

Towards a Global Brain

Keynote VLDB 2011

Tim O'Reilly

O'Reilly Media

<http://tim.oreilly.com>

ABSTRACT

At the same time as we are seeing breakthrough after breakthrough in artificial intelligence, we are also seeing the fulfillment of the vision of Vannevar Bush, JCR Licklider, and Doug Engelbart that computers could augment human information retrieval and problem solving. AI turned out not to be a matter of developing better algorithms, but of having enough data. The key applications of the web combine machine learning algorithms with techniques for harnessing the collective intelligence of users as captured in massive, interlinked cloud databases. Bit by bit, this is leading us towards a new kind of global brain, in which we have met the AI, and it is us. We and our devices are its senses, our databases are its memory, its habits, and even its dreams. This global brain is still a child, but as its parents, we have a responsibility to think about how best to raise it. What should we be teaching our future augmented selves? How can we make the emerging global consciousness not only more resilient, but more moral?

1. ABOUT THE PRESENTER



Tim O'Reilly is the founder and CEO of O'Reilly Media Inc., thought by many to be the best computer book publisher in the world. O'Reilly Media also hosts conferences on technology topics, including the O'Reilly Open Source Convention, the Web 2.0 Summit, Strata: The Business of Data, and many others. O'Reilly's Make: magazine and Maker Faire has been compared to the West Coast Computer Faire, which launched the personal computer revolution. Tim's blog, the O'Reilly Radar "watches the alpha geeks" to determine emerging technology trends, and serves as a platform for advocacy about issues of importance to the technical community. Tim is also a partner at O'Reilly AlphaTech Ventures, O'Reilly's early stage venture firm, and is on the board of Safari Books Online.

Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. To copy otherwise, to republish, to post on servers or to redistribute to lists, requires prior specific permission and/or a fee. Articles from this volume were invited to present their results at The 37th International Conference on Very Large Data Bases, August 29th - September 3rd 2011, Seattle, Washington.

Proceedings of the VLDB Endowment, Vol. 4, No. 11

Copyright 2011 VLDB Endowment 2150-8097/11/08... \$ 10.00.