

RENAISSANCE: THE “ROME CALL FOR AI ETHICS” DEFINED THE PRINCIPLES FOR A HUMAN-CENTRIC ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. “ALGOR-ETHICS” AS FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF GOOD INNOVATION

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On 28 February 2020 Pontifical Academy for Life, Microsoft, IBM, FAO, the Italian Government signed the “Rome Call for an AI Ethics”, designing an ethical approach to Artificial Intelligence so that in future digital innovation and technological progress serve human genius and creativity rather than their gradual replacement.

First signatories: Msgr. Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life (sponsor of the initiative); Mr. Brad Smith, President of Microsoft; Mr. John Kelly III, Executive Vice President of IBM, Mr. Dongyu Qu, General Director FAO; Mrs. Paola Pisano, Italian Government. To the ceremony has participated Mr. David Sassoli, President of the European Parliament.

In the two previous days the Workshop on the theme “The 'good' algorithm? Artificial Intelligence: Ethics, Law, Health”, organized by the Pontifical Academy for Life, took place in the Vatican, with the participation of researchers, experts, scholars, university professors from Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia.

“Artificial intelligence” (AI) is bringing about profound changes in the lives of human beings, augmenting human capabilities and enabling or facilitating many tasks that can be carried out more efficiently and effectively. “The transformations currently underway are not just quantitative, but above all qualitative, because they affect the way these tasks are carried out and the way in which we perceive reality and human nature itself, so much so that they can influence our mental and interpersonal habits”. New technology “must be researched and produced in accordance with criteria that ensure it truly serves the entire “human family” (Preamble, Univ. Dec. Human Rights), respecting the inherent dignity of each of its members and all natural environments, and taking into account the

needs of those who are most vulnerable. The aim is not only to ensure that no one is excluded but also to expand those areas of freedom that could be threatened by algorithmic conditioning”.

In the long term, “the values and principles that we are able to instil in AI will help to establish a framework that regulates and acts as a point of reference for digital ethics, guiding our actions and promoting the use of technology to benefit humanity and the environment”.(.) “Now more than ever, we must guarantee an outlook in which AI is developed with a focus not on technology”, but rather for a vision in which human beings and nature are at the heart of how digital innovation is developed, supported rather than “gradually replaced by technologies that behave like rational actors but are in no way human”.

In order for technological advancement “to align with true progress for the human race and respect for the planet, it must meet three requirements. It must include every human being, discriminating against no one; it must have the good of humankind and the good of every human being at its heart; finally, it must be mindful of the complex reality of our ecosystem with a highly sustainable approach”.

In addition, each person must be aware of when he/she is interacting with a machine. AI-based technology must never be used to exploit people in any way, especially the most vulnerable: indeed, new technologies can prove extremely useful in helping people with disabilities to learn and become more independent (for example, remote working for people with reduced mobility, technological support for those with cognitive disabilities, etc.) in order to make the educational motto "no one left behind" a reality.

“As we design and plan for the society of tomorrow, the use of AI must follow forms of action that are socially oriented, creative, connective, productive, responsible, and capable of having a positive impact on the personal and social life of younger generations”.

The ethical commitment of all the stakeholders involved is a critical success factor, so in order for AI to act as a tool for the good of humanity and the planet, the topic of protecting human rights in the digital era has to be put just at the heart of the public debate.

Duty of explanation will become essential: not only the decision-making criteria of AI-based algorithmic agents have to be made understandable, but also their purpose and objectives, by offering individuals precise information on the logic behind the algorithms used to make decisions. New forms of regulation must be encouraged to promote transparency and compliance with ethical principles, particularly "for advanced technologies that have a higher risk of impacting human rights, such as facial recognition".

To achieve these goals, each algorithm's development has to be set out from the very beginning with an "algor-ethical" vision, i.e. an approach of "ethics by design".

Designing and planning fully trustable AI systems involve narrow coordination and strong consensus among political decision-makers, UN system agencies and other intergovernmental organisations, researchers, the world of academia and representatives of NGO regarding the ethical principles that should be built into these technologies.

"For this reason, the sponsors of the call express their desire to work together, in this context and at a national and international level, to promote "algor-ethics", namely the ethical use of AI as defined by the following principles":

1. Transparency: AI systems have to be explainable as a rule;
2. Inclusion: each individual must know that his/her needs as a human being are definitively considered in order to receive the best favourable conditions for expressing and developing their potential;
3. Responsibility: accountability and transparency must be the rails for those who design and deploy the use of AI;
4. Impartiality: unconditional respect of fairness and human dignity requires the utmost care in avoiding any kind of bias;
5. Reliability: the pursuit of absolute reliability for AI is imperative;
6. Security and privacy: preserving the users' privacy as well as operating in total security are basic requirements.

These are declared as "fundamental elements of good innovation" definitely.

Source: Pontificia Academia Pro Vita.

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