

: *What is the danger of cognitive computing?*

by Daniel J. Power

Editor, DSSResources.com

A number of science fiction stories have dealt with rogue computer intelligences. My favorite is Star Trek episode number 53 titled "The Ultimate Computer". Captain Kirk is confronted by a tactical and control computer called the "M-5 Multitronic System". M-5 is designed to handle all functions of the starship *Enterprise* without any human assistance. In the episode M-5 goes rogue and defends itself and attacks other starships in what was a planned war game. Eventually Kirk determines the computer's creator, Dr. Richard Daystrom, programmed his own engrams into M-5. Daystrom became mentally unstable and so did M-5. Kirk engages M-5 in a dialog and persuades the computer it acted contrary to its purpose by killing people. M-5 recognizes it committed murder and the penalty for murder is death. To atone for its crime, M-5 commits an act of suicide and shuts itself down as the other starships are preparing to attack. Kirk decides to let the *Enterprise* drift with shields down hoping the commander of the starship squadron will not fire upon a "dead" ship. All ends well for Kirk and the *Enterprise* and the lesson learned is that a need remains for human control of starships.

Author: Daniel Power

Last update: 2016-10-02 07:10