

EDUCATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

EDUCACIÓN E INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL: EL PAPEL DE LA FAMILIA

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ABSTRACT:

This paper studies the «exciting possibilities and grave risks» of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of education. Pope Francis affirms that AI «is radically affecting the world of information and communication, and through it, certain foundations of life in society.» How can we educate children in this new existential context? The first part focuses on the growing use of AI systems, underlining that they can bring about an important change in the way we understand education. In the second part, some indications are given about the educational use that parents can make of AI in the family environment, having as its horizon the humanism of fraternity inspired by Francis of Assisi.

KEYWORDS: Artificial intelligence, Family, Education, School, Ecclesiastical Magisterium, Francis of Assisi.

RESUMEN:

Este artículo estudia las «entusiasmantes posibilidades y graves riesgos» de la Inteligencia artificial (IA) en el ámbito educativo. El papa Francisco afirma que la IA está «modificando radicalmente la información y la comunicación y, a través de ellas, algunos de los fundamentos de la convivencia civil.» ¿Cómo acompañar a los niños en este nuevo contexto existencial, tanto en la familia como en la escuela? En la primera parte, se reflexiona sobre el uso creciente de los

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sistemas de IA, subrayando que pueden provocar un cambio importante en el modo de entender la tarea formativa. En la segunda parte, se ofrecen algunas indicaciones sobre el uso educativo que los padres pueden hacer de la IA en el ámbito familiar, teniendo como horizonte el humanismo de fraternidad que el Papa propone inspirándose en Francisco de Asís.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Inteligencia artificial, Familia, Educación, Escuela, Magisterio eclesiástico, Francisco de Asís.

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This article² analyzes the educational use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the family environment. The topic has gained greater relevance since the launch of ChatGPT on November 30, 2022. This is a generative AI program, capable of producing «syntactically and semantically coherent texts³.» Soon after, other similar applications were released, which are capable of generating texts, images, videos, etc.⁴ Pope Francis asserts that AI is «radically affecting the world of information and communication, and through it, certain foundations of life in society⁵.» These advances force us to review the way we understand education, both in the school and in the family.

The term «education» should not be reduced to modeling others by instilling values and ideals previously elaborated. That would be instructing, not educating. Pope Francis uses the expressions «global compact» and «educational alliance»,

² The first version of this study was written for a talk at the 8th International Symposium of Familiology organized by the University of Warmia Ymazuri in Olsztyn (Poland) on June 12, 2024. This paper continues the author's previous publication on AI: CARBAJO-NÚÑEZ Martín, «Artificial Intelligence and Franciscan Humanism of Fraternity», in *Carthaginensia* 41 (2025), forthcoming; and three posts on the Alfonsianum blog: 1) «AI and Wisdom»; 2) «Living in truth in the AI Era»; 3) «AI & Ethics»; also available here: <https://www.antoniano.org/carbajo/culturaleView.php?id=251&lg=en>.

³ FRANCIS, «Message for the 57th World Day of Peace (WDP),» (Jan. 1, 2024), in *Osservatore Romano*, (OR), 286 (Dec. 14, 2023) 3.

⁴ There are already many AI applications that generate text (Copilot, Gemini, Perplexity), images (Dall-E, Midjourney, Leonardo, Jasper), audio and video (Synthesia, Fliki, Pictory), to name just a few examples.

⁵ FRANCIS, «Message for the 58th World Communications Day (WCD),» (Jan. 24, 2024), in *OR* 19 (Jan. 24, 2024) 8.

thus emphasizing the importance of dialogue and respect for diversity⁶. Indeed, rather than transmitting content, education is an alliance to advance together toward truth, respecting and welcoming each other. In this sense, Paulo Freire states: «Nobody educates anybody else. Nobody educates himself. People educate each other through their interactions of the world.⁷»

Pope Francis asserts that the term «Artificial Intelligence» is complex and difficult to define unambiguously, as it applies to «a galaxy of different realities.» It encompasses a wide «variety of sciences, theories, and techniques aimed at making machines reproduce or imitate» (*WDP* 2024, 2) capacities associated with human intelligence, such as creativity, machine learning, and planning. It would be more appropriate to use the term in the plural («artificial intelligences») because their tasks are fragmentary and only partially imitate or reproduce some human capacities.

We will use the term «family» to refer to the nuclear family, which the Catholic Church bases on the sacrament of marriage but which, in our secularized society, is also acquiring other configurations. The Church teaches that this nuclear family needs to interact with the wider family⁸, which can encompass all humanity (the universal human family) and the entire ecosystem (the cosmic family).

The first part of this paper focuses on the increasing use of AI systems in the educational field, emphasizing that they can bring about an important change in the way we understand education. We need to discern their many possibilities and the risks and challenges they present. The second part analyzes the potential use of these AI systems for educational purposes in the family environment, paying special attention to the role that parents can play in ensuring that their children receive an effective and personalized education that enhances the qualities and addresses the difficulties of each student.

1. AI AND EDUCATION

Before the emergence of generative AI, other AI systems were already being used in education, such as text editors, intelligent assistants, search algorithms, translators, etc.

⁶ FRANCIS, «Message for the Launch of the Global Compact on Education» (Sept. 12, 2019), in *OR* 207 (Sept. 13, 2019) 8.

⁷ FREIRE Paulo, *Pedagogía del oprimido*, Siglo XXI, Madrid 2008 (20th reprint), 69; Cf. NANNI Carlo, *Corresponsabili. Crescere ed educarsi insieme*, UPS, Rome 2013.

⁸ FRANCIS, «*Amoris Laetitia*. Postsinodal Apostolic Exhortation» (March 19, 2016), [*AL*], n. 187, in *AAS* 108/4 (April 1, 2016) 311-446.