Five things you need to know about machine learning

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In the not-so-distant past, computers had to be programmed with a very specific set of instructions to perform even the simplest task. Over the years, computer programming languages have improved drastically and become much easier to learn, however, programming a computer is still no easy task. Fast forward to present day and computers are now able to learn for themselves. This is called machine learning and everyone needs to at least be familiar with it. Here are five things you should know about machine learning.

What is it?

Machine learning is the advanced application of statistics to identify patterns from data sets. Put in simpler words, it's a program that doesn't have to be programmed to perform a task, rather it's programmed to teach itself how to perform a task.

Why is it exciting?

Machine learning opens up a whole new world for computers. They can now do tasks that previously could only be performed by humans since they are now able to learn and improve with time.

How is it being used?

In the health care industry, machine learning is analyzing medical scans to diagnose illnesses with greater accuracy and earlier on than doctors can. It's being used in conjunction with natural language processing to improve the effectiveness of digital customer service agents. Companies are using it to provide customers with more personalized advertisements.

What can it do in the future?

Soon machine learning will be programmed into our vehicles so that they can drive us places without incident. The technology will be used at security checkpoints to assist personnel in identifying threats. Data security programs will use it to track malware and other cyber-threats and defend against them proactively instead of reactively as current antivirus software does. Your phone will become a universal translator as machine learning becomes developed enough to translate speech from any language into any language in real time.

Why should you care?

Machine learning will change all of our existing technology. It is also going to change the workforce to a degree that hasn't been seen since the industrial revolution by rendering millions of jobs obsolete but also by introducing millions of new positions.

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