

How The Relationship Between Humans And Computers Is Evolving

The way in which humans interact with computers is undergoing a dramatic shift, which will have a huge impact on the way we work in future.

Already, many of us are used to conversing with machines daily, making simple commands of voice assistants such as Siri and Alexa. The [digital voice assistant market is booming](#), and the number of voice assistants in use is projected to increase from 3.25 billion in 2019 to around 8 billion by 2023. We are witnessing a generation of individuals enter the workforce who have grown up with smartphones and voice assistants, who are expecting to be able to ask a computer to perform some of their more mundane jobs for them.

In the early days of computing, humans served the computer, feeding it data through mechanisms such as punch cards, to help keep it running. Today, the computer has evolved into more of a toolbox, accessible via the two-dimensional interface of the screen, supporting us in what we need to do. But gradually, the dynamic between human and machine is shifting, with the computer on course to becoming a more pervasive form of intelligence that can surface through all digital platforms and computer systems, helping individuals to complete their tasks more easily and efficiently.

We have only just begun to see how AI will influence interactions between humans and technology, and the capabilities of smart speakers such as Amazon Echo, Apple HomePod and Google Home are already evolving from simple voice commands to supporting ecosystems of applications and interactions within the home. We have some way to go before we see voice and AI widely used as a component in systems for business and workflow, but there are already signs of the incoming change, and the impact this will have on the future of work. The computer is shifting from a tool into a colleague or assistant, in the human sense of the term.

The emotional bond between humans and computers is also changing. If the two can work together in a cooperative manner, we could end up with an established relationship of trust. The computer has its own way of looking at the world, helping us humans to be successful in other areas.

In the future workplace we may see the computer learning from the individual and taking on repetitive monotonous tasks, freeing up the individual to be more productive in their cognitive work. We may also see the voice assistant knowing “best” in some scenarios and making recommendations or suggestions to the human, calculating insights around the individual’s performance, advising them on how to prioritize their workload, or suggesting when they should take a break. Eventually, these principles could be applied to more complex scenarios, with the computer enforcing its recommendations upon its human colleague.

The scenario of a computer becoming the too dominant player is of obvious concern.

However, our world is shaped towards human cognition and AI is still programmed by humans, so it can only advance as fast as we choose.

In the future, we are likely to see a closer bond forged between humans and computers, which could dramatically impact the way we work for the better. Above all, the progression from “computer-shaped” interfaces to “human-shaped” interfaces will allow individuals to communicate and collaborate with computing systems in a natural and human way... leaving the workplace the same, but also very different.

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