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Generative AI, AI Agents, and Agentic AI : An Overview of Current AI Technologies

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Abstract: *This research paper examines the transformation of Artificial Intelligence from rule-based systems to three advanced paradigms: Generative AI, AI Agents, and Agentic AI. Generative AI focuses on creating original content by learning from large datasets, serving as reactive tools that respond to user prompts. AI Agents execute goal-driven tasks autonomously within specific environments by perceiving inputs and making decisions in real time. Agentic AI advances this further by proactively planning, reasoning, and managing multi-step workflows with minimal human oversight, enabling dynamic task execution and long-term goal achievement. The study highlights how these AI forms differ in autonomy, function, and application, emphasizing the growing impact of Agentic AI in automating complex processes. Understanding these distinctions is essential for designing responsible AI systems that balance innovation, ethics, and human collaboration in an evolving technological landscape.*

Keywords: *Generative AI, Agentic AI, AI Agents, Autonomous Systems, Multi-Agent Collaboration, Content Creation, Goal-Oriented AI, Artificial Intelligence Evolution.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has evolved remarkably—from simple rule-based systems to advanced machines capable of creating art, writing code, and making independent decisions. Today, three major paradigms—Generative AI, AI Agents, and Agentic AI—are reshaping how we interact with technology. Understanding these distinctions and their capabilities is crucial for navigating a future where AI is smarter, more autonomous, and deeply embedded in daily life.[2]

AI's progression has led to diverse approaches that address different dimensions of intelligence and autonomy. Generative AI excels at producing original content by learning from vast datasets, driving innovations in natural language processing, image synthesis, and creative problem-solving. AI Agents build upon this by incorporating autonomous decision-making and action-taking within specific tasks, powered by tools and memory systems. Moving beyond, Agentic AI represents a shift toward systems capable of multi-agent collaboration, dynamic task management, and persistent memory retention. These systems independently plan, reason, and execute complex long-term goals with minimal human oversight. Unlike Generative AI—which reacts to user prompts by creating content—Agentic AI is proactive, capable of breaking down broad objectives into actionable steps, interacting with external systems, adjusting strategies based on outcomes, and maintaining goals over time. In this sense, Agentic AI acts not just as a tool but as an autonomous collaborator, transforming AI from reactive assistance into a digital workforce member. [1]

This taxonomy clarifies the conceptual boundaries and overlaps among these AI forms while highlighting their developmental trajectories, operational mechanisms, and societal impact. Providing this structured framework is vital for guiding the design, deployment, and governance of increasingly intelligent, autonomous AI technologies advancing within the rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

II. GENERATIVE AI

Generative AI is a branch of artificial intelligence focused on creating original content—ranging from text and images to music and code—by learning patterns from vast datasets. Unlike traditional AI systems that primarily classify or predict outcomes, generative AI generates outputs that simulate human creativity and ingenuity. Well-known examples of generative AI include ChatGPT, which excels at producing coherent, context-aware text, and DALL-E, known for generating detailed images from textual descriptions.

The technology behind generative AI is rooted in sophisticated machine learning models such as transformers and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs). These models learn to recognize complex patterns in data by processing extensive training examples. When provided with a user prompt or instruction, the system predicts the next element—be it a word, pixel, or sound—drawing from what it has learned to produce coherent and human-like responses. For instance, after extensive training on artwork, a generative AI can create a new image depicting "a sunrise over Paris" by mimicking specific artistic techniques like brush strokes and color use.

Generative AI has found applications across multiple fields. In content creation, it supports writers by generating articles, composing music, or drafting advertising copy. The design and architecture sectors leverage generative AI to develop innovative visuals and concepts. Healthcare benefits from synthetic medical images that enhance diagnostic training, while education sees personalized learning aids and intelligent tutors powered by generative AI.

The technology offers several advantages including stimulating creative processes, reducing time and costs associated with manual production, personalizing content to fit individual needs, and spurring innovation in diverse disciplines such as art, science, and engineering.

However, generative AI also faces challenges related to the quality and ethics of its outputs. It can unintentionally reproduce biases present in training data, raising concerns over fairness and representation. Ethical issues such as copyright infringement and misinformation also require careful management. Furthermore, the extensive data requirements necessary for training raise privacy concerns that must be addressed responsibly.

Overall, generative AI presents transformative opportunities while necessitating mindful consideration of its limitations and potential impacts.

