

The Ethics of Using Artificial Intelligence

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The assignment for topic three in Principles of Sociology asks students to engage with an approved large language model platform to complete a project unrelated to technology.

Instructions include asking students to use A.I. to generate an infographic of collected data, document their prompts, and write a reflection on their experience of “using A.I. ethically”. A.I. provides assistance by analyzing massive amounts of data taking into consideration context, nuance, and cultural references, providing a result that simulates human conversation (Ismail et al., 2024). In a world where neglecting technological advancements risks placing students at career disadvantages, it makes sense that the University encourages the “ethical” use of these platforms. However, in the technology’s infancy a definitive statement cannot be made of the ethics of A.I.. Requiring it for an assignment forces students with strong moral objections, like myself, to choose between violating our conscious or violating our GPA. Despite the potential for positive impacts, until environmental, economic, cognitive, and safety considerations are made and regulated for this emerging technology, there is no ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Environmental Impact

The negative environmental impact of A.I. is no secret but has not generated enough concern with consumers or developers to take steps to ensure God’s creation, and resources that sustain human life, are being well stewarded in the rapid expansion of LLMs. According to MIT, each time a prompt is entered, the computing hardware uses five times more energy than a traditional web search (Zewe, 2025). In anticipation of future demand, data centers are being constructed all over the nation, diverting essential water and electricity away from human communities and wildlife (Gioino, 2026). This is a can that should not be kicked down the road

and left to our future selves to solve. The wise approach would be to find a solution for this issue before the technology is used.

Economic Impact

Another concern with A.I. is its potential for mass human labor replacement. While there are some economic benefits to the technology like improving productivity, medical advancements, and access to information (Federspiel et al., 2023), the number of potential jobs lost could be detrimental to our economy (Gonsalves et al., 2023). Invention and automation have historically replaced human labor but not at the scale of what A.I. could do. This is not a singular invention in a singular industry, but a technology that touches a myriad of fields, especially in information and technology. Many of my clients are in the tech industry. Some have already lost their livelihood to A.I. and the rest are well aware of that potential for themselves.

Atrophy of the Human Mind

One of the questions that is not being asked enough is what the long-term impact of A.I. use on human cognition is. New studies are beginning to confirm that reliance on A.I. increases “cognitive atrophy”, shrinking critical thinking abilities (Ismail et al., 2024). The difference is consumption vs. engagement. With other technologies, the user is utilizing a tool, but the relational response of A.I. increases a sense of trust that causes users to use cognitive processes that differ from those of traditional searches (Ismail et al., 2024). This study also notes that with LLMs, information retrieval, task organization, and problem solving are done *for* the user, not *by* the user (Ismail et al., 2024). Those in the tech world are speaking out about dependence on A.I. influencing human decision making and reducing the ability to think critically (Gonsalves et al., 2023). The purpose of higher education is fostering critical thinking and teaching students not

just what to learn but how to learn. Any platform that diminishes a student's ability to think over time has no place in an academic setting.

AI and the Christian Worldview

A.I. has the potential to be a great force for good for humanity, but that is not the A.I. available to consumers today. The goals of the technology are the goals of the platform's developers and shareholders, not what is in humanity's best interest. Sam Altman, CEO of Open AI famously said, "A.I. will probably most likely lead to the end of the world, but in the meantime, there'll be great companies" (Shin, 2023, para. 1). LLMs respond to prompts relationally, as a human would without being a human, getting humans accustomed to exchanges where meeting needs goes one-way. In traditional research or tool using, content is not presented relationally. In all my research, an NIH journal article has never told me, "You ask a great question, you're on the right track". Every engagement with LLMs conditions users for counterfeit, self-serving connection while decreasing the ability to connect with other people in the same way pornography decreases one's ability to engage in genuine physical intimacy. Human connection and relational reconciliation are as much at the heart of the gospel as personal salvation (*The Holy Bible, New American Standard Version*, 2000, Matthew 22:38-40). Christians should prayerfully consider engaging with platforms that threaten human connection, an essential part of the Christian mission.

Conclusion

I understand that my concerns with the use of A.I. come across as fear or simply refusing to embrace emerging technology, but I am not against A.I.'s *potential*. Innovation is part of the human experience and those who refuse new things get left behind. As a learning-disabled

person, I am hopeful for the leveling of the playing field a tool like this could provide. I'm not against the A.I. we could have tomorrow; I am against the A.I. we have today. "It is necessary to establish adequate regulatory tools capable of upholding justice and curbing the distorting effects of technological power" (Pope Leo XIV, 2026, p.1). I am aware that refusing to follow the assignment as instructed means not receiving credit for it. In this case, it means enough to me to give up the 4.0 I have maintained in my three years at GCU. Until our governing bodies are brave enough to address the real concerns around these powerful tools and establish safeguards so we can truly have an ethical A.I. experience, I will not be engaging with any of the available platforms. Not even to see what I'd look like with bangs.

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