Robots smarter than humans by 2029

26th February, 2014

A scientist said robots will be more intelligent than humans by 2029. The scientist's name is Ray Kurzweil. He works for Google as Director of Engineering. He is one of the world's leading experts on artificial intelligence (AI). Mr Kurzweil believes computers will be able to learn from experiences, just like humans. He also thinks they will be able to tell jokes and stories, and even flirt. Kurzweil's 2029 prediction is a lot sooner than many people thought. The scientist said that in 1999, many AI experts said it would be hundreds of years before a computer was more intelligent than a human. He said that it would not be long before computer intelligence is one billion times more powerful than the human brain.

Mr Kurzweil joked that many years ago, people thought he was a little crazy for predicting computers would be as intelligent as humans. His thinking has stayed the same but everyone else has changed the way they think. He said: "My views are not radical any more. I've actually stayed consistent. It's the rest of the world that's changing its view." He highlighted examples of high-tech things we use, see or read about every day. These things make us believe that computers have intelligence. He said people think differently now: "Because the public has seen things like Siri [the iPhone's voice-recognition technology] where you talk to a computer; they've seen the Google self-driving cars."

Sources: *The Daily Mirror / The Japan Times*

Writing

Computers will become too intelligent one day. They will be a problem. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientist / intelligence / engineering / experts / experiences / jokes / the human brain / crazy / predicting / thinking / views / consistent / voice-recognition / technology

True / False

a) This research is from a scientist from Google. T / F

b) The article says the scientist is an expert on jokes around the world. T / F

c) Many people thought robots would be smarter than humans in 1999. T / F

d) The scientist believes computers will be a billion times smarter than us. T / F

e) Most people now think about robots more like the scientist does. T / F

f) The scientist said his views about robots are more radical than ever. T / F

g) The scientist said our everyday things show us computer intelligence. T / F

h) The article says Siri is the name of Google's self-driving cars. T / F

Synonym Match

1.	more intelligent	a.	mad
2	leading	b.	strong
3.	experiences	c.	forecast
4.	prediction	d.	pointed to
5.	powerful	e.	smarter
6.	crazy	f.	way of thinking
7.	thinking	g.	events
8.	view	h.	top
9.	highlighted	i.	people
10.	the public	j.	opinions

Discussion – Student A

a) Are scientists' ideas crazy?

b) How have your ideas about computers changed in the last 10 / 20 years?

c) What high-tech things do you totally, totally need?

d) How will computers change learning languages?

e) Would you lug an English-learning app that plugs into the brain?

f) Will we all sit in self-driving cars in a decade or two from now?

g) What could a computer one billion times smarter than us do?

h) What questions would you like to ask Dr Ray Kurzweil?

Phrase Match

1. robots will be more
2. the world's leading experts
3. a lot sooner than
4. He said that it would
5. the human
6. His thinking
7. It's the rest of the
8. He said people think
9. iPhone's voice-
10. the Google self-

a. differently now
b. recognition technology
c. brain
d. has stayed the same
e. many people thought
f. on artificial intelligence
g. not be long
h. driving cars
i. world that's changing
j. intelligent than humans

Discussion – Student B

a) Do you think computers will be smarter than us?
b) How scary is it to think that computers will be more intelligent than us?
c) Is it possible for computers to control all humans one day?
d) What kind of robots would you like?
e) Are robots dangerous?
f) What movies do you like about intelligent computers or robots?
g) Do you think there will be cyborgs (half-human / half robot) in the future?
h) Do you think a computer's joke would be funny?

Spelling

1. A scsiettni said robots will be more intelligent
2. Director of ignnrEenieg
3. one of the world's leading xeertsp
4. firicilata intelligence (AI)
5. Kurzweil's 2029 tiiecdnrpo
6. one iliobln times more powerful
7. My seiwv are not radical any more
8. He gihehtighld examples
9. ihhg-cthe things
10. people think ledintferyf now
11. the ilupbc has seen things like Siri
12. oevci-recognition technology

Role Play

Role A – Learn English overnight app
You think a learn English overnight app is the best technology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): a time travel machine, a 24-hour health monitor or a helicopter suit.

Role B – Time travel machine
You think a time travel machine is the best technology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): a learn English overnight app, a 24-hour health monitor or a helicopter suit.

Role C – 24-hour health monitor
You think a 24-hour health monitor is the best technology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): a time travel machine, a learn English overnight app or a helicopter suit.

Role D – Helicopter suit
You think a helicopter suit is the best technology. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): a time travel machine, a 24-hour health monitor or a learn English overnight app.

Speaking - Technology

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you would most like at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- self-driving car
- wrinkle eraser
- 200-inch 3D TV
- helicopter suit
- learn English overnight app
- air-con / heated clothes
- 24-hour health monitor
- time travel machine

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. g	4. c	5. b
6. a	7. j	8. f	9. d	10. i