M6

Digest IT

We Take "IT" Seriously

No One Knows You're a Dog on the Internet
By Sebastian Scheller

With the exponential rise of AI in every aspect of our lives, how can we trust what is real in the digital world?

The world changed on November 30, 2022, when OpenAI released Chat GPT to the public. This new Large Language Model (LLM for short) took the world by storm with over 100 million users by January of 2023. Previously, TikTok held the record by acquiring 100 million users in just 9 months. What made Chat GPT so remarkable? To understand the difference between Chat GPT and the chatbots that came before it, we must first understand the basics of Machine Learning. Machine Learning is the process of teaching a computer to tell the difference between two types of data. For example, we can teach a computer to recognize the difference between the picture of a dog and a cat. Computers cannot see images the same way we do, but the way they process the information of a picture is similar. When humans see an image, we immediately see defining characteristics such as ears or whiskers. How does a computer see? Computers don't have eyes, but they can process images by processing every pixel in an image. By giving a computer model a library of pictures of cats, a computer can break those images down by using a KNN algorithm (K Nearest Neighbor). The computer model will plot each image of a cat given on a KNN graph and when given a random image, it will compare the data of that image to the stored data it has of a cat. Using the data it has collected from images of cats to the image it was given, it will be able to determine if that image is one of a cat.

This KNN algorithm approach can be used to simulate conversion. By giving a computer model access to conversation and the basic grammar rules of English, a computer can mimic human conversation. This can be seen in chatbots like Siri or Alexa. The issue with these chatbots is that they are severely limited in their responses. Chat GPT is set apart in two distinct ways. The first is that Chat GPT does not have set responses. (It does have a warning response when a user prompts it to break the Terms and Conditions and it is not allowed to respond). This forces Chat GPT to come up with an organic response to each prompt it is given. The second is that Chat GPT was trained on 45 Terabytes of data. To put that into perspective, 1 TB of data is worth about 200,000 novels. This means in order to have read the same amount of information as Chat GPT, you would need to read nine million novels. These two features have allowed Chat GPT to do remarkable things, such as pass AP standardized tests, the SAT, and even the Bar Exam. While Chat GPT does have some flaws such as hallucination (generating false or incorrect answers) and struggling with basic addition, its ability to write surpasses many humans.

"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

Inside this Issue

Special Points of Interest

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M6 Charitable Initiatives

The M6 Team got together in November to make a dozen or so warm blankets that were then donated to a local charity.

Our Chief People Person, Sandy Dorsch, was a seamstress in her early years and was confident that the M6 crew would have no problem "tying up" a few plush blankets. We squared off in teams and began cutting and tying. Six warm, comfortable blankets were created during the two hour session. The workers only stopped creating after it was realized that the seamstress ran out of twist. Much like the Tailor of Gloucester, we had "no more twist." A great time was had by the entire M6 team. Unfortunately, Paula is missing from the picture because she was the photographer!

In December, the M6 team collected canned goods and other non-perishable items to provide to the Hope House, a charity with which Bill is closely involved, that delivers groceries to those who are less fortunate and are unable to provide or shop for themselves.

M6 News and Updates

No One Knows You're a Dog on the Internet *(continued from page 1)*

This brings me to my final point, the Turning Test. In 1950, Alan Turning proposed the Imitation Game, later known as the Turning Test. The Imitation Game was based on a game played by three people: a judge, a man, and a woman. The three players would be in separate rooms and the judge would ask the man and the woman a variety of questions (via a keyboard and screen) in an attempt to figure out the sex of each player. Turning proposes a similar test to determine if a machine was capable of Artificial Intelligence. In the Turning version of the Imitation Game, a judge would communicate with a person and a computer and try to determine which was the machine. Although several chatbots have come close to passing the Turning Test, none have, until Chat GPT. While some critics claim that the Turning Test cannot determine true intelligence or consciousness, it has been a good indication of how well machines can imitate human understanding and comprehension. Why is this an issue? Because many companies are starting to integrate Chat GPT into their websites and services, and on the internet, no one knows you're a dog.

