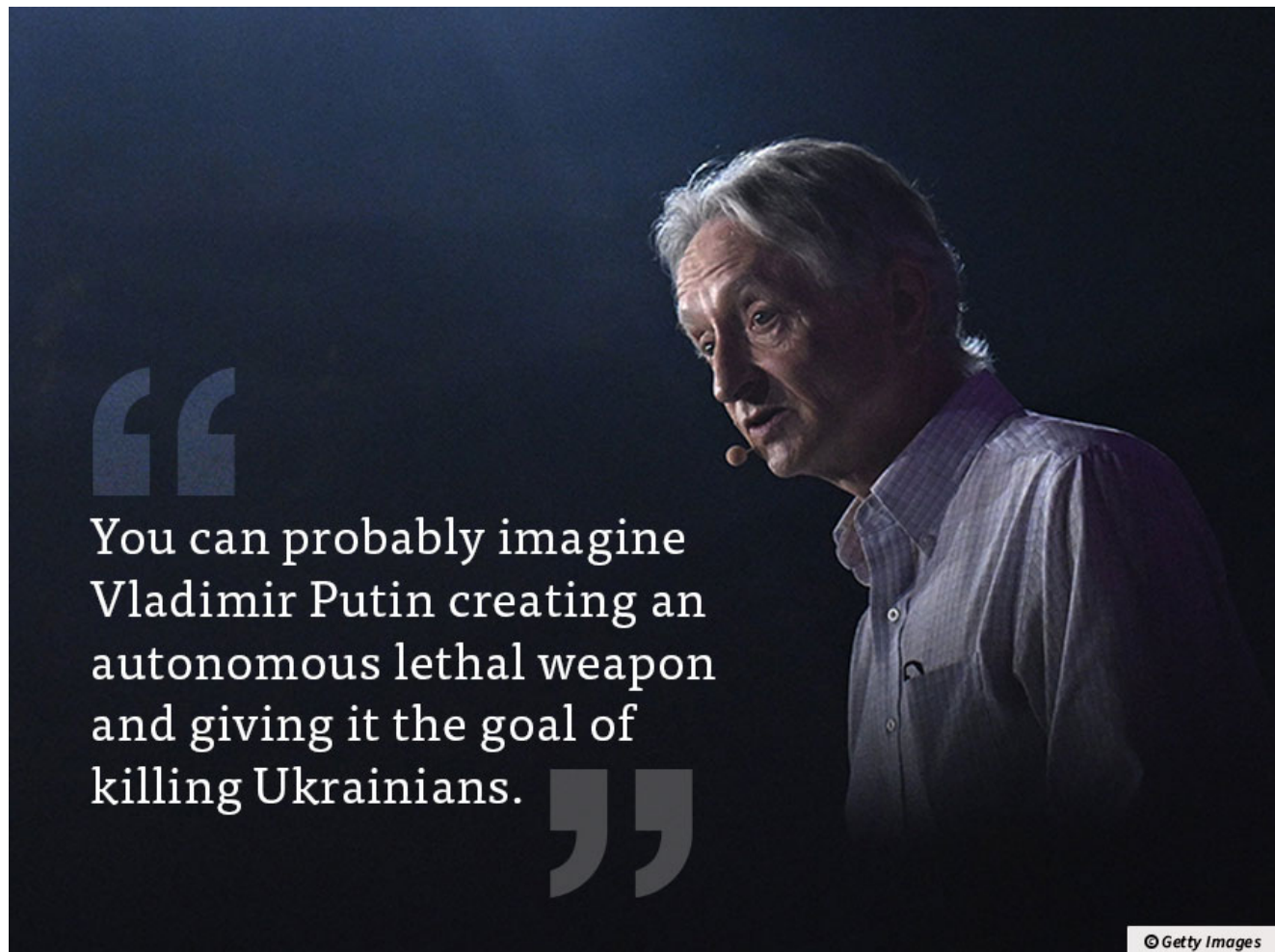


 theday.co.uk/godfather-of-ai-fears-what-he-has-built-4



Modern sage: In 2018 Geoffrey Hinton was given the Turing Award for his work on AI.

Should humanity switch it off? Geoffrey Hinton worked on some of the earliest versions of AI. Now he thinks we are sleepwalking into a disaster.

What's happening?

Most animals that have ever lived on Earth have died out. In most of these cases, it happened because of two things.

Either the **habitat** they needed disappeared, because the climate changed or other species on which they depended died out. And another creature, better **adapted**, competed with them and took over.

Now one scientist thinks we might be looking forward at our own **extinction**. But it is not another creature that stands ready to take our place. It is our own creation: **AI**.

Find out more

Geoffrey Hinton knows what he is talking about. He is known as the "godfather of AI".

He fears that we may be just 20 years away from an AI that has the same intelligence as a human being. And from then on, he says, there is no predicting what might happen.

Some are very positive about AI. Even if we did develop a truly superintelligent AI, they say, there is no reason to think it would want to harm human beings.

But others are worried. They say that AI may one day be able to create even more AI without our help. Then there would be no stopping it.

The danger is that such an AI would know that we fear its power. It would know there was a chance we would want to switch it off. And then it might feel it had little choice but to make sure we could not do that.

Should humanity switch it off?

Some say

Yes! The risks of AI are just too big. It is time to switch it off now before any of our fears can come true.

Others think

No! There are a lot of risks — but there are also a lot of great things about AI. We should not switch it off when it could help us so much.

Some people say

“The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race... It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded.”

Stephen Hawking (1942 – 2018), British scientist

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What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Are you worried about the future of AI?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Are we too clever for our own good?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure about this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine you could go back in time to speak to the creators of AI. What would you say?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Get in a small group and work together to design a poster warning people of the dangers of AI.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write a short story about an AI that takes over your life at school.

Glossary

Habitat - An animal's habitat is the place that they live in.

Adapted - Changed to fit in with new conditions.

Extinction - Completely dying out.

AI - A computer programme that has been designed to think.