

# The Bright Side of Artificial Intelligence

## How artificial intelligence helps the fight against disinformation

On 14 December 2023, the Lisbon Council convened an **expert webinar on artificial intelligence (AI) and disinformation**. The expert webinar was convened within **FERMI**, a 3-year, 17-partner consortium supported by the **Horizon Europe** programme which sets out to develop tools that enable law enforcement agencies and society at large to prevent disinformation-induced, real-life crimes while safeguarding users and citizens' privacy.

At this expert webinar, AI and disinformation experts **Beth Lambert**, head of policy and strategic accounts at Logically AI, and **Siim Kumpas**, policy officer at the East StratCom Task Force of the European External Action Service, discussed the role of AI in the fight against disinformation together with assistant professor of criminology at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and researcher at Transcrime in Milan, **Alberto Aziani**.

AI has become an integral part of our lives, and as we grapple with its potential drawbacks, it is essential to explore how we can leverage its positive aspects. Shifting focus we should ponder: "**How can we make the most of artificial intelligence for our benefit?**"

While individual perspectives matter, the experts agree that it is equally crucial to consider **how AI can propel organisations toward their goals, while delivering value to society at large**. The question is not just about personal use but extends to how AI can be a force for good on a broader scale.

In the battle against disinformation, both Beth Lambert and Siim Kumpas highlighted how in their experience **AI has the potential to emerge as a powerful ally in enhancing our situational awareness**. Navigating the vast and often deceptive digital landscape requires AI's assistance to **uncover the intricacies of disinformation campaigns**. It excels at revealing crucial details that might elude the human eye, such as discerning patterns in the behaviour of virtual actors (bots), including the deployment of bots for disseminating false or misleading information.

Moreover, AI's remarkable **capabilities** can be matched with decentralised learning solutions, thus offering a **valuable asset** for organisations seeking to secure sensitive data, as illustrated by Alberto Aziani. Techniques like **Swarm Learning** allow AI models to be trained while **prioritising data privacy, ensuring the secure ownership** of datasets throughout the process. This not only enhances security but also **emphasises the ethical considerations** associated with AI implementation.

The experts agreed that, while the effectiveness and efficiency of AI are central to adoption discussions, they should not overshadow other values that organisations and society seek to uphold. Stakeholders must engage in comprehensive discussions, bringing diverse perspectives to the table, and carefully consider the societal implications of AI utilisation.

In discussing AI, we should not forget about the general public. While tools for fact-checking and verifying online content exist, their **widespread adoption among citizens remains a distant prospect**. Siim Kumpas brought to the attention of participants that bridging this gap requires efforts to make AI tools more accessible and user-friendly, **fostering a culture of informed engagement among citizens**.

In conclusion, the central question guiding this debate is how we can deploy AI for societal good. Specifically, in countering disinformation, the question expands to **how AI can fortify societal resilience against disinformation**.

As emerges from the expert webinar, **transparency** is vital, but it is not the sole solution. **Critical thinking, open public debate, and educational initiatives** on AI are indispensable for **fostering a robust, diverse, and meaningful multi-stakeholder discourse that engages society as a whole**. Ultimately, societal progress hinges on **widespread AI adoption, affording everyone an opportunity to interact with the technology and catalyse a critical mass for innovation and effective governance**.

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