

Artificial intelligence

2025 James Bridle (The Stupidity of AI) doubts the widespread view that artificial intelligence (AI) is an omniscient, objective, and efficient system that can address complex human issues. Rather, Bridle claims that AI is frequently flawed, biased by humans, and, finally, stupid in its inability. The article brings to the attention the risks of over-reliance on AI when making critical decisions, including healthcare, law enforcement, and education. Bridle emphasizes that AI technologies are not neutral; they represent assumptions, errors, and inequalities of the information and individuals that develop the technologies. Although AI is sold as smart and objective, Bridle reveals its failures and makes the reader rethink mindless trust in technological machines.

In this essay, I will claim that Bridle makes a sound rhetoric argument by relying successfully on a blend of logos, ethos, and kairos to prove the inadequacy of AI, but his tendency to use emotionally-charged warnings is at times too much, and he does not engage in the counterarguments as thoroughly as he could have done. By ensuring that decisions are well thought out, making use of the context, and worrying about the issue of audiences, Bridle manages to build a very strong argument in regards to the boundaries of artificial intelligence.

Summary of the Article

Bridle starts the explanation of how AI has been promoted as a groundbreaking technology that can be more effective and efficient in decision making compared to humans. However, he busts this myth as soon as he gives the real life examples of AI failure. They are biased criminal justice algorithms, defective facial recognition platforms and flawed healthcare diagnostic systems. Bride says that these failures do not happen but are the inevitable consequences of AI systems being trained on biased or partial data sets. He also states that AI is

dumb not because it lacks the ability to process complex information but because it lacks actual knowledge, interpretation and accountability.

The author also underlines the timeliness (kairos) of this argument since the adoption of AI is acquiring momentum in both real-life and in policymaking. Bridle states that society must critically evaluate the flaws of AI prior to giving up on it to make choices that affect the lives of humans. The overall point of his argument is that AI is not a progressive technology in case man does not recognize and deal with its inherent deficiencies.

Thesis and Claim of Value

The article by Bridle is a solid argument since it appeals to the rhetorical aspects to persuade the readers that AI can not be relied on unquestioningly. The appeal to logos is based on logical evidence, credible knowledge and references (ethos), and reinforced by the urgency of current AI discussions (kairos). Though his language sometimes borders the alarmist in a way that might drive more skeptical readers away, overall rhetorical performance of the article is considerable.

Ethos: Authority and Credibility.

Bridle is an authentic cultural critic and a technology writer, which makes Bridle a rhetorically powerful cultural critic. He also speaks with confidence about the history, development, and current uses of AI, which communicates to the audience that he is well informed on the subject. He is not an engineer of AI, but he is a critic, and it makes him an individual who can distance himself and evaluate the greater consequences of technology beyond its technical mechanisms.

Another element of ethos that he builds up is his awareness of mass AI fiction. The interest of the population in AI is not denied by Bridle, however, on the contrary, he is open

about it and knows why many people believe that AI is intelligent without properly disaggregating this concept. This forking stance renders him impartial which increases the credibility of his criticism.

Nevertheless, it would be better to see Bridle mention more names of AI researchers or technical minds in his ethos. The fact that he has based his conclusions on his analysis can be perceived as quite convincing, but can be viewed as questionable by those who might be more scientific or data-oriented. However, his authoritative and easy to understand explanations can enable him to relate well to a general audience.

Pathos: Emotional Appeals

Bridle does use pathos to appeal to emotions at some points (such as the risks caused by excessive reliance on AI). As an illustration, he cites the fact that AI errors in the police could put innocent people in wrongful custody, and improper medical algorithms could endanger the life of patients. Such scenarios are frightening and alarming as they make readers perceive AI as not a neutral tool only but a danger to equality and justice.

Kairos: The Opportune moment of the argument.

The secret of success of Bridle is kairos or the opportune moment of rhetoric. His article is timed when AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, autopilot vehicles, and predictive codes, among others, are capturing headlines. Putting his criticism into the context, Bridle exploits the urgency in the subject of the debate on AI among people.

The topicality of the argument further confirms this since readers are ready to consider the role AI plays in their lives. By informing his audience about the reality of the fact that the decisions towards the implementation of the AI are already in progress, Bridle is reminding them that once the latter are brought to the mainstream, the fact that they might feature certain

shortcomings might become much more challenging to fix because of it. This use of kairos reiterates that this is a desperate, critical involvement.

Assumptions and Audience

Bridle makes several assumptions about his readers. He assumes that the readers are already aware of the rising presence of AI in society and they are somewhat skeptical of its promises. The examples he gives rely on the universal concerns of fairness, justice and equality, and it suggests that his intended audience is concerned with ethics in technology. In the meantime, Bridle is assuming that his audience is not too technical with AI. He is not technical; he uses language that can be understood and uses familiar examples. This literary device broadens his audience base in that even common people and those not well versed in the technological field can make sense of his critique.

Organizing and Planning of Argument: The article itself is well organized and structured, having a flow of general criticism of AI myths, then concrete examples of failure, and finally having some implications on the society in general. This logical flow can be likened to how an argument ought to be developed; first, one needs to prove the problem, then evidence, and finally the consequences. Bridle is also a good presenter since he understands how to create the balance between clarification and evaluation. He does not only describe AI failures but also positions the learning of these failures in terms of technology limitations. This will help in ensuring that the article does not become a list of complaints but will help it become a lead to a sound argument.

Rhetorical Effectiveness: The article by Bridle is generally rhetorically good because it brings logical arguments, credibility and emotional appeal in a way that makes it appealing to the readers. One of the strengths of the argument is that it is especially timely (kairos) and presents complex technological concerns in terms that are easy to understand and digest.

Nevertheless, improving the article might be possible by interacting more with counterarguments. Bridle briefly mentions the possible benefits of AI, but does not develop them further. His argument could have been even more convincing to the skeptics, however, with a better balance of criticism and recognition of opposing arguments. Although it is limited in this way, the article still serves as a rhetorical criticism of blind optimism about AI.

Conclusion

James Bridle is successful in his article *The Stupidity of AI*, as he is trying to break the cultural belief that artificial intelligence is necessarily intelligent and reliable. Bridle creates a convincing argument with a well-crafted logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos, explaining that the flaws and biases of AI should be addressed. Although there are certain instances when he depends on emotionally appealing warnings instead of logical appeal, the rhetorical skill of the article, in general, is that it makes a complex matter relatable, pressing, and something to think about. Finally, the article by Bridle is an efficient critique that should prompt the readers to rethink their belief in technology and insist on more accountability in designing and deploying AI.

Works cited

Bridle, James. "The Stupidity of AI." *Elements of Argument*, 14th ed., E-book ed., edited by Annette T. Rottenberg and Donna Haisty Winchell, Bedford/St. Martins, 2025, pp. 485–493.