Shenzhen College of International Education Model United Nations (SCIEMUN) Conference 2024

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Background Guide

Topic: Analyzing the Ethical, Political, and Social Implications of Artificial Intelligence

Committee: General Assembly

Topic: Analyzing the Ethical, Political, and Social Implications of Artificial Intelligence

Chair: Max Liang

Letter from the Chairs

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to SCIEMUN2024 and the General Assembly! We are honored to have you join this esteemed committee.

I am Max Liang, and it is my pleasure to serve as your Chair alongside Deputy Chair Taryn Lin. In this committee, our discussions will revolve around two critical topics: Analyzing the Ethical, Political, and Social implications of Artificial Intelligence, and Eliminating Global Hunger and Ensuring Food Security.

We expect you to prepare your opening speeches before the conference, form blocs to come up with resolutions, and actively engage by raising Points of Information (POIs). It is essential that you familiarize yourself with the background, historical context, and current situation of the country you are representing, in relation to the topics at hand.

Please remember that both Taryn and I are here to support you. Should you have any questions regarding the topics, rules of procedure, or any other aspects of the conference, please reach out. You can contact me at 26.max.liang@swis.cn.

We look forward to your participation in the General Assembly and to witnessing the debates that will unfold!

Best Regards,

Max Liang

Committee Background and Mission Statement

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations. General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six principal organs and the main policy-making organ of the United Nations (UN). The UNGA serves at a platform for 193 member states to share their dialogue, policymaking, and decision-making on pressing international issues. There are 3 main objectives of the UNGA: Promoting International Cooperation, Deliberating on Major Issues, and Facilitating Consensus Building.

Since the establishment of the UNGA in 1945, this committee has been instrumental in constructing international relations and passing crucial resolutions. The UNGA's past achievements include the establishment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), enabling numerous nations to gain independence, promoting global action on climate change, and setting the agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015.

One of the important factors of the UNGA is to make key decisions for the UN, including appointing the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council, electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council, and approving the UN budget. By serving as the pivotal connecting link between the United Nations membership, the Host Country, and the United Nations System at large, UNGA aspires to contribute to effective multilateralism and to serve the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. The UNGA is dedicated to its clients, providing them with comprehensive, timely and impartial protocol-based services and guidance. However, there are also limits to power in General Assembly. For instance, resolutions made in GA are non-binding and there is no jurisdiction over disputes. Overall, General Assembly plays a significant role in the United Nation, affecting decisions made and influencing the direction of international affairs.

Key terms

Term	Definition
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	The computer systems that can perform tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as recognizing speech, analyzing complex information, understanding, and translating languages, visual perception, making decisions, and simulation of humans. The key characteristic that distinguishes it from other computer systems is that AI can reason, self-correct, perceive, and learn with the information it is fed with.
Ethical Implications	Ethical implications refer to the consideration of morals that come with actions, decisions, and in this context, technologies. Aspects of ethical implications include the effects of bias, unfairness, and injustice; issues surrounding lack of consent and privacy; judgements on who is responsible when bad outcomes occur; and how technologies may influence social norms or effects well-being of communities.
Political Implications	Political implications refer to the consideration and consequences to the political sphere caused by actions, decisions, policies, and in this context, technologies. Aspects of political implications include the effects of how this technology changes the distribution of wealth and power, affects public opinion, shapes public policy, influences international relations, and affects social stability.
Social Implications	Social implications refer to the consequences and effects to individuals, communities, and society, caused by decisions, policies, and in this context, technologies. Aspects of social implications include the effects of how this technology influences wealth disparity, mental and physical health, unfairness in opportunity, disadvantaged or marginalized groups, and societal behavioral changes.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been rapidly integrating into our society in numerous sectors, including education, media generation, healthcare, transportation, and more. The usage of AI has grown exponentially, with the global AI market expected to grow 33% year over year, and with 77% of devices (phones, tablets, and computers) being used with some form of AI. However, as AI has gained a large user base and its capabilities have continued to advance, ethical, political, and social issues surrounding the creation and use of AI applications have emerged.

