

# iDISRUPTED AUTHOR COMMENTS ON FACEBOOK'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO OPEN SOURCE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE MODULES

Submitted by: iDisrupted

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Facebook's move into open source AI is a brain changer

Facebook has revealed plans to open source some of its programs on the Torch open source development environment\*. This is a key moment in the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and a major threat to Google's own plans. For Facebook this is another very smart move.

John Straw, technology expert and co-author of iDisrupted (<http://www.idisrupted.com>), said: "Facebook's move will lead to raised eyebrows at Mountain View, California where Google's head office is based. AI is set to become one of the most important disrupters of business and the economy. The announcement shows that Facebook is taking this challenge very seriously. By engaging with the open source community, the company will gain new expertise, which it will find invaluable as it prepares to incorporate AI into future products and upgrades.

"By turning its AI code into open source, in effect Facebook acquires thousands of developers free of charge in a self-governing environment.. It's a bit like Wikipedia."

He added: "We are seeing very rapid advances in AI, but such developments are likely to accelerate if major players in the arena join open source platforms."

Straw continued: "Making software available to the open source community will allow the world's massive community of software developers to advance the platform and turn it into a standard. Facebook will benefit from this – significantly. It's rather like multiplying your in-house developer network by 100 per cent - but free of charge. The problem Google has is that much of the software it develops is internal and proprietary. Facebook has the real possibility of outpacing Google's development team..."

The book iDisrupted says that the wider economic implications of advancing AI are not clear. Although AI may lead to acceleration in scientific research and breakthroughs, and more efficient use of technology - for example in healthcare - the impact on jobs could be negative. Generally, computers can do with ease the things we find hard, but struggle with the things we find easy. Unfortunately, the jobs that computers may always find difficult are often quite poorly paid.

\* Torch open source development environment for numerics, machine learning, and computer vision with a particular emphasis on deep learning and convolutional nets. According to Facebook, Torch is widely used at a number of academic labs as well as at Google/DeepMind, Twitter, NVIDIA, AMD, Intel, and many other companies.

John Straw is a leading authority on emerging technologies, a major voice in the digital services industry, and a serial entrepreneur. He is an active early stage venture capitalist, with a particular interest in technology companies. Currently, he is Chairman of Thomas Cook's Digital Advisory Board, Chairman/Investor in search startup Cloudfind, NonExecutive Director at personal data startup

CTRLio and principle at the recently formed investment group Thorium Technology Investors.

About iDisrupted

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