

The AI-Climate Paradox: Adversary or Ally?



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The AI-Climate Paradox: Adversary or Ally?

A new lens on technology's role in the climate crisis—seeking curiosity, not just catastrophe.

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JUL 15



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At first perception, artificial intelligence and the climate crisis are direct adversaries. With each stroke of an energy-laden ChatGPT or Gemini query, it feels as though each one of us is sinfully subjecting the planet to further degradation. This quickly advancing, and often permissionless technology has intruded onto our lives aggressively, promising convenience and access to a higher class of living and learning.

Yet, without a defined tutorial announcing its arrival, this thing we've simply named AI, has quietly become the culprit behind major job losses, entire industries overhauling, education and its value being redefined in our economy, and, crucially, a rising question of how we generate enough power to keep this intelligence in power, and what resources we might be risking in the process.

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The transition to a new way of life at the behest of new technology has historically been met with a fury of opposing viewpoints, confusing media fodder, and what had been considered "safe" industries being reformed. This left us questioning where we might find ourselves in an uncertain future. Take, for instance, the introduction of the railroad in the 1800s, or the combustion car in the later part of the 19th century that replaced travel by stagecoaches, irrevocably changing jobs and forcing working-class citizens to upskill into entirely new professions or go hungry.

Advanced technology has not always provided a kind nor just transition. Historically, people – historically, those most marginalized in society – and the planet have been the ones most egregiously impacted by new and emerging systems that have not adequately taken them into account.

And yet, I am of the mind that AI is neither savior nor villain – it's a tool. And in the climate fight, how we wield it will shape and hopefully encourage the sustainable future we can imagine is possible. This is the guiding principle behind **Regenerative**.

My deep engagement with global ecosystems and conversations on climate, innovation, and democracy, alongside my long-standing work as a journalist, speaker, advisor, and host championing human-centered technology solutions, has been a catalyst for me to unpack AI's true potential. I understand intimately how technology has always begun with ugly starts, failed firsts, and an unknown impact on the future it would usher in. Accountability shakes hands with possibility. This is precisely where collaboration must occur, and more significantly, this is the case for curiosity.

So here's the question that will shape our direction: How do we approach the role of AI in our quest to solve the climate crisis with curiosity, not blame or judgment, but for its actual potential?

For the purposes of this weekly newsletter going forward, my aim is to find the missing space that exists between the media noise singing AI's praises while also crucifying its existence. We'll decode the investments, controversies, and innovations transforming energy, food systems, carbon markets, and public infrastructure. We'll spotlight the entrepreneurs actually deploying AI for climate resilience, and call BS on the hype when needed.

I'll meet you here on the other side of the possibilities.

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