This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 3:47:04 2026 / +0000 GMT

Is it real?

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Is it live, or is it Memorex?

If you remember that slogan, you're probably a certain age.

It was a slogan used by the Memorex company aimed at demonstrating the quality of their cassette recording tapes.

This was at a time when cassette tapes went from being of mediocre quality and not very popular, to a tape of high quality suitable for good listening on a stereo system.

Although I'm pretty sure you could tell the difference between a live saxophone and one being played back after a recording, it was a good advertising strategy that let the public know that recordings on tape were using new and better technology.

Technology has moved forward at an ever-increasing rate over the past couple of decades.

However, the predictions from old movies and science fiction TV shows were off the mark on a lot of things.

By the 1990's, they predicted flying cars, robot butlers, and a jet pack in the garage for personal transportation.

I wouldn't mind a robot butler, but a lot of people can't drive a car on a regular street in a respectable manner. I don't think taking to the air with your neighbours would be safe.

For some reason, domed cities of the future were popular. It looked kind of cool, but no one ever explained why you would want a glass dome over your city.

They did get some things right. Everyone now has a small ?Beam me up Scottie' handheld device, which actually does more than the Star Trek version.

The one thing that old sci-fi buffs predicted that came true is artificial intelligence. However, they predicted it would be in the form of a humanoid who would speak to you, not the current AI that is shaping up.

I received a recommended video on my YouTube feed about car crashes. You've probably seen dash-cam videos of car accidents on a street or highway.

The first crash appeared to be videotaped from an overpass, showing a car crossing the centre line and hitting another vehicle head-on, before careening into a third car. I thought for sure, there would be fatalities.

The second video was equally horrendous.

It was the third video, where I finally caught on. It was a Dodge Hellcat involved in a police chase.

The Hellcat made a sudden super tight turn and took off at a speed not even a Hellcat could achieve.

I went back over the videos again and realized none of them were real. They were all computer-generated. But they were that good, to fool me the first time.

This technology has made its way into film with some pretty spectacular results.

If I was a movie actor, I would be worried about getting work in the future.

I saw some portraits, in the photographic sense, of people in different parts of the world. Except the people didn't exist. They were created by AI based on suggestions only.

It won't be long until filmmakers start to use AI to create actors for their movies.

An AI-created actor would produce the exact person the producer wants for a role without having to do auditions. It will produce the exact emotions the director wants from the actor, and they will do it in one take.

Why pay an A-list actor $20 million to be in a movie when you can create something that will do an even better job?

It's a strange thought to think that in the future, that beautiful actress you saw in a movie, may not even be real.

I recently released my second novel on Amazon.

During the actual publishing phase, you have to answer a question asking if your book content or cover has been created by AI.

I'm not sure what happens if you answer ?yes' to that question. I guess you don't get full credit for authoring a book.

There are now programs that use AI to write for you. You only have to enter information about the topic, and the program writes it for you.

Apparently, students love it. But if you're caught using AI to write an essay, do you fail because you didn't complete the assignment all on your own?

AI software companies are now booming as the industry moves into the next phase of having computers think for you.

There's a lot of good that can happen with this technology.

However, how would you feel, if you found out that the 20-minute conversation you just had with a person on a helpline at your bank, was nothing more than a computer-generated voice offering you advice?