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The Ugly Fight: Unleashing Artificial Intelligence Against Global Warming

R. S. Amblee
Gloture Books (Nov 7, 2018)
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The book's extended thought experiment, which details how AI could impact our fight against climate change, is compelling.

R. S. Amblee's technological, environmental examination, *Unleashing Artificial Intelligence Against Global Warming*, hypothesizes that modern computer algorithms have a major part to play in curbing the need for and use of fossil fuels.

Beginning with a discussion of both climate change and the rise of artificial-intelligence computing, the book explores how artificial intelligence can be used to mitigate fossil fuel emissions, with computers examining large data sets to learn how to make choices more and more accurately.

Here, AI is often discussed as the ability to automate various expensive parts of climate mitigation processes, making them less expensive and thus simpler to implement. Proposed ways to reduce global warming include relying on solar energy, developing cheaper and easier carbon-capture methods, and geo-engineering to lower global temperatures. The book posits that such computer automation via AI will take over many commonly held jobs and careers in the course of climate mitigation, and that housing, food, and health care will need to be made affordable under a universal basic income (UBI).

Amblee outlines issues and problems, then forwards quick explanations of how machine learning and artificial intelligence can solve such problems. Chapters cover different topics, but the guiding structure is easy to follow. The book excels at explaining complex topics for a lay audience, and its extended thought experiment, which details how AI could impact our fight against climate change, is compelling.

The text covers a substantial amount of ground in a brief space. While initial explanations of AI and the climate change situation are clear, individual solutions are covered so quickly that they are difficult to understand. A section on 3-D-printed houses mentions various experiments with the technology, but doesn't explain why these homes are likely to be popular. Points such as that AI will necessitate restructuring society due to job loss are repeated many times but without depth. The conclusion is abrupt and relies on generalities rather than specifics.

With a pleasant informality, the strongest sections briefly outline cutting-edge companies' work on AI, such as the strides being made to use enormous medical data sets to improve diagnostic outcomes without relying solely on one physician's opinion. The text wanders away from its thesis on climate change to discuss topics like self-driving vehicles and the hyperloop, though these sections are also cogent and engaging.

Unleashing Artificial Intelligence Against Global Warming offers linked technological and environmental essays that look to future applications of current artificial intelligence, positing interesting possibilities without fully connecting the dots.

LAURA LEAVITT (September 20, 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to

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