

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Artificial Intelligence: Challenges and Opportunities

Concept Note

Advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are often accompanied by preoccupying projections in which humans have been replaced, enslaved or hunted by their own creations. Indeed, for many people, the concept is associated to job loss, income inequality, biased data and surveillance and control.

Yet they nonchalantly accept smartphones, apps, search engine optimization, spam filtering and other algorithms that are already omnipresent in their daily lives. AI certainly brings opportunities and risks, and its impact in cities deserves careful consideration. But how to look beyond the headlines?

The use of sensors, networks and analytics is already helping officials to understand how people utilize certain services, thus improving, for example, traffic and parking management, informing emergency response services and, of course, preventing crime. In the coming years, self-driving vehicles, drones and service robots or personal assistants could be commonplace. But are cities ready for that change?

In some fields, such as healthcare and education, AI's impact will probably depend more on regulation than technology. In others, such as employment or the development of low-resource communities, cultural constraints need to be overcome. In any case, the challenges ahead are numerous and complex. They include access and privacy issues, algorithm bias and machine ethics. For example, what will autonomous vehicles (AV) decide when facing moral dilemmas?

The problem is AI is still a black box and people don't feel comfortable when they don't understand how a decision is made. How can cities make AI more explainable and transparent to face all those challenges?

It's clear that the advancement of AI is unstoppable. Considering this technology as a savior is woefully naïve. Yet predicting dystopian outcomes can cause potential solutions to be missed. Cities need to ensure that they set in place the regulations and institutions required to make the most of Artificial Intelligence while minimizing its downsides.

Expected outcomes

Participants will:

- Get insights on the benefits of AI in cities.
- Discuss the complex set of considerations AI puts forward.
- Discover how to make the most of AI's opportunities while managing risks.
- Identify the ethics and privacy limits of AI technology.



Guiding questions

- How important will be the role of AI in the future of our society?
- Will AI free us from mundane chores or leave us in a state of perpetual surveillance where robots have taken our jobs?
- Is AI a real solution to improve living conditions in cities?
- Can we tackle the gap between Southern and Northern countries with the use of AI?
- How can AI bring improvements in the public sector management?
- In the field of security, how can concerns about overly pervasive law enforcement be overcome in order to realize the potential of AI to make policing more targeted?