

Protokoll 18

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Every scholar is a language model in training. Yet it is not out of a worry about competition that I bow out of fully participating in this book's experiment in the collectively human large language model that is scholarly talk about machine large language models. Rather, I gently decline because every time public commentators mention ChatGPT--to fret about perils, enthuse with promises, or even simply describe these nonsense machines and their hallucinations--we scholars are both feeding their omnivorous maws with the very content it needs to make predictive guesses about what an average "we" might say next as well as we are freely advertising one over other private companies. ChatGPT--an acronym few experts even seem to grok (*Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer*)--is, if nothing else, one of the greatest branding triumphs in recent memory. None of it, including this all-too-brief comment about LLMs, seems remarkably "smart." Perhaps because scholars resemble language models in training in one very specific way--rarely do we know what else to do except to *talk and write*--do scholars and our ilk accidentally give away the very content and then cover for privatization schemes that profit off of the imitation of robust public discourse. But if better talk feeds the beast better, silence will not slow it. Self-righteous abstinence is sure to offer little abyss artistry of value in response to large language models. My bet: perhaps the best way forward in an era of large language models will have less and less to do with scholarly discourse about machines and humans, and more and more to do with the regulation and the prohibition of business models that serve the few and the unscrupulous at the cost of the public. May the former serve the latter!