The Challenge

Machines are becoming more intelligent and more powerful every day. But, like all tools, they can be used for good or evil. How can we design artificial intelligence (AI) to augment people and change humanity for the better?

There are numerous potential pitfalls of living and working in a world where AI is ubiquitous and touches how we inform ourselves, learn, make decisions, and care for our health. While accuracy, efficiency, privacy, and non-bias of AI systems are all essential, they alone do not guarantee that the consequences will be beneficial when these systems are introduced in a human context.
The Media Lab’s View

While other research labs focus on making AI smarter — creating better algorithms, models, and hardware — the Media Lab is focused on people and AI, especially how novel AI technologies and applications can improve the human experience.

The Life with AI theme is about how we live and work with AI systems so that they aid humans in all dimensions of activities. The theme brings together a broad group of Media Lab researchers to prototype systems, run experiments, create provocative experiences, and develop new technologies — all to reveal pitfalls and opportunities, as well as inform a more thoughtful design and deployment of these powerful technologies.

Our research “looks into the future” to study and understand possible outcomes of integrating AI in a human context. We seek to answer questions such as:

• How might combined human + AI systems make better decisions than either one alone?
• How might AI alter how we create and express ourselves?
• How might AI amplify human intelligence?
• How do we make AI legible and trustworthy?
• How might AI improve the way we govern and make collective decisions?
• How can children grow up AI-literate, equipped to create a more fulfilling future with AI?
• How might AI be used in learning to enable more equitable outcomes?
• How might AI reorient health care towards a more preventive “staying well” problem?
• How might AI allow people to grow old with dignity?