*Once you understand the structure of the case, you should try to come up with some contentions of your own. Cases containing your own material will be more effective. There are **flaws** in the following case. Moreover, your opponents will likely have seen the sample case and be prepared to respond to it.*

We stand CON on the resolution Resolved: The benefits of using artificial intelligence outweigh the harms.

[Definition]: John McCarthy, a professor of computer science at Stanford, defines artificial intelligence as the science of making intelligent machines, especially using computers to understand or act like humans do. An intelligent machine uses computational ability to look toward the future and achieve goals.¹

[Framework]: Given the wording of the resolution, the debate should be about the consequences of Artificial Intelligence. This means that we are not debating about AI in theory or if the idea of AI would be a good one; rather, we care about the implications of it. Thus, if the CON proves that there is reasonable chance that the consequences or possible impacts are too harmful then we win the round.

[Contention 1]: Our first contention is about losses of information and hacking. Hackers or the AI systems alone will be able to misuse AI to cause havoc or destroy information.

According to Health Research Funding, AI poses a common issue in that information can be lost due to machine damage. As AI infiltrates different aspects of our lives, we will become dependent on the machines and will heavily rely on them to maintain our information.² The grand issue is that for all good

Start your constructive by clearly stating what side you are on.

The definition, it explains what you think AI is for the purposes of the debate

Your framework is why you win the debate. It tells the judge what they should look at first when evaluating the debate.

This means the Pro must provide evidence and not just discuss AI in the abstract

Name of contention

Claim

things that AI machines can be used for, they can equally if not worse be used for ill purposes. For instance, if banks become heavily reliant on AI, a cyber-attack could dramatically impact the economy. During a security conference in Las Vegas, USA, it was proven that AI systems can be used to exploit vulnerabilities of machines, proving how easily hack-able government systems are.

Warrant with source

Max Tegmark, the president of the Future of Life Institute and professor of physics at MIT, argues that one of the main problems of artificial intelligence is that it may have goals that are different from that of the creators. In other words, the machines would not turn evil, but their goals would go against that of humans, causing misuse.³ This could lead to dangerous issues in which AI can cause grave mistakes, or even deaths. The task of an AI is to accomplish a goal, which does not imply how it accomplishes the goal. Another example of an AI system that is charged with completing a geo-engineering project, but as a side-effect, the AI system drastically harms the environment.

This provides a unique argument in that even if the PRO proves that AI cannot get hacked, the machines themselves may harm us.

Thus, for all the good that AI does, it can lead to very negative outcomes, and it is these implications that we should consider under our framework.

Impact

[Contention 2]: Our second contention is job loss. The development of Artificial Intelligence will destroy jobs.

Claim. Notice this is an economic impact

According to CNN Money, In the US alone, 38% of jobs are at risk of being replaced by automation.⁴ This is assuming the only automation is occurring are simple robots like kiosk machines; however, artificial intelligence would then replace more skilled jobs, causing the number to increase from 38%. While automation and AI creates new opportunities for work, automation destroys jobs faster than it creates them. For instance, while the tech industry has 6.7 million jobs, automation will take over anywhere from 2.2 to 3.1 million jobs in the truck driving industry alone.

This is how you use evidence and examples to make warrants and back up your claims

Even if automation increases quality of life, people will not be able to provide for themselves and their families without a job. According to Stephan Simpson, a freelance financial writer, investor, and consultant, unemployment currently

This shows that AI can increase inefficiency because there will be greater spending on things like unemployment

costs the government \$2.96 billion for unemployment benefits, and it also affects companies, since the welfare system is predominately financed by taxes on businesses.⁵

A more direct response. We are getting rid of jobs, this is not an improvement of the status quo.

The PRO will likely say that automation will help decrease terrible working conditions, and they are correct. Automation will help alleviate these conditions by completely getting rid of these jobs. For instance, low-paying factory jobs will be replaced by automation. This occurred in the auto industry, and now robots make 80% of all car parts. One of the errors that the PRO makes is assuming that the people who lose their jobs will be able to take on new jobs. This is a significant problem that is caused by AI

[Contention 3]: Our third contention is AI Arms Race. By developing AI, an military technological race will happen much like the nuclear arms race of the past.

Claim. This is the contention with the largest impact

Carl Shulman, who is a part of the Singularity Institute of Artificial Intelligence, argues that when one country increases their AI technology, other nations will perceive this as a threat. This is what happened with nuclear weapons. When countries begin to develop nuclear weapons, regardless of their intentions, other nations quickly perceived it as a threat. This was seen during the Cold War when the United States and the Soviet Union both perceived the other nation as a threat because of their military technologies. This caused both nations to heavily invest in their nuclear programs, such as the Manhattan Project. Similarly, Shulman argues that an “AI Manhattan Project” would occur in which nations would develop technology that hacks, destroys, and kills the enemy.

This is an example from the past, which you are using to show why an AI arms race will happen.

The only way to avoid this AI Arms Race is if we slowed down our advances in AI and closely monitored the development of the system.

Shulman goes on to also argue that we must pay a special focus on this risk since it poses the death of all humanity. It does not matter if the PRO proves that they may help alleviate poverty or solve the economic inequality if the world is

destroyed. Shulman says, “even a catastrophic nuclear war or engineered pandemic that killed billions would still likely allow survivors to eventually rebuild human civilization, while AIs killing billions would likely not leave survivors.”

This is a possible risk of AI that cannot be ignored.

For these reasons, we urge a CON ballot.

Sources

- [1] McCarthy, John. "What is artificial intelligence?" 2007.
<http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/whatisai/>
- [2] "Pros and Cons of Artificial Intelligence" 2014
<http://healthresearchfunding.org/pros-cons-artificial-intelligence/>
- [3] Tegmark, Max "Benefits and Risks of Artificial Intelligence" 2016
<https://futureoflife.org/background/benefits-risks-of-artificial-intelligence/>
- [4] Petroff, Alanna. "U.S. workers face higher risk of being replaced by robots." March 2017
<http://money.cnn.com/2017/03/24/technology/robots-jobs-us-workers-uk/index.html>
- [5] Simpson, Stephen D. CFA. "The Cost of Unemployment to the Economy" May 2017
<http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0811/the-cost-of-unemployment-to-the-economy.aspx>
- [6] Patel, Rachi "Will Automation Kill or Create Jobs?" March 2017
<http://theinstitute.ieee.org/ieee-roundup/blogs/blog/will-automation-kill-or-create-jobs>
- [7] Palmer, Danny. "How AI-powered cyberattacks will make fighting hackers even harder" Dec 2016
<http://www.zdnet.com/article/how-ai-powered-cyberattacks-will-make-fighting-hackers-even-harder/>

Always keep track of your sources, so that you or your opponents can go back to them. Make sure you have an easy way (such as a flash drive, print out, laptop,) for your opponent to be able to access your evidence. This will mean less difficulty for you should your opponent want to view your evidence. Remember that debate is an academic game centered around research, so make sure you know where your facts come from, and be prepared to show it.