

Google's Ray Kurzweil revs up search focus with AI vision

January 15 2013, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org)—The setting: An intimate gathering at Singularity University's NASA campus in Silicon Valley. This is the place founded by Dr. Peter Diamandis and Dr. Ray Kurzweil, pursuing the idea of a new university that could "leverage the power of exponential technologies to solve humanity's grand challenges." Speaking in an interview is artificial intelligence expert and Google's new Director of Engineering, Ray Kurzweil.

Now you know this is worth visiting. His comments do not disappoint. In an interview with *Singularity Hub*, which was posted on January 10, he

said he wants to build a search engine that would be more sophisticated than ever, that can behave as an all-knowing, learned friend. He said there well could be a time, some years from today, where the majority of [search queries](#) will be answered without you actually asking. His thoughts, in brief, are about the deliverance of a cybernetic friend.

Now that inventor Kurzweil is at [Google](#), he is focused on helping his search giant employer to develop the type of [artificial intelligence](#)-powered search assistant that could be better than ever. One can easily say that Kurzweil came to the right place to work out his AI dreams. He told his interviewer, "We hope to combine my fifty years of experience in thinking about thinking with Google scale resources (in everything—engineering, computing, communications, data, users) to create truly useful AI that will make all of us smarter." Enormous stores of information from Google's database can be drawn upon for his research.

Google's access to what people read and write as mail messages or blog posts can enable this cybernetic friend to bring forth answers without the user asking. Kurzweil specializes in machine learning and [language processing](#) and an artificial brain has the advantage of understanding ideas and concepts. Presently, [search](#) engines have algorithms that select key words but natural language understanding can go to a different level. "It will know at a semantically deep level what you're interested in, not just the topic...[but] the specific questions and concerns you have," he said.

"The project that I plan to do is focused on natural language understanding. It may have other applications, but we want to computers the ability to understand the language that they're reading."

As the posting of the interview suggested, Kurzweil's work can result in the ability of computers to understand their users with "a quantum leap."

Kurzweil was the principal inventor of the first omni-font optical character recognition, the first print-to-speech reading machine for the blind, the first text-to-speech synthesizer, the first music synthesizer capable of recreating the grand piano and other instruments, and the first commercially marketed large-vocabulary speech recognition.

More information: Via [Singularity Hub](#)

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Citation: Google's Ray Kurzweil revs up search focus with AI vision (2013, January 15) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-01-google-ray-kurzweil-revs-focus.html>

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