

# Quaderni di Comunità

Persone, Educazione e Welfare  
nella società 5.0

## Community Notebook

People, Education, and Welfare in society 5.0

n. 1/2025

HUMAN-CENTRIC APPROACH  
TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

*edited by*

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# INDICE

## EDITORIALE

*Marco Filoni, Filippo Maria Giordano, Giorgio Grimaldi* 15

## RUBRICA *EDUCATION* 31

1. Intelligenza artificiale generativa nella didattica: verso un approccio umano-centrico  
*Michele Baldassarre, Francesco Pio Sarcina, Anna Maria Cuzzi* 33

2. Approccio plurale all'intelligenza artificiale: sfide etiche e formative nelle istituzioni scolastiche  
*Sara Pellegrini, Riccardo Sebastiani, Patrizia Ninassi, Emanuela Lampis* 59

3. L'intelligenza artificiale nell'educazione: un'analisi degli studenti italiani  
*Antonio Opromolla* 89

## RUBRICA *EMPOWERMENT* 97

1. Approccio umanocentrico all'intelligenza artificiale: sfide etiche, sociali ed economiche  
*Riccardo Mancini, Sara Pellegrini, Riccardo Sebastiani, Debora Glori* 99

2. Bridging expectations and realities: the future socio-economic impact of AI  
*Viviana Condorelli, Fiorenza Beluzzi* 121

3. Balancing Innovation and Equity: an Analysis of the European AI Act  
*Sergio Pappagallo* 127

4. La protezione dei dati personali, l'intelligenza artificiale e i traduttori automatici <i>Federica De Stefani</i>	135
5. Participatory Approaches For The Transition From Automation To Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Case Study <i>Sara Calicchia, Chiara Colagiacom, Angela Bagnato, Roberta Pistagni, Bruno Papaleo, Francesca Grosso</i>	145
SAGGI	153
1. Intelligenza artificiale generativa, costruzione di senso e reti sociali: una prospettiva sociologica <i>Francesco Mattioli</i>	155
2. Intelligenza artificiale e Literacy. Promuovere l'approccio sociologico umano-centrico per superare i pregiudizi e favorire l'inclusione sociale <i>Danilo Boriati, Mariangela D'Ambrosio</i>	183
3. Riattivare la riflessività: per un modello etico-critico di educazione digitale <i>Giuseppe De Ruvo</i>	213
4. Trasformazioni digitali nel welfare: intelligenza artificiale e servizio sociale <i>Roberto Veraldi, Chiara Fasciani</i>	243
5. A Model for Responsible Governance of human-centric AI in the Public Sector <i>Francesco Niglia</i>	277
6. AI and Democracy: the Role of the European Parliament in Shaping the EU "AI Act" <i>Raffaella Cinquanta</i>	311

7. L'IA nella gestione delle frontiere dell'Unione europea:  
un approccio antropocentrico per tutti?  
*Giulia Maria Gallotta* 341
8. Sovranità e indipendenza tecnologica. La sfida e i  
rischi delle "nuove" intelligenze. Una valutazione di  
sistema  
*Giuseppe Romeo* 373

## 2. BRIDGING EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES: THE FUTURE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF AI

by Viviana Condorelli\*, Fiorenza Beluzzi\*\*

**Abstract:** Questo studio esamina la disconnessione tra le aspettative sociali e le strategie di investimento aziendale nell'intelligenza artificiale per comprendere in che modo le scelte economiche e tecnologiche siano orientate a soddisfare i bisogni della popolazione. Attraverso l'analisi di indagini internazionali e di recenti report, esploriamo se gli investimenti aziendali rispondano ai bisogni sociali e ribadiamo la necessità di un cambiamento di prospettiva verso un'intelligenza artificiale centrata sull'uomo.

**Parole chiave:** IA antropocentrica, Aspettative sociali, IA generativa, Investimenti sull'IA

**Abstract:** This study examines the disconnection between social expectations and corporate investment strategies in AI to understand how economic and technological choices are oriented to meet the population's needs. Through the analysis of international surveys and recent reports, we explore whether corporate investments respond to social needs and propose the need for a change of perspective towards human-centred AI.

**Keywords:** Human-centred AI, Social expectations, Generative AI, AI investments

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## *Introduction*

The spread of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming various areas of daily life, from healthcare to education, from entertainment to work. This technology, which has become increasingly pervasive, raises crucial questions about how it is perceived by society and how much companies' investment choices reflect social needs. According to recent surveys, the public recognizes the potential of AI to improve the quality of life, but also faces significant concerns, such as the risk of job losses and the perception of a lack of transparency in corporate decision-making processes. This study examines the disconnection between social expectations and corporate investment strategies in AI to understand how economic and technological choices are oriented to meet the population's needs. Through the analysis of international surveys and recent reports, we explore whether corporate investments respond to social needs and propose the need for a change of perspective towards human-centred AI.