III. AI AGENTS

AI agents function through a cyclic process known as the Perception–Decision–Action loop. Initially, the agent perceives inputs from sensors or data sources, then processes this information to decide which action is most appropriate. Finally, it executes this action within its operational environment. This loop allows agents to adapt and operate independently in dynamic settings.

The practical applications of AI agents are broad and diverse, including virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa that understand voice commands, chatbots that handle customer service inquiries, robots aiding industrial automation or household chores, and game bots designed to emulate human player behavior in interactive environments. These agents leverage their autonomous decision-making to perform complex tasks efficiently without constant human supervision.

AI agents are intelligent software systems that observe their environment, analyze data, and independently carry out actions to achieve designated goals. While generative AI focuses on producing creative outputs like text or images, AI agents emphasize autonomy, decision-making, and executing tasks in dynamic settings. For instance, a self-driving car continuously monitors its surroundings, interprets traffic signals, decides on maneuvers, and controls the vehicle accordingly.[4]

There are different categories of AI agents tailored to various operational needs:

- 1) Simple Reflex Agents respond immediately to specific stimuli, such as thermostats regulating temperature based on sensor inputs.
- 2) Model-Based Agents keep an internal representation of their environment to make informed decisions when information is partial or uncertain.
- 3) Goal-Based Agents select actions designed to fulfill predefined objectives.
- 4) Learning Agents improve their strategies over time by learning from experience and feedback.

The operation of AI agents hinges on a cyclical Perception–Decision–Action framework. They begin by perceiving information either through sensors or data interfaces, analyze it to decide on the best course of action, and then execute the chosen response in the environment. This cycle enables them to adapt continually and operate with a high degree of independence.

AI agents find application across a broad spectrum, including voice-activated assistants like Siri and Alexa, customer service chatbots, robots performing industrial or household tasks, and intelligent bots in video games simulating human behavior. Their autonomous decision-making capability allows them to efficiently handle complex tasks while minimizing the need for human intervention.

IV. AGENTIC AI

Agentic AI is an advanced form of artificial intelligence that autonomously plans, reasons, and carries out complex tasks across multiple steps without requiring continuous human intervention. It merges the creative capabilities of generative AI with the autonomy and decision-making abilities of AI agents to effectively manage long-term objectives. For instance, an Agentic AI system might independently design and execute a marketing campaign—from generating the content and scheduling posts to monitoring audience engagement—without human input at every stage.[3][5]

When comparing Generative AI, AI Agents, and Agentic AI, their distinguishing features can be summarized as follows:

Feature	Generative AI	AI Agents	Agentic AI
Focus	Content creation	Task-oriented decision-making	Autonomous reasoning & goal execution
Example	ChatGPT, DALL·E	Self-driving cars	AutoGPT, BabyAGI
Autonomy Level	Low (responds to prompts)	Medium (executes specific tasks)	High (proactively manages workflows)
Core Strength	Creativity	Reflexive action	Independent planning and execution

Generative AI produces creative work reactively based on instructions, AI agents autonomously perform focused tasks, and Agentic AI takes a proactive role in orchestrating multi-step processes to fulfill larger goals.

Looking ahead, Agentic AI is expected to evolve in several key ways:

- Systems will incorporate self-learning capabilities, continuously improving with experience.
- Collaboration will increase among multiple AI agents working in concert toward shared objectives.
- Ethical frameworks and governance will become integral to ensuring responsible and safe use.[4][6]

Although promising, this evolution raises challenges surrounding accountability, oversight, and safety, which remain critical considerations. [4][6]

Agentic AI is reshaping the workforce and industries by automating repetitive tasks and creating new roles centered on supervising AI systems, ethics management, and training. The future success of Agentic AI integration hinges on close human-AI collaboration, with people focusing on strategy and creativity while AI manages execution. To enable this partnership, education systems need to prioritize AI literacy to equip individuals with the skills required to work effectively alongside intelligent autonomous systems.[4][6]

V. CONCLUSION

The evolution from generative AI fostering creativity, to AI agents managing automation, and now to Agentic AI enabling autonomous, multi-step reasoning marks a transformative era of intelligent cooperation between humans and machines. This paradigm shift promises to enhance innovation, boost operational efficiency, and bring significant changes across societal and industrial domains. To fully harness these benefits, it is crucial to align technological advancement with ethical principles, ensuring responsible development and deployment of AI systems. Emphasizing transparency, accountability, and human oversight will help guarantee that AI serves as a beneficial partner rather than an unchecked force, paving the way for a future where human ingenuity and AI capabilities collaboratively drive progress and positive impact.

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