In Sympathy
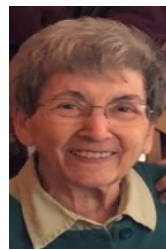
Paula Mulcahey's mother passed away peacefully on January 24, 2024, at the age of 94 with her family by her side. Maria Quinn celebrated her 94th birthday with a party on New Year's Day. Thankfully, most of her family was present at the party. Mom, Granny or Quinner, as she was often called, lived a very good life. She was blessed with a wonderful husband, eight children, 20 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Maria was an avid Phillies fan, loved puzzles, Scrabble and solving the daily Jumbles & Cryptograms in the Philadelphia Inquirer. However, her love for her children and their families far surpassed her love for the Phillies, any game that she played or puzzle that she completed. Her warm, infectious smile and loving "double-cheek" kisses made everyone feel special. She will be truly missed. Please keep Paula and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

M6 Congratulates Central Outreach Wellness Center

Dr. Stacy Lane and her team at Central Outreach Wellness Center (COWC) continue to grow and offer their culturally competent and compassionate healthcare services to an increasing number of individuals. M6 was proud to attend the grand reopening of their new Cleveland Heights, Ohio office on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. A short ceremony attended by COWC team members, local dignitaries and guests heard from both the keynote speaker, Kenyon Farrow, and Dr. Lane. Alexander Young, the COWC Marketing Director, did a great job as the Master of Ceremonies. An open house and luncheon followed the ceremony. All were welcome to tour the new space, meet and network with attendees and enjoy a delicious lunch.

COWC's Pennsylvania locations include downtown Pittsburgh, Aliquippa, Erie and Washington. They also have two Ohio locations, one in Columbus and one in Cleveland.

Congratulations to Dr. Stacy and all of her dedicated team members. We're proud to include COWC as part of the M6 family.

This quarter's comic was submitted by Mark Janovec.

M6 Client Spotlight

DiBella Weinheimer, P.C.
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
https://www.dibella-weinheimer.com
412.261.2900

CIS Critical Security Controls Version 8 — A Deeper Dive

CIS
Critical Security Controls
Version 8
A Deeper Dive

The M6 Secure Outcomes Team is continuing its closer look at each of the 18 security controls. This quarter, controls 8 and 9 will be reviewed.

8. Audit Log Management

Audit logs collect information about activity within an organization's IT infrastructure, both hardware and software. Logs typically contain the following types of information: an event name, a clear description of the event along with a time stamp, an ID or service that caused the event, the resource impacted by the event and the source of the event. We collect and monitor audit logs to provide evidence of how data or configurations may have been accessed, changed and by whom. The practice also increases efficiency, helps with fraud protection, allows for reconstruction of events and helps meet compliance regulations. Control #8 is critical when addressing IT and Cybersecurity incident responses.

9. Email & Web Browser Protection

Control #9 is all about protection! Email and web browsers have always been and continue to be the major threat vectors through which cyber-criminals attempt to gain access to IT environments. Does your business ensure that only fully supported browsers and email clients are in use? Are these applications kept up to date? Do you implement network-based DNS and URL filtering? Are there methods employed that scan email and attachments for malware and viruses? Does your business block unnecessary file types attempting to enter your systems through your email gateway? Do you know how to implement SPF, DMARC and DKIM? If you're not sure, we can help!

Contact M6 Technologies to find out more about our Secure Outcomes initiative.

The law firm of DiBella Weinheimer, P.C. became part of the M6 family after our long time client Weinheimer, Haber and Coco, P.C. merged with DiBella Geer McAllister Best, PC in July of 2021. DiBella Weinheimer is a premier defense firm in the Pittsburgh region providing services over a wide range of practice areas. The experienced legal team at DiBella Weinheimer is a "Trial Ready Defense" team that is guided by three core pillars: Experience, Respect, Results. If you are a business or individual in need of an exceptional defense team, DiBella Weinheimer is the firm to contact.