### *1. Ethical-moral clusters*

At least five clusters of ethical-moral issues that require in-depth reflection by the scientific community, policymakers, and civil society can be grouped:

- The development of AI models entails high energy and financial costs, significantly impacting energy consumption and the climate crisis, especially when energy does not come from sustainable sources. It raises a debate about the equitable distribution of AI benefits and the risk of widening the economic and technological gap between World regions.
- The datasets used often reflect a Westernized vision,

perpetuating racial, gender, and socio-economic prejudices. The emergence of monopolies in the data and AI sector, with a few companies dominating the market, accentuates these inequalities. It is, therefore, necessary to rethink management models and the role of the public sector as a guarantor of individual rights.

- The growing difficulty in distinguishing AI-generated content leads to the “automation bias”, where individuals consider AI outputs as objective and reliable, even when they are not. This increases the risk of manipulation and cognitive dependence, reducing people’s critical sense.
- Generative AI represents a challenge for cognitive jobs, with potential social tensions related to replacing or integrating human skills. According to Ipsos data, only 29% of Italian respondents believe that AI will improve the labour market, while 37% fear a worsening, indicating a negative perception of the impact of AI on employment (Ipsos, 2024).
- The need for more transparency in data collection and use raises concerns about the privacy and security of personal information. Without rigorous control, data could be exploited without individuals’ consent. Despite these risks, 47% of global respondents trust companies that use AI to protect their data (Ipsos, 2024).

## *2. Comparative analysis*

Between 2023 and 2024, significant developments in AI have occurred, highlighting a divergence between economic investment choices and users’ perceptions, use, fears, and hopes. The AI Indexes (Maslej *et al.*, 2023; Maslej *et al.*, 2024) show that industry continues to dominate AI research, with an increasing

number of large and expensive models: in 2023, 51 significant models were produced by industry, compared to previous years (Maslej *et al.*, 2024). Training costs have skyrocketed, with models like OpenAI's GPT-4 requiring an estimated \$78 million investment (Maslej *et al.*, 2024). Additionally, AI patents have increased exponentially, especially in China, which accounted for 61.1% of AI patent origins in 2022 (Maslej *et al.*, 2024). Despite these significant investments, user awareness and understanding of AI have progressed at different rates. According to Ipsos 2023, only 50% of people knew which products and services used AI, which modestly increased to 52% in 2024 (Ipsos, 2024). This indicates a persistent gap between technological advances and public understanding of AI applications. While the percentage of individuals who say they have a good understanding of AI has remained stable at 66-67% between 2023 and 2024 (Ipsos, 2023; Ipsos, 2024), this self-assessment may not reflect actual knowledge, given the lack of awareness of practical applications.

User perceptions have evolved, showing an increase in nervousness and ethical concerns. Ipsos 2023 reported that 52% of respondents felt nervous about AI, a sentiment that remained at 50% in 2024 (Ipsos, 2024), indicating lingering concern. Trust issues remain, as 41% did not trust that companies using AI would protect personal data in 2024 (Ipsos, 2024). Additionally, incidents of AI misuse have increased, with a 32.3% increase in reported cases in 2023 (Maslej *et al.*, 2024), further fueling public concerns. Economic choices have focused on technical advances, such as developing more powerful models and increasing AI capabilities (Maslej *et al.*, 2023; Maslej *et al.*, 2024). However, users are concerned about ethical implications, including potential job displacement and discrimination. In 2024, 36% expected AI to replace their jobs, with concerns highest among younger generations (Ipsos, 2024). This contrasts with the industry's

emphasis on efficiency and performance, highlighting a misalignment between investment priorities and user concerns. Expectations that AI will profoundly change daily life remain high, with 66% anticipating a significant impact in the next 3-5 years (Ipsos, 2023; Ipsos, 2024). However, only 50% felt that AI had already changed their lives by 2024, indicating a lag between expectations and realized benefits. Users are sceptical about the economic benefits of AI; only 34% believe it will improve the economy, and 32% think it will improve the labour market (Ipsos, 2024). This scepticism highlights a disconnect between the transformative potential of AI expected by investors and the public's confidence in its benefits.

### *Conclusion*

The evolution from 2023 to 2024 highlights a growing gap between the rapid progression of AI technologies and public perceptions and concerns. To bridge this gap, putting people at the centre of AI-related decisions is imperative, ensuring that investments improve technical capabilities and address ethical considerations and social impacts. This holistic approach balances expectations and actual investment performance in a green and integrated vision. A human-centric approach implies considering not only the performance and profitability of technology but also human well-being, dignity, and individual rights. However, the current economic context ignores these priorities in favour of profit logic. AI regulation should promote greater transparency and citizen participation in decision-making processes to ensure that individuals can understand how AI affects their lives.

In conclusion, the evolution of AI highlights a growing gap between economic logic and population concerns. To address AI's

challenges responsibly, greater transparency, open dialogue, and citizen participation are necessary. Only through a multidisciplinary approach, including social sciences, ethics, and technology, can we ensure that AI respects and promotes human values, reducing inequality and protecting individual rights.

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