

## Reviewing the Works of Yuval Noah Harari, and Ethan Mollick

By: William J. (Jay) Carson, ISSA Member Colorado Springs

#1 New York Times bestselling author of SAPIENS

Yuval Noah Harari



# Nexus

A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI

Read by Vidish Athavale

### Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI.

by Harari, Yuval Noah, Random House, (2024).

**Sound Bite:** Information gathering and networks (AI puts it all on steroids) have been part and parcel of being human, but we do not always use everything smartly.

**Opinion on Primary Audience:** Everyone, but especially any kind of leader.

What is a "Nexus?" Any dictionary will give you two definitions, either a network linkage or a focus point. Page 222 of the hardback copy of this book refers to a tax definition of an entity connected to a jurisdiction. I think all three definitions have artificial intelligence applicability in this book. For further information, see the book! It is at a very high conceptual level on AI implications, so you will not find technical details. There are dozens of books out there by credentialed authors talking about artificial intelligence implications. I have read many of them, and to me the best books like this one do not focus on current AI limitations but emphasize the possibilities. Sure, it starts as a history, but it is all about where we can be headed.

#### The Author:

Yuval Noah Harari is an Oxford PhD historian, currently a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is an accomplished if not famous writer, noted for his other works, among them *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, and *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*.

#### The Metadata:

A 2024 publishing date! The online ordering cost including shipping is about \$25. The hardback copy is nearly 500 pages. If your public library is like mine, you will find many copies, but multiple holds.

'Thought-provoking' is an overused term, but that is Dr. Harari's writing style. I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze. Using a Wikipedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, the readability is high school level. The sample had 16% passive voice. This article is under 3% passive voice.

#### Table of Contents: [Including Reviewer notes]

##### Part I: Human Networks [Reviewer note: Interesting stories on vantage points about information]

- 1 What is Information?
- 2 Stories: Unlimited Connections
- 3 Documents: The Bite of the Paper Tigers
- 4 Errors: The Fantasy of Infallibility
- 5 Decisions: A Brief History of Democracy and Totalitarianism

##### Part II: The Inorganic Network [Reviewer note: IT&AI is not your past scientific revolution]

- 6 The New Members: How Computers Are Different From Printing Presses
- 7 Relentless: The Network Is Always On
- 8 Fallible: The Network Is Often Wrong

##### Part III: Computer Politics [Reviewer note: We can make choices]

- 9 Democracies: Can We Still Hold a Conversation?
- 10 Totalitarianism: All Power to the Algorithm?
- 11 The Silicon Curtain: Global Empire or Global Split?

Disclaimer: These are the author's subjective opinions, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any organization or other individual. A human prepared this article with assistance from Microsoft Editor and Grammarly.

# Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI

By Molick, Ethan. Penguin, (2024).

**Sound Bite:** Do not think of AI as artificial intelligence, think of it as *alien* intelligence. Do not Fight AI – Use it!

**Opinion on Primary Audience:** Anyone in any business!

Ethan Mollick deserves the title of 'AI Whisperer.' You know how you can buy books on 'How to use your iPhone?' This book could easily fill in as 'How to use your AI assistant.' With an author of Professor Mollick's stature, that comment could be seen as demeaning. Rest assured I mean the opposite. This book is both college textbook idea quality (who says textbooks can't be fun?) and hands-on, as Dr. Mollick uses the ideas in his courses.

**The Author:** Ethan Mollick seems to be primarily now a business management scholar. Harvard BS (Magna Cum Laude) Science Technology and Policy, PhD from Sloan. Professor and Co-Director of the Generative AI Lab at Wharton. Call him a major and modern business management scholar!

**The Metadata:** A 2024 publishing date! The online ordering cost including shipping is about \$25. The hardback copy is about 250 pages. Your public library will probably have a couple of copies, but you will have to wait for the holds. It is that good! I took a one-page sample of the text to analyze. Using a Wikipedia article about the Flesch-Kincaid Readability Test, the readability is high school level. The sample had 23% passive voice, which is a bit high for my preference, but it reads really well. This article is under 3% passive voice, for comparison.

## Table of Contents: [Including Reviewer notes]

### Part I

- 1 Creating Alien Minds
- 2 Aligning the Alien
- 3 Four Rules for Co-Intelligence [Reviewer note: I will never forget this quote: "Assume this is the worst AI you will ever use."]

