AI Apocalypse?

I have always found the question of building an artificial general intelligence (AGI) incredibly fascinating. To have a machine that could think and act as a human does could have many potential benefits. For example, some jobs require people to be placed in dangerous situations, in which case AGI could be used instead. As well as preventing any harm coming to people, computers are more regulated and precise than humans, and would be less likely to make a mistake and cause damage. AGI would also be able to carry out many other functions to aid humans in many different tasks and employment sectors.

In addition to this, a growing problem within society is the increase in mental health conditions, where many people are too afraid to ask for help. AGI, however, could easily be seen as much more approachable than a human, and potentially save many lives by being an outlet for emotions and feelings, and maybe even being able to offer advice. Furthermore, if the AGI could hold a developed conversation, this would be incredibly useful to people suffering from loneliness, especially in a scenario such as today's pandemic where social interactions are severely limited.

However, it is also likely that the AGI would be able to store all of the information from conversations such as these. Although this could be helpful in areas such as science where new experiments are carried out, this could also cause a great threat to somebody's privacy. Even if they were able to act like humans do, the AGI is ultimately still a machine with vulnerabilities, and could be hacked, or share the information itself. In addition to this, being able to effectively communicate with humans suggests an understanding of emotions and deeper meanings behind speech, which many people find frightening. Computers can already carry out many tasks that humans can't, and for them to also be able to comprehend emotions and feelings and think for themselves could lead to an apocalyptic event, where AGI began to control humans.

This leads on to the question of unplugging the system. For simpler machines such as laptops and mobile phones, this is not a problem. However, if you were to try and shut off a system that could think for itself, its reaction would be unpredictable. The AGI would be able to carry out many functions that the human could not, and potentially prevent itself from being unplugged. This links back to the previous idea of computers beginning to control humans. With the extensive knowledge that these machines would likely have, they could then "reproduce" by creating similar machines, to the point where humans are rendered powerless.

AGI has many wonderful possibilities that could increase the ease of day-to-day life, as well as allowing further developments within society. However, there is also a danger that a machine able to think for itself would do exactly that, putting both individuals and the entire human race at risk.