



57<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2024

## Artificial Intelligence and Peace

### Introducing the theme

People across the world are currently wrestling with the ethics and consequences of significant and potentially dangerous developments in technology.

The theme proposed by Pope Francis for this year's World Day of Peace - 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace' - might seem a strangely technical and abstract title, of limited interest to many of us. But new technologies are developing so quickly that we need to think about their consequences for our freedom, peace and security. Pope Francis' overriding concern is that artificial intelligence should be used in the service of humanity and the protection of our common home and not to increase injustice and inequality or to fuel division, polarization and violent conflict. As pointed out by Pope Francis in his message, we cannot presume *a priori* that its development of AI "will make a beneficial contribution to the future of humanity and to peace among peoples. That positive outcome will only be achieved if we show ourselves capable of acting responsibly and respect such fundamental human values as inclusion, transparency, security, equity, privacy and reliability".

Whether we like it or not, AI is already having a profound impact on politics, the economy and on the way we interact with each other. All of us are familiar with a few of its uses: search engines like Google autocomplete our queries; applications like Amazon, YouTube and Netflix recommend something to buy or watch based on our previous choices; software like ChatGPT generates articles and essays; chatbots have largely replaced human beings at customer service and call centres.

Moreover, thanks to algorithms, the digital environment that each person sees is never the same as that of someone else. The consequence of this increasingly sophisticated personalization of results is a forced exposure to partial information, which reinforces our beliefs, and prevents us from meeting people who hold different views from ours. AI also makes it much easier to 'fake it', photoshopping pictures to remove 'imperfections', projecting carefully curated images of 'my best life', blurring the distinction between truth and falsehood. There are also even more disturbing and dangerous possibilities: the threat of 'fake news' and 'deep-fake' videos showing things which never happened, aiming at influencing public opinion and subverting democracies. Finally, we also have to contend with the scary prospect of 'Autonomous Fighting Vehicles' deciding who lives and who dies on the battlefield without any human agent being involved.

What Pope Francis is therefore calling for is an open dialogue on the meaning of these new technologies. But he also calling for vigilance: If in the development and use of AI, human beings yield to the temptation of self-interest, desire for profit and the thirst for power, not only will freedom and peaceful coexistence be threatened, but a disproportionate benefit for the few will come at the price of the impoverishment of the many. That is why Pope Francis felt the need to remind us in his Message for the 2024 World Day of Peace that “technological developments that do not lead to an improvement in the quality of life of all humanity, but on the contrary aggravate inequalities and conflicts, can never count as true progress”.

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## Nintroduċu t-tema

Bħalissa fid-dinja, kulhadd qed jithabat mal-etika u l-konsegwenzi ta' żviluppi sinifikanti u potenzjalment perikolużi fit-teknoloġija.

It-tema proposta mill-Papa Franġisku għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi ta' din is-sena - Intelligenza Artifiċjali u Paċi - tista' tolqotna bħala xi ħaġa astratta u teknika, li ma tantx tinteressa l-biċċa kbira minna. Madanakollu, teknoloġiji ġodda qed jiżviluppaw b'rata tant mgħaġġla li rridu naħsbu dwar il-konsegwenzi tagħhom għal-libertà, il-paċi u s-sigurtà tagħna. It-tħassib ewlieni tal-Papa Franġisku huwa li l-intelligenza artifiċjali għandha tintuża fis-servizz tal-umanità u l-protezzjoni tad-dar komuni tagħna u mhux biex tiżdied l-ingustizzja u l-inugwaljanza jew biex tkabbar il-firda, il-polarizzazzjoni u l-kunflitt vjolenti. Kif irrimarka l-Papa Franġisku fil-messaġġ tiegħu, ma nistgħux nassumu *a priori* li l-iżvilupp ta' din it-teknoloġija “se jagħti kontribut ta' benefiċċju għall-futur tal-umanità u għall-paċi fost il-popli. Dak ir-riżultat pożittiv jinkiseb biss jekk nuru lilna nfusna kapaċi li naġixxu b'mod responsabbli u nirrispettaw valuri umani fundamentali bħall-inklużjoni, it-trasparenza, is-sigurtà, l-ekwità, il-privatezza u l-affidabbiltà”.

Irridu jew ma rridux, l-intelligenza artifiċjali diġa qed ikollha impatt profond fuq il-politika, l-ekonomija u fuq il-mod kif aħna ninteraġixxu ma' xulxin. Ilkoll kemm aħna familjari ma' ftit mill-użi ta' din it-teknoloġija: Google u *search engines* oħra jimlew awtomatikament il-mistoqsijiet tagħna; applikazzjonijiet bħall-Amazon, YouTube u Netflix jirrakkomandaw prodott jew film abbażi tal-għażliet preċedenti tagħna; software bħal ChatGPT jiġġenera artikli u esejs; meta nċemplu servizz tal-konsumatur ħafna drabi nispiċċaw 'nitkellmu' ma' chatbot minflok ħaddiem.

Barra minn hekk, grazzi għall-algoritmi, l-ambjent diġitali li kull persuna tara qatt mhu l-istess bħal dak ta' xi persuna oħra. Il-konsegwenza ta' din il-personalizzazzjoni dejjem aktar sofistikata tar-riżultati, hija espożizzjoni għal informazzjoni parzjali, li ssaħħaħ it-twemmin tagħna, u ma tħallinax niltaqgħu ma' nies li għandhom fehmiet differenti minn tagħna. L-IA tagħmilha wkoll ħafna eħfef li niffalsifikaw l-affarijiet. Nużaw photoshop biex inneħħu 'l-imperfezzjonijiet', nipproġetta immajni kkurata bir-reqqa ta 'l-aqwa ħajja tiegħi', biex b'hekk inċajpru d-distinzjoni bejn il-verità u l-falsità. Hemm ukoll possibbiltajiet aktar inkwetanti u

perikolużi: it-theddida ta' *'fake news'* u filmati *'deep-fake'* li juru affarijiet li qatt ma ġraw, bil-għan li jinfluwenzaw l-opinjoni pubblika u jpoġġu fil-periklu d-demokrazija. Fl-aħħarnett, irridu niffaċċjaw ukoll il-prospett tal-biża' li 'Vetturi tal-Ġlieda Awtonoma' jiddeċiedu min jgħix u min imut fil-gwerer, mingħajr ma jkun involut ebda persuna umana f'din id-deċiżjoni.

Għaldaqstant, il-Papa Franġisku qed jitlob għal dialoġu miftuħ dwar it-tifsira ta' dawn it-teknoloġiji ġodda. Qed jappella wkoll għall-vigilanza: Jekk fl-iżvilupp u l-użu tal-IA, il-bnedmin iċedu għat-tentazzjoni tal-interess personali, tax-xewqa għall-profitt u tal-għatx għall-poter, mhux biss il-libertà u l-koeżistenza paċifika jkun mhedda, iżda l-ftit jipicċaw jibbenefikaw b'mod sproporzjonat minn fuq dahar il-ħafna. Huwa għalhekk li l-Papa Franġisku ħass il-bżonn li fil-Messaġġ tiegħu għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi 2024 ifakkarna li "iżviluppi teknoloġiċi li ma jwasslux għal titjib fil-kwalità tal-ħajja tal-umanità kollha, iżda għall-kuntrarju jaggravaw l-inugwaljanzi u l-kunflitti, qatt ma jista' jgħodd bħala progress veru".

*(Adapted from <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday/>)*