Several members of the DiBella Weinheimer team are certified mediators offering court mandated or private mediation through their Alternative Dispute Resolution services. The team at DiBella Weinheimer also gives back to their communities in a variety of ways. Some members provide educational services, seminars and lectures to colleagues and local universities; some are involved in social organizations and professional associations; and others are involved in charitable organizations.

A great group of people offering great legal defense services, who give back to their communities and home towns. A great client we proudly count as a member of our M6 Family.

Best Practices for Email Communication

In today's digital age, email has become a unanimous means of personal and professional communication. However, with the convenience of email comes the inherent risk of exposing sensitive data.

One-way emails are compromised by being intercepted by bad actors. If a bad actor is in between the sender and the recipient of an email and the email is not encrypted, the bad actor will be able to see the contents of the email. Another way bad actors can view emails is by hacking into a recipient or sender's email. It is common practice for bad actors to send out malicious links telling a user to sign into their Microsoft account or their bank account. These links may look like the Microsoft login page or a Dropbox page, but they are traps. When a user enters their credentials into a malicious site, it sends them to the bad actor. From there, the bad actor will use the credentials to sign into the user's email and then view private or sensitive information. The bad actor will also send phishing emails from the compromised email in order to gain access to additional email accounts.

One of the most effective ways to enhance email security is through encryption. Email encryption involves encoding the contents of an email in such a way that only authorized recipients with the decryption key can decipher and access the information. This ensures that even if intercepted during transmission, the contents of the email remain unreadable to unauthorized parties. Additionally, password protecting sensitive documents attached to emails adds an extra layer of security. By encrypting the document with a strong password, only those with the correct password can open and view its contents. This is particularly useful when sharing confidential files such as financial documents, legal contracts, or personal records via email. By using password protected documents, you can prevent sensitive information from being leaked even if your email is compromised.

It's essential to implement robust email security practices, including regular password updates, multi-factor authentication, and learning how to recognize phishing emails. By taking these steps you can minimize the risk of unauthorized access to sensitive information.

From the Desk of...
Bill Mulcahey

I am sure that we are all aware of the phrase "Stay in Your Lane." Obviously, drivers of motor vehicles need to stay in their lanes, especially if someone is passing them or approaching them in a different lane. At times the phrase is used when admonishing someone who has insufficient knowledge or ability on a topic about which they are speaking. Similar in a way to saying "keep your mouth shut if you don't know what you're talking about." One of my daughters holds her index finger of one hand over her mouth, holds the other hand out in a stop position and fires off about five or six soft shushes! That is her way of telling me to stay in my lane. Effective but annoying!

More often, at least in my experiences, it is used when one steps in and tries to take over a task, chore or assignment that is not their responsibility to address. Jennifer, our Manager of Client Services, gives me her "stinky cheese eyes" when I pull a ticket from our triage queue and start working on it. Or worse, I just work on the issue and never touch the ticket! Processes are in place to enable us to provide our clients with "white glove service." When one of us leaves our lane and does not follow procedure, even with the best of intentions in mind, it tends to creates a larger mess that becomes someone else's responsibility to fix.

When assigned a task, most people will do their best to educate themselves on what needs to be done to accomplish that task. Most will also reach out to someone if they need advice or assistance. In most cases, there is no need to jump your lane to "help" if you haven't been asked. Our team at M6 knows more about certain aspects of our tools and our clients than I do. I find it hard at times, especially since I am the "experienced" one, to not jump in and help. But, as is most often the case, the team's got it, so I have to remind myself..."Stay in Your Lane, Bill!"

Business Read: **"**Process" by Mike Paton and Lisa Gonzalez

Personal Read: **"**I Don't Want To Talk About It" by Terrence Real

Our Mission Statement

M6 Technologies strives to be the premier security-focused MSP for small businesses in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania region.

We will accomplish this by delivering expert and attentive support to our clients through well-trained, honest and accountable Client Service Advocates. We will continually educate ourselves on existing and new technologies so we can design, implement and manage the best secure IT solutions. M6 Technologies makes every effort to be your trusted strategic IT partner dedicated to your overall success.