### Part II [Reviewer note: This is the how-to part, filled with examples.]

- 4 AI as a Person
- 5 AI as a Creative [Reviewer note: That is not a typo.]
- 6 AI as a Coworker
- 7 AI as a Tutor
- 8 AI as a Coach
- 9 AI as our Future

## Happy Reading!

PS: If you have a book you want me to review, or changes to the material in 'Book Reviews,' please use the email address in my bio to let me know!

## Next Month:

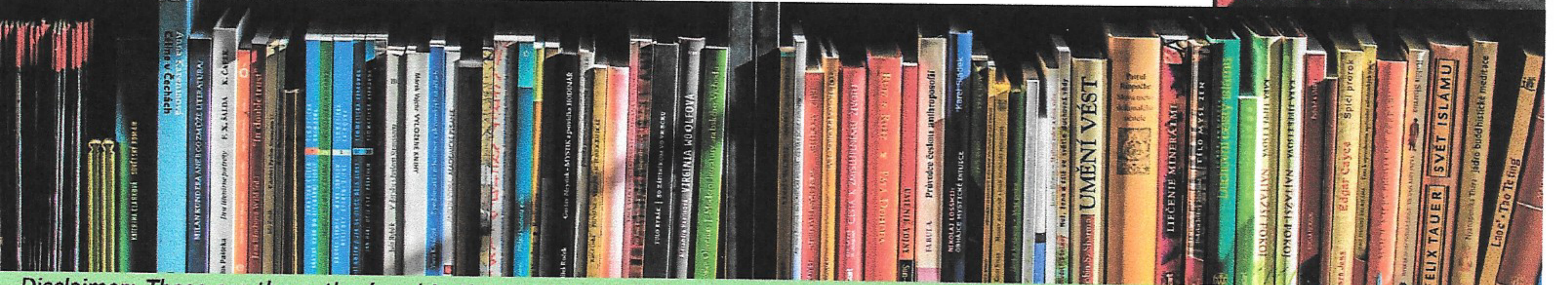
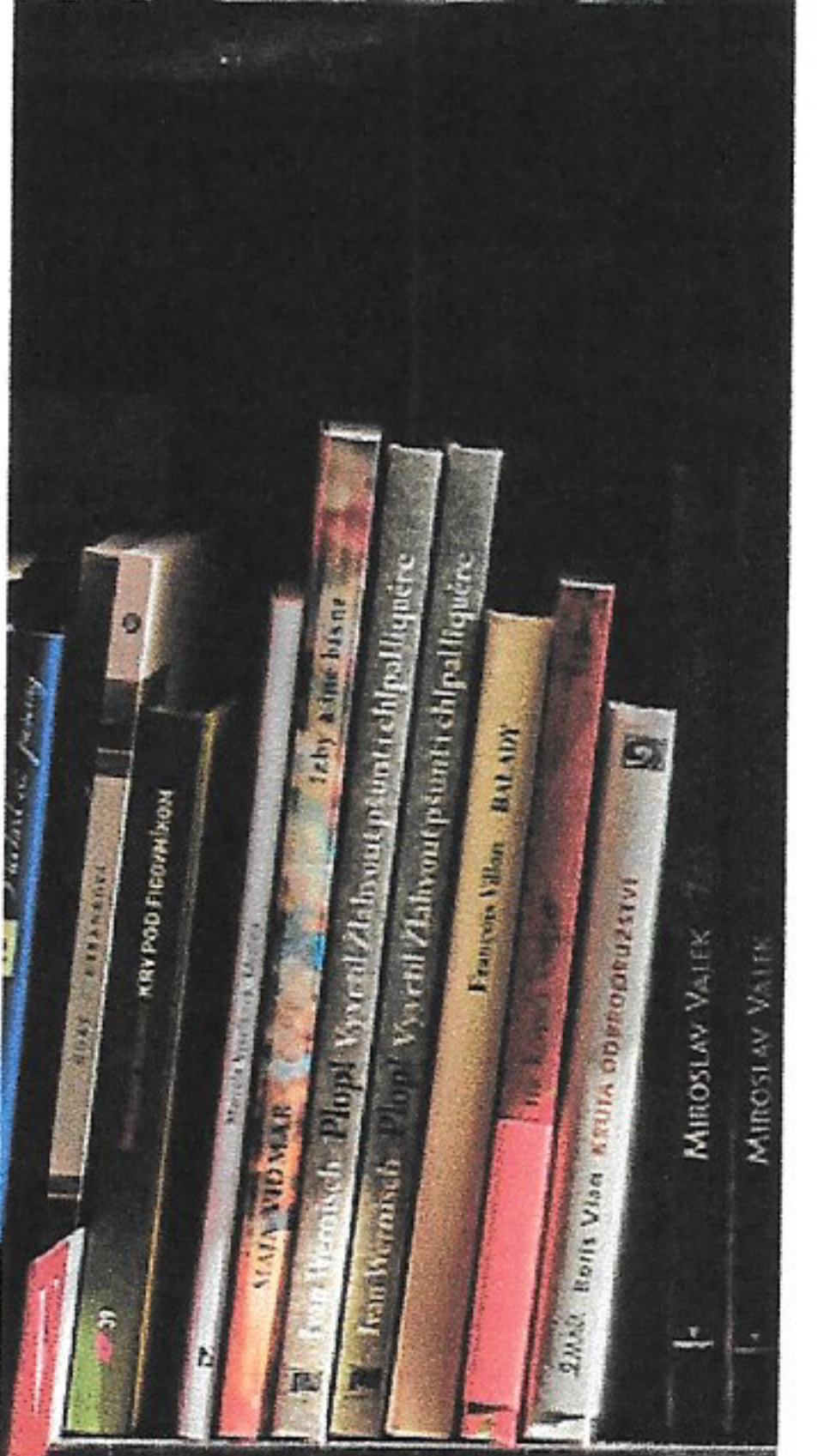
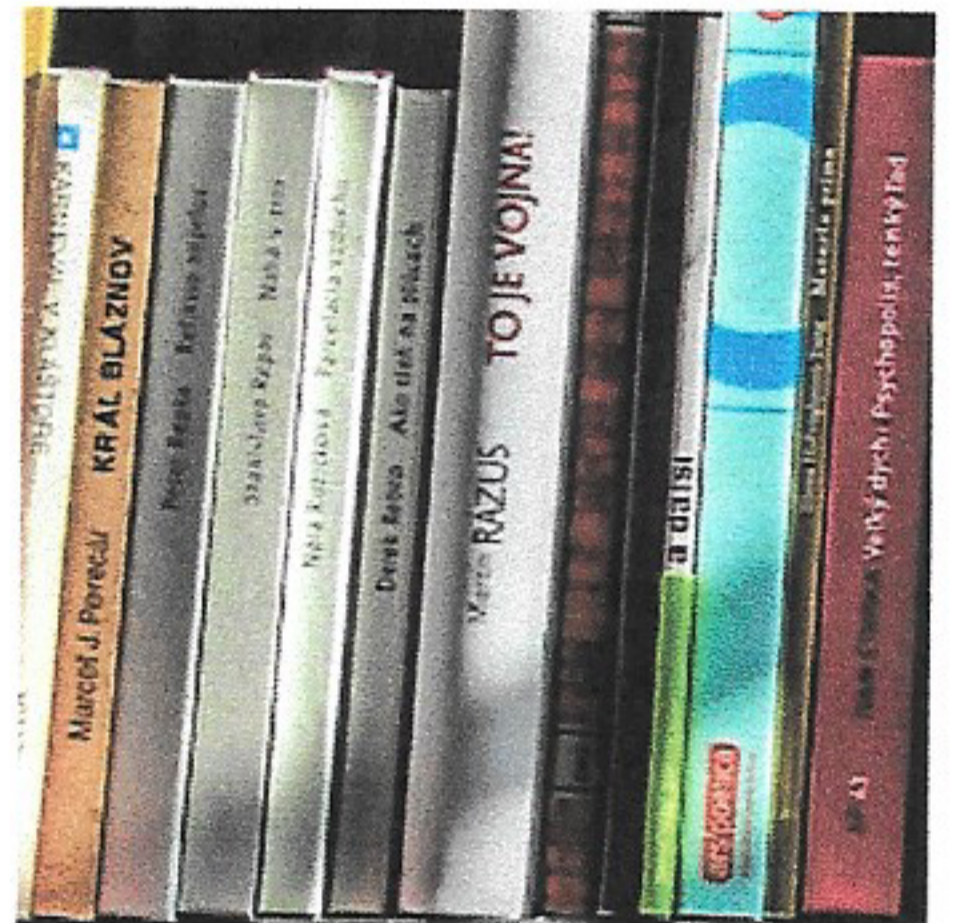
