THE DEEP LEARNING CURVE

Big data is important not only to human researchers, but also to the artificial intelligence that computers acquire through deep learning. Emeritus Professor of Computer Science Francis YL Chin has jumped at the chance to be part of the big data revolution.

Constant learning has been a necessity throughout Emeritus Professor Francis YL Chin’s professional life, driven by never-ending evolution in computing technology. When he retired from HKU in 2015, one might have thought it would be time to take a breather. But the exciting developments of the past few years have been too irresistible a draw. Not only is technology constantly improving, but machines are showing the potential to progressively learn. At the heart of this revolution is big data.

“Big data and deep learning are very closely related. Big data is why deep learning has been doing so well,” Professor Chin said.

Jump on it

Machine learning through big data is expensive, though, particularly because much of it is not in the public domain. Internet firms such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Alibaba collect enormous amounts of data about pages visited, searches and so forth. Their in-house researchers, who have access to this data, are also producing some of the most significant research in the world.

This said, Professor Chin pointed to the recent program AlphaGo Zero, developed by a Google subsidiary, which taught itself how to play the game Go without any data apart from the rules of the game. A previous version had used data from more than 100,000 games to learn the game. The success of AlphaGo Zero makes sense considering that a child does not need to learn its native language this way. Instead, we’re exposed to the language through countless examples of how it’s used. We learn our native language this way.

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In another, at Hang Seng Management College, Professor Chin and his team are training computers to do the translation of financial documents by feeding them reams of initial public offering and other business documents. They are also producing some of the most significant research in the world.

Source:

under the arrangements currently in force, the aggregate emoluments payable by our group to and benefits in kind receivable by our directors for the year ending 31 December 2013 are expected to be approximately mhb3, 20,400.

Our translation: 根據現行安排，截至2013年12月31日止年度，本集團應付董事的酬金總額及董事應收的實報酬總額為人民幣3,204,000。

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