Ireland currently ranks as the sixth ‘most digital’ economy in the EU. Last week’s Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Summit provided an overview of where we are now, and where AI can take us in the future, writes Roisin Kiberd

Taking place in Victoria Park, the inaugural Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Summit was an opportunity to explore the possibilities of an automated future, including Ireland’s asset from AI, coming world’s public policy, AI ethics and risk management.

Pat Breen, Minister for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, delivered the opening address, discussing digital transformation for the EU, as well as a national focus on AI. He announced that a report was being announced by the European Commission in 2015, presenting the European Union’s vision for digital transformation.

The report included an Assessment of the digital revolution, including the impact of European digitalization, and new challenges, such as geospatial data and GDPR.

“Completing the single digital market is a priority for us, Ireland,” he said, stressing that the outcomes must be “pro-trade, pro-enterprise and pro-announcer,” the pillars of digital transformation of digitalization, trust, security and well-being, and the effective use of digital data and analysis.

In December of 2018, the EU published the Plan on the Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence Made in Europe. It establishes a model for cooperation in AI across European countries, including providing a necessary digital infrastructure, the market of academic research and the digital economy, and international strategy to already in action.

In the UK, for example, which is seen throughout the country, said Breen. “We are uniquely positioned to part take in the digital revolution that is happening at the moment, and it stands to benefit all of us.”

The opening keynote was delivered by technology evangelist Clare Dillon. Providing an overview of the ways in which AI is currently changing business, she discussed the challenges of “real AI world implementation,” which can only be met with the acceleration and R&D of technology companies. She also discussed the need to increase investment in AI and the need for a digital strategy in business.

The key takeaways from the conference were:

1. AI is becoming a humanities discipline, rather than as purely a scientific one.
2. AI is helping to address issues such as climate change, rather than just solving them.
3. AI is helping to improve human rights, rather than just infringing on them.
4. AI is helping to improve healthcare, rather than just providing treatments.
5. AI is helping to improve education, rather than just providing information.

The final panel of the day looked at the importance of AI in the future of work. The panel consisted of a range of experts, including a professor, a business leader, and a government official.

“I believe that AI will change the way that we work, and the way that we think about work, in the next 10 years,” said the professor. “It will be a significant shift, and one that we need to prepare for.”

The business leader agreed, and added: “AI will change the way that we do business, and the way that we think about business. It will be a significant shift, and one that we need to prepare for.”

The government official concluded: “AI will change the way that we do business, and the way that we think about business. It will be a significant shift, and one that we need to prepare for.”

The summit concluded with a panel discussion on the future of AI, with experts from a range of industries discussing the potential of AI in the future of work.

The summit was funded by AI Ireland, a non-profit organization that aims to promote the development and adoption of AI in Ireland. The summit was attended by over 500 people from a range of industries, including technology, finance, healthcare, and government.

At the AI & Machine Learning Summit 2019, from left: Irfan Rasul, principal solutions consultant, Oracle Business Analytics; Dean Cullen, business director – Ireland and UK, Comtrade Digital Services; Paul Verkaik, director, EMEA solution strategy, IPsoft; Clare Dillon, technology evangelist, Pat Breen, TD, Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation; and Mark Kelly, founder of AI Ireland and chief customer officer at Alldus International

Pictures: Maura Hickey

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