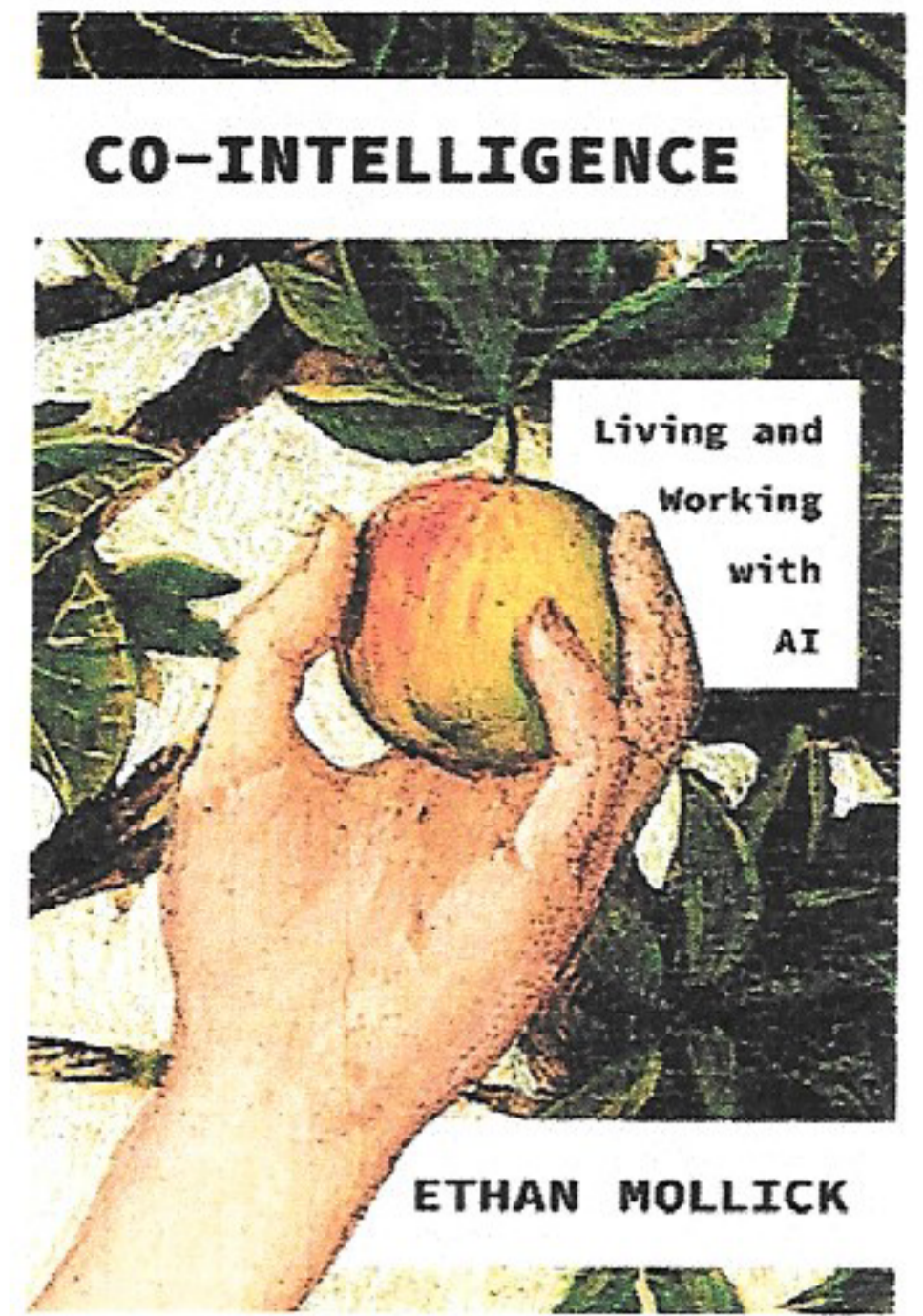
- Bostrom, Nick. Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies. Oxford University Press, (2016).
- Kissinger, Henry, Craig Mundie, and Eric Schmidt. Genesis: Artificial Intelligence, Hope, and the Human Spirit. Little, Brown and Company (2024).

## Additional sources used in the article:

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid\\_readability\\_tests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flesch%E2%80%93Kincaid_readability_tests)
2. LinkedIn profiles for authors listed, where available.

## About the Author

William J. (Jay) Carson, ISSA Senior Member, ISSA 2020 Volunteer of the Year, and past ISSA-Colorado Springs Executive Vice President. He is the part-time 'Cyber Librarian' of Semper Sec, LLC. Holding Security+ and CIPP/E certifications, he is a former high school math/science teacher, civil servant, contractor, and retired USAF Lieutenant Colonel. Reach him at [Runningjay51@gmail.com](mailto:Runningjay51@gmail.com).



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