All.Net Analyst Report and Newsletter

Welcome to our Analyst Report and Newsletter

Will you still need me?

Will you still feed me? When I'm 64? - The Beatles

I am soon turning 64, younger than many think I am, older than I was when I wrote this, and not accurately reflected in Wikipedia (or have they changed that yet?) My wife is still here and feeding me (not through a tube yet). So I guess I'm doing better than the song's author (his marriage didn't last that long).

I've been trying to replace myself

I am already confused about the whole retirement thing, but I am hoping to create an AI platform with deep learning in a cloud-based infrastructure using blockchain to provide a dialogue system that can replace me so that I will live on after I die. NOT!!!

- AI has been pro-missing this with different verbiage in different eras, but we are nowhere near that today, I think at least partly because we don't yet get it that brains are analog devices whose very nature is at a far higher (essentially infinite) granularity than the mechanisms of digital systems will attain.

- I was recently asked about the marvelous system I had for keeping in touch in anticipation of meetings. It's apparently a system far better than any they had seen before, and they were wondering what the name of it was. I told them that it was "Fred", and that the reason it works so well is that I personally send out the reminders.

I've been trying to become more efficient

The problem with becoming efficient is that it's a vicious cycle. The more you do the more you and they expect you can do. And you generally cannot charge as much more as the value you bring. So the key to being efficient is to hide it. It still takes a week to get those results, because it's so complicated. On the other hand, for the other 6.95 days I can be doing something else for someone else who also thinks it takes me a week. I just have to be good at scheduling things and careful not to over-deliver too soon.

Efficiency can only get you so far. Or can it? There always has been and still remains a tradeoff between what one really good person can do (quality) and what 10 other people can do (quantity). I run a forum for investors and presenting companies and service providers (3-sided market), and I pretty much do everything to make it work – using of course massive amounts of pre-existing technology, in many cases at the edge of its performance capabilities. I talk to each and every presenter for 30 minutes and record their introductions/presentations in advance, then play each of these as their introduction/pitch before the live online discussion parts. The presenting companies fill out forms in a system I implemented that details their situation and path forward, and I develop metrics analysis for these, make the output available to the companies and potential investors, and automate what I can… but it still takes an extra 30 minutes per company to help them get things right and address the obvious inconsistencies they have. And you cannot believe how hard it is to get people to include the http:// (or https://) in a URL. Or maybe you can?

Hiring a few dozen people from India to replace me

It costs less than $500/month to get a full time, well educated, professional, hard working, and skilled person from India. They will even work 12 hours offset from their local business hours, have good Internet, their own computer, and British accents (if you want that). So for $60,000/year you can get 10 full time people. At some point, the tradeoff between quality and quantity (of quality people without quite the same level of expertise). If I could only get them to have my weird sense of humor and wacky way of expressing things…

But I don't really need to be replaced. I am looking at supplementing myself so they do the "simple" part and I do the complicated part. Then I can cut it down to 15 minutes per person… but then I give up on the getting to know you part of the interaction, which is ultimately where the real value comes – in forming actual relationships.

But security!!!

I keep hearing that somehow people from the US are more trustworthy than people from India. Or that access to information for me is one thing, but for people working for me is another. Or that…

The list goes on and on, and frankly, you can trust me more than almost anybody else you know.

- But if you don't trust me, saying you can should not change your mind.
  - And if you do trust me, I don't need to say it.
    - So only a scam artist would say that.
      - Except of course me. I say it to teach you about scam artists.
        - Or so I say. Maybe it's all just a scam, what I have been doing since the 1970s, often against my financial interests.
          - But maybe I haven't been doing it that long, and the postings on my Web site were all just made up last week (or maybe it took a bit longer).
            - But you can look it up in the archives.
              - But maybe that's just part of the government plot to …
                - But fake news!
                  - But I'm such a good hacker, I could have faked it all!
                  - → I've run out of bullet levels or I would provide the definitive closing answer and you would trust me...

So the issue of trust and security in the era of globalization vs the era of xenophobia reflect social norms as well as the reality of loyalties that are pressed into service. When we are cooperating as nations, we can cooperate as people, and the general resentments and social norms are more similar in times of peace and cooperation. I think the trick is to design your entity so that you cannot be unduly harmed by any disloyalties within some anticipated range. Ah… but that is from last month.

Stupid security spreads

The password for entering all of my zoom meetings is the number 1. Why is this? Because stupid security has again thrived. Here's an example zoom URL:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84546070000

Adding all of the gobelty goop to the end to include an encoded password is, at best a waste of time and inconvenience to users who can no longer enter the meeting ID using human skills and then add the stupid thing they use to encode passwords at the end. Of course passwords that are not numeric get turned into numeric passwords for dialin. If people are trying to guess URLs to enter meetings, the 02 (from us02web…) combined with the 11-digit identifier and the time taken to get into a meeting will create a pretty serious barrier to entry. But of course Zoom could simply add a few check digits to the end of the meeting numbers and that would make it simple to rapidly detect guessing attempts and cut off the perpetrators by sending them into a deception process or disabling their access. For published URLs that people use to get into meetings, if they publish their new "secure" ULRs, anyone using the URL can come in anyway. So the security is stupid. It adds no value to require it. Of course if folks want to use it that's fine, but forcing it on all their users is a sickness of security idiocy.

The alternative, they will explain, is the waiting room. This waste is even worse, of course, because it takes more time, is less convenient, and makes entry far more complex for meetings of substantial size. It depends on the users claiming names that they can change and that somehow are supposed to be used to determine if they are allowed in. Try it for a meeting with 20 users who drop off and reenter, and listen for all the entry chimes or miss their attempts to join. But you have no choice – stupid password or waiting room. No opt out.

- Not more secure (if they knew what that even meant)
  - Not effective (doesn't prevent the attacks that used to work)
    - Disruptive to operations (requiring millions to change the way they work)
      - More expensive and time consuming
        - Inconvenient (for hosts and owners)
          - Doesn't work across the different entry paths (phones vs. browsers)
            - Doesn't solve the actual problem they have (people sharing URLs)
              - Better, faster, simpler, easier, less expensive alternatives
                - They were told and told (and told and told and told)
                  - And yet they did the stupid thing.

"There is no limit to stupidity." - Dario V. Forte

Conclusions

Do you still need me? Did you ever? This is the part of the year when I try to put aside my ego, think about how I helped perfect the world (or failed to do so), and feel guilty about what I did or failed to do less than perfectly. Of course I write an article every month on something stupid I did (http://a2e.co/Articles.html) so there is no lack of opportunity for improvement here. But mostly, I hope I am bringing value to the world.