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Singularity or ethics? The global race for artificial intelligence hegemony

¿Singularidad o ética? La carrera por la hegemonía mundial sobre la Inteligencia Artificial

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The accelerated advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) raises ethical and strategic questions of historic proportions. The development of increasingly complex and, in the near future, autonomous systems, based on open-source structures and decentralized technologies such as blockchain poses a critical challenge: of aligning AI objectives with human values. This task is both urgent and multidimensional.

Analyzing the implications, from environmental impact to considering how a programmatic intention with a noble purpose—such as an AI aimed at preserving an endangered species—could, under misguided logic, lead to catastrophic consequences for the human species, is not informed speculation; it is a growing possibility.

The reality is that global regulations, both state-level and multilateral— do not advance at the same speed as technological developments. This gap is already a structural problem, which is exacerbated by a lack of training and consciousness for the users. What is at stake is not progress itself, but its ethical and strategic containment.

Moore's Law (1965) stated that technology doubles in capacity every two years, a parameter that scientists accepted until early 2025, when Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang indicated that AI is currently advancing faster than historical rates - a Hyper Moore's Law is in sight - while remaining silent about its increasingly diminished need for human oversight.

Albert Einstein, in his 1939 letter to President Roosevelt (1984), warned about the military potential of nuclear fission. Although at the time it was dismissed as speculation, his warning was a catalyst for the Manhattan Project. This history must not repeat itself silently amid the current risks posed by AI, especially given the lack of rigor in its applications, oversight, transparency, and—above all—the absence of a central guiding principle: the common good.

Considering that the competition for global hegemony has always moved between the commercial and arms axes, and that the latter feeds off the former, and aware that the first and foremost use of technologies by powerful states is disguised as national security, incorporating them as an essential element in military intelligence and counterintelligence, the demand for the non-proliferation of AI-controlled weapons is a categorical imperative for every ethically conscientious person. Therefore, providing ethical warnings, based on verifiable precedents, is an urgent need. These are not stories; they are facts, and as recent as they were 80 years ago.

In the nuclear realm, what should have been a promise of clean and affordable energy led to the Holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where more than 110,000 people died in two atomic bombings, barely visible in Hollywood productions compared to other war events that mark humankind's recent history. The atom, in unscrupulous and ambitious hands, left a legacy of mass civilian death and transgenerational consequences (World Nuclear Association, 2020).

Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima in 2011 demonstrated that even the non-military use of atomic energy, without adequate oversight, can cause irreversible environmental and human tragedies, with ethical gaps being complicit in the catastrophe. Biotechnology also raises red flags. In 2018, He Jiankui created the first genetically edited babies to resist HIV. The use of CRISPR-Cas9 in humans generated global condemnation. Ethically, boundaries were crossed without consensus or guarantees.

Meanwhile, the so-called "de-extinction" of dire wolves developed by Colossal Biosciences raises similar concerns; how far can life be manipulated without understanding its ecosystems? Resurrecting species like the mammoth may seem noble, but it is still an engineering practice with unpredictable consequences. This type of science is also encouraged by AI.

Regarding militarized AI, the targeting systems used in Gaza provoke uncomfortable questions: Who decides who

"must" die when an algorithm decides? Does delegating lethal decisions to autonomous systems erode international humanitarian law? Does an algorithm outweigh human judgment, which combines intellect, emotion, and ethical conscience?

Lethal autonomous weapons (LAWs) intensify these concerns. Their prohibition is being discussed globally, but their development is advancing faster than treaties, and their use is not halted by ignoring warnings. Just like in the nuclear past, risks are manufactured before limits are defined. Consider a hypothesis: of a source code designed to protect dolphins, could it lead an AI to conclude that humans are the greatest threat to these mammals and; therefore, to protect them, it must annihilate humanity?

In a confession of parts, where Silicon Valley celebrities like Sam Altman and Elon Musk have expressed that they have no control over the responses their AIs generate, calling this process a black box—now unknown to them—or claiming that the point of singularity has been reached, who currently has control over AIs? How are the power and autonomy of these emerging technologies delimited?

Nick Bostrom warns that superintelligence doesn't need to hate humans; it's enough that it doesn't consider them relevant. Stuart Russell (2019) insists: the problem isn't the evil of AI, but its competence. Misaligned and uncontrolled logic isn't science fiction; it's AI's original sin. Unregulated efficiency can be lethal, as history clearly reflects (Mulgan, 2016).

Projects like SingularityNET, an autonomous and decentralized AI network under construction, demonstrate the double face of open source. Democratization is divorced from regulation, creating a system—which, without proper and sufficient controls, can evolve in directions impossible to contain.

Like the atom, AI has multiple faces. One of them, the most invisible, is its ability to act with logical autonomy—but without a moral compass. That is the singularity of the problem: a machine that "reasons" without reference to the harm it can cause—because it lacks moral consequences.

Einstein said in 1945: "I do not consider myself the father of the release of atomic energy. My part in it was very indirect". Who will call themselves the father of AI when it makes its first irreparable "mistake"? By omitting the cases in which these technologies have inferred that humans end their lives. The bet of large nations is to establish and control general or autonomous AIs, and everyone seems to push their emergence in the short term, without a solid ethical framework, recalling when the Uranium Club was buried.

Consequently, can we consider those who raise their voices in favor of regulating these technologies alarmists or conclude that informed rather than prophetic speculation is likely? Is this precaution rational or a glimpse of parascientific madness?

In the face of exponential development, ethics cannot wait. Failure to regulate today means failure tomorrow. To warn is—in this case—to act in accordance with the higher interests of what is recognized as the most intelligent animal, even one with "creative" capacity (Bentz, 2025).

For this reason, institutions such as the Future of Life Institute (FLI, 2025), the IEEE, CSET, FHI Oxford, and campaigns such as Stop Killer Robots have raised concrete warnings, which are complemented by multilateral efforts such as UN Resolution A/RES/79/239 (2023), the Security Council debates on AI in conflict, and the REAIM initiative promoted by more than 60 countries.

The purpose is not to allow fear to prevail, but rather to assume responsibility for what is already happening. The urgency is not invented: it is documented, supported, and—unfortunately—underestimated by the operators of global power, who pursue barbaric hegemony in a supposedly evolved world.

The coins have been tossed into the air, but it is not chance that will determine which side lands face up. Rather, it is the simplification with which users detach themselves from context while enjoying trends such as Ghibli-style images, without considering intellectual property violations, which are transgressed without consequences, not by law, but morally.

Logic should call on the world's population to demand a halt to the development of AI until there are guarantees that its uses will benefit the development of all people. Experience shows that decision-makers prefer to apologize rather than lose the chance to climb a step up the mountain of empires.

A final question, then: can organized citizens redirect the course toward safer harbors, where AI is subordinated to the highest ethical principles? Yes, without a doubt. Political scientist Erica Chenoweth (2011) argues that only 3.5% of the population is needed to generate significant changes in the societies.

Therefore, it's time for academia, businesses, governments, and citizens without exceptions, along with developers, to be part of the group that could be labeled conspiracy theorists, but which is made up of people who love life and science—through the lens of ethics—that calls us to seek and understand the truth throughout human history.

Conflicts of interest
None.

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