How artificial intelligence can revolutionise science

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DEBATE about artificial intelligence (AI) tends to focus on its potential dangers: algorithmic bias and discrimination, the mass destruction of jobs and even, some say, the extinction of humanity. As some observers fret about these dystopian scenarios, however, others are focusing on the potential rewards. AI could, they claim, help humanity solve some of its biggest and thorniest problems. And, they say, AI will do this in a very specific way: by radically accelerating the pace of scientific discovery, especially in areas such as medicine, climate science and green technology. Luminaries in the field such as Demis Hassabis and Yann LeCun believe that AI can turbocharge scientific progress and lead to a golden age of discovery. Could they be right?

Such claims are worth examining, and may provide a useful counterbalance to fears