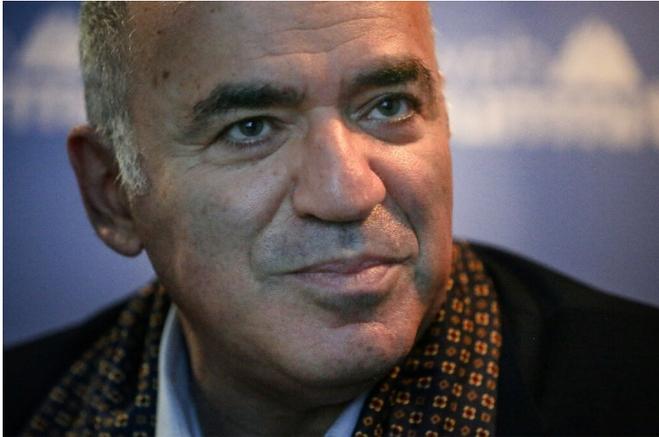


# Humans bigger threat than AI, says chess legend Kasparov

5 November 2021, by Yassine Khiri



Kasparov has remained fascinated by technology since his famous matches against IBM's Deep Blue computer.

Russian chess legend Garry Kasparov was beaten by a supercomputer—but when it comes to artificial intelligence, he is firmly convinced that it's the humans who pose the real threat.

Kasparov has remained fascinated by technology since his famous matches against IBM's Deep Blue computer in the 1990s.

When he wasn't busy taking on 10 simultaneous chess opponents at Lisbon's Web Summit this week—handily beating them all in 45 minutes—he spoke to AFP about AI's growing role in society.

"We live in a world where machines are playing bigger and bigger roles. Whether you like it or not, it's happening," he said.

"There is simply no evidence that machines are threatening us. The real danger comes not from killer robots but from people—because people still have a monopoly on evil."

The true threat, the Kremlin critic says, comes from

"the dictatorial, totalitarian countries and the terrorists who will use this technology to harm us".

While Terminator-style robo-assassins remain the stuff of science fiction, [human rights groups](#) are already pushing for [international laws](#) to restrict the use of so-called "[killer robots](#)", predicting that AI will transform warfare in the years to come.

At the Web Summit, meanwhile, tech gurus have spent the week discussing more positive potential applications of AI, from intelligent chatbots that boost our mental health to sorting plastic waste.

## 'It will be painful'

Kasparov might be described as a techno-optimist, but he does not totally dismiss the fears of AI naysayers who worry that robots will replace jobs once done by humans, from factory workers to truck drivers.

"It will be painful, no doubt about it. I don't want to sound callous—people will lose jobs. But look at the big picture," he said.



Kasparov took on 10 simultaneous opponents at the Web Summit and beat them all in 45 minutes.

"Humanity always wins with more technology brought in."

He pointed to the speed at which vaccines were developed in response to Covid-19, a lightning effort compared to work fighting earlier diseases, as something that made him hopeful about the power of innovation.

But he called for better regulation worldwide to help limit the negative impact of social media and other evolving technologies.

"What I want is a good public debate that will end up with recommendations to the government," he said.

"Because it's governments who could make legislation to force corporations to start doing things that will minimise the damage."

He spoke amid growing [international calls](#) for the immense power of tech giants like Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon to be reined in.

Facebook in particular has faced intense criticism over leaked documents showing that company executives knew about their sites' potential to harm people's safety on numerous fronts.

Kasparov suggested that authorities have struggled to regulate fast enough to keep up with the social media revolution partly "because governments look at big tech as a source of income".

However we end up regulating social networks, he predicted that no legislation can totally eliminate the harm it causes, from hate speech to making teenagers feel bad about themselves.

"Anybody who tells you we can eliminate it, it's absolutely impossible," he said.

"Because social platforms are the kind of business where conflict is built-in."

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