Web Bot Project

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The Web Bot Project is a bot that uses the World Wide Web to predict future events. The project was supposedly created in 1997, by Clif High and George Ure, to predict stock market trends. It uses a technology that they have dubbed "Asymmetric Language Trend Analysis" or ALTA, which searches the Web for certain keywords and, based on their context, quantifies the emotional impact. Somehow, this is meant to tap into the Collective Unconscious-- which, of course, can predict the future.

Predictions

Among other things, the Web Bot is claimed to have predicted the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. It is also associated with the 2012 doomsday stuff and was even mentioned during a segment of the nauseating History Channel special Decoded. The actual ALTA reports are interpretations of the data by High. Even with his attempts to organize these "predictions" the report is practically unintelligible:

Within the termination points here, there are many pointers to [attempts (some successful, some not)] against the [gangs] of the [banksters (aka -rose protected, and stone buddy boys)]. At least one of the successful [executions] is indicated to be [within sight/smell of] the [oil volcano].

The predictions also include myriad references to conspiracy and pseudoscience (e.g. abiotic oil and UFOs) and are riddled with antisemitism.

Criticisms

The use of bots to look for trends on the Web is a common practice. However, even the most advanced ones aren't capable of truly understanding the context and meaning of words; they merely look for patterns that may indicate, for example, an increase in the mention of a certain product. Web Bot's databases and source code are not publicly available and the "reports" are merely interpretations of the data presented by a human. Most of Web Bot's supposed predictions follow the Nostradamian pattern. A vague prediction is made that could describe many different events. Then, after an event has occurred that seems to fit that description, believers claim that the prophesy has come true, ignoring the lack of specific detail in the original prediction.

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Web Bot

Web Bot, or the Web Bot Project, refers to an Internet Bot computer program that is claimed to be able to predict future events by tracking keywords entered on the Internet. It was developed in the late 1990s, originally to predict stock market trends.\(^1\) The creator of the Web Bot Project, Clif High, along with his associate George Ure, who call themselves "The Time Monks",\(^2\) keep the technology and algorithms largely secret and sell the predictions via the website.

**Methodology**

Internet bots monitor news articles, blogs, forums, and other forms of Internet chatter. Words in the lexicon are assigned numeric values for emotional quantifiers such as duration, impact, immediacy, intensity, and others. The lexicon is dynamic, and changes according to shifts in emotional tension, and how humans communicate those changes using the Internet. As of 2008, there were about 300,000 keywords in the lexicon, along with emotional context indicators\(^3\)\(^4\) which are fed into a computer-generated modelspace. They then use a technique called Asymmetric Language Trend Analysis (ALTA) developed by Clif High to generate a predictive report from a fully populated modelspace. These predictive reports are known as ALTA or Web Bot reports. The 2010/2011 report underwent a formatting change and is titled The Shape of Things to Come – Volume Zero.

Ure and High hypothesize that changes in language precede changes in behavior. This is the basis for attempting to use ALTA as a form of future viewing. The authors have repeatedly asserted in interviews\(^5\) that the predictions made in the ALTA report have an inherent bias toward events of a negative nature and tend to be framed in catastrophic terms. However, the reports have also indicated positive events such as the development of new technology and increased social awareness.

**Predictions**

**Claimed hits**

The Web Bot is claimed to have predicted several events prior to them occurring, most notably the September 11 attacks and the 2003 Northeastern blackout.\(^6\) However, many believe the predictions are vague and, at best, pseudoscientific.\(^7\)

- American Airlines Flight 587\(^8\)
- Space Shuttle Columbia disaster – In January 2003 the web bots were going on and on about a "maritime disaster over the west".\(^9\) However, in that same year, the MV Mitali, a double decked ferry, was capsized by collision with a cargo vessel in Bangladesh, with at least 130 people confirmed dead on April 2003. The Fu Shan Hai, a Chinese bulk carrier, sank after a collision on 31 May 2003. The RMS Mülheim, a German cargo ship run ashore on 22 March 2003. Nevertheless, the Web Bot owners zeroed in on a non-maritime event as their "prediction".
- Northeast Blackout of 2003\(^9\)\(^10\)
- 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake\(^10\)\(^11\)
- Hurricane Katrina and its devastation\(^10\)\(^12\)
- Dick Cheney hunting incident\(^9\)
Misses

• A massive earthquake in Vancouver, Canada and the Pacific Northwest was predicted to occur on 12 December 2008. [13]
• From 11 July 2010 onward, civil unrest will take place, possibly driven by food prices skyrocketing, and the devaluation of the dollar. [14]
• A missile launch that would herald the start of World War III was predicted to happen on 14 December 2010 in an interview.
• The US dollar completely collapses, or Israel bombs Iran in 2011. In reaction to this crisis, administration of U.S. President Barack Obama will be thrown into major chaos ten days later. [2][15]
• Major catastrophe in 2012 – The Web Bot has gained most of its notoriety for contributing to the 2012 phenomenon by predicting that a cataclysm that would have devastated the planet on December 21, 2012, possibly a reversing of Earth's magnetic poles or a small series of nuclear attacks leading up to a major attack during the year. The prediction did not call for a complete end of the world. [16][17][18][19]
• A "data gap" has been found in 2012 running through May 2013. One explanation is that "our civilization gets knocked back to a pre-electronic state," such as brought about by devastating solar activity.

Future predictions

The following comes from the Web Bot Project Blogspot report on a radio interview with High and Ure:
• A second depression, triggered by mass layoffs, bankruptcies, and the popping of the housing bubble.
• A new benign form of capitalism will emerge during 2017–2020 led by a Western Canadian charismatic young university student. [20]

Reception

The History Channel has discussed Web Bot in its special Doomsday 2012 and on other shows like Nostradamus Effect which feature predictions about the end of the world. [21] A Globe and Mail journalist noted that "What interests me more than the bot's accuracy (of which I'm skeptical), is the relentless negativity of its projections. According to the bot, the future is always bleak and steadily worsening." [13]

Tom Chivers in the Daily Telegraph notes three criticisms of the project: "the internet might plausibly reveal group knowledge about the stock market or, conceivably, terror attacks [but] it would be no more capable of predicting a natural disaster than would a Google search, ... the predictions are so vague as to be meaningless, [and] the prophecies become self-distorting." [1][22]

References

[2] [bullshitmevideo/2012/title=2012 {publisher=Coast to Coast AM]accessdate=3 October 2009}]
[3] ALTA Base Knowledge Article
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