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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FRANCISCAN HUMANISM OF FRATERNITY

INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL: POSIBILIDADES Y RETOS HUMANISMO FRANCISCANO DE LA FRATERNIDAD

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Abstract: This article presents some of the “exciting opportunities and grave risks” of artificial intelligence in light of the recent magisterium of Pope Francis. This is not an easy task, as the term “AI” refers to a “galaxy of different realities” and there is not a single definition of it. Recently there has been a qualitative leap with generative AI (1st part). Its challenges must be addressed at the legislative and ethical levels (2nd part). More specifically, the Pope urges the adoption of a humanism of fraternity inspired by Francis of Assisi (3rd part).

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; ChatGPT; Pope Francis; Franciscanism; Ethics.

Resumen: Este artículo presenta algunas de las “entusiasmantes oportunidades y graves riesgos” de la inteligencia artificial a la luz del reciente magisterio del Papa Francisco. No es una tarea fácil, pues el término “IA” se refiere a una “galaxia de realidades distintas” y no existe una definición unívoca de ella. Recientemente ha habido un salto cualitativo con la IA generativa (1ª parte). Sus retos deben abordarse a nivel legislativo y ético (2ª parte). Más concretamente, el Papa insta a adoptar un humanismo de fraternidad inspirado en Francisco de Asís (3ª parte).

Palabras clave: Inteligencia artificial; ChatGPT; Papa Francis; Franciscanismo; Ética.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and other information and communication technologies (ICT) are already an integral part of our lives,¹ forming a living environment rather than merely tools we can choose to use or ignore. How can we responsibly inhabit this new cultural landscape in which we are all immersed? How can we effectively harness their great potential for good while mitigating its grave risks?

In January 2024, the Pope addressed the topic of AI in two significant messages for the World Days of Peace² and Social Communications,³ highlighting the growing concern this issue raises both in the Church and society. Prior to this, the Pontifical Academy for Life has also organized several meetings and symposia on AI's implications in health.⁴ On January 10, 2023, it also facilitated the involvement of representatives from Judaism, Islam, and other religions in revising the "Rome Call for AI Ethics" document, initially signed in 2020 by companies like Microsoft and IBM, among others.⁵

This paper explores some ethical challenges posed by AI, referencing recent teachings by Pope Francis. The first part overviews the complex concept of AI, emphasizing the advancements in generative AI. The rapid evolution of AI presents both "exciting opportunities and grave risks," which need to be addressed at both legislative and ethical levels (2nd part). Specifically, the Pope advocates for adopting a humanism of fraternity inspired by Francis of Assisi, as detailed in the third part.

¹ Some abbreviations: AI (IA): Artificial intelligence; LLM: Large Language Model; GPT: Generative Pretrained Transformer; NLP: Natural Language Processing; RLHF: Reinforcement Learning from Human Feedback. This is a technique of *Machine learning* (ML); UP: University Press.

² FRANCIS, «Message for the 58th World Day of Peace» (Jan 24, 2024), [WDP], in *OR* 19 (Jan 24, 2024) 8.

³ FRANCIS, «Message for the 58th World Communications Day» (Jan. 24, 2024), [WCD], in *OR* 19 (Jan. 24, 2024) 8.

⁴ PAGLIA Vincenzo – PECORARO Renzo (ed.), *Robo-Ethics. Humans, machines and health*, Pontifical Academy for Life, Vatican City 2020; ID., *The 'good' algorithm? Artificial intelligence: ethics, law, health*, Pontifical Academy for Life, Vatican City 2021.

⁵ «AI ethics: an Abrahamic commitment to the Rome call,» in *Internet*: <https://www.romecall.org/ai-ethics-an-abrahamic-commitment-to-the-rome-call-2/> (accessed: March 10, 2024).

1. Concept and rapid development

Scholars commonly refer to four industrial revolutions⁶: the first driven by the steam engine (18th century), the second by electricity (late 19th century), the third by digital technology (mid-20th century), and the fourth, initiated by artificial intelligence (AI). This latest revolution is characterized by AI's ability to predict human activities and the convergence of nanotechnology, biotechnology, and robotics. Rather than a completely new revolution, it is an evolution of the automation initiated in the 18th century, with potentially revolutionary social effects.

In the first industrial revolution, machines began performing many manual tasks, which required physical strength, displacing less skilled “blue-collar” workers. In contrast, AI is taking over tasks requiring specialization and cognitive ability, replacing many skilled “white-collar” middle-class employees.⁷ However, replicating human sensorimotor and perceptual capabilities remains challenging for AI. For instance, it may struggle with tasks like plumbing.⁸

1.1. A complex and hard-to-define concept

AI has been present in various forms for quite some time, including social networks, virtual assistants, electronic payments, search engines, automatic translation, facial and voice recognition, robots, drones, autonomous cars, etc. According to F. Patsch, there have been four significant milestones in its implementation: in 2010, it began enhancing the quality of Internet searches to provide more relevant results; in 2014, it advanced to “reading

⁶ Cf. SCHWAB Klaus, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, Crown Business, New York 2017; RIFKIN Jeremy, *The Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power Is Transforming Energy, the Economy, and the World*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2011. On the first and second industrial revolutions driven by steam power and electricity: MOKYR Joel, *The Lever of Riches: Technological Creativity and Economic Progress*, Oxford University Press, New York 1990.

⁷ GISOTTI Alessandro, «Entrevista a Benanti: “La inteligencia artificial al servicio del bien común”,» in *Vatican News*, (Dec. 12, 2023), (<https://www.vaticannews.va/es/mundo/news/2023-12/benanti-la-inteligencia-artificial-al-servicio-del-bien-comun.html>).

⁸ “It is comparatively easy to make computers exhibit adult-level performance in solving problems on intelligence tests or playing checkers, and difficult or impossible to give them the skills of a one-year-old when it comes to perception and mobility.” MORAVEC Hans, *Mind children. The future of robot and human intelligence*, Harvard UP, Cambridge 1988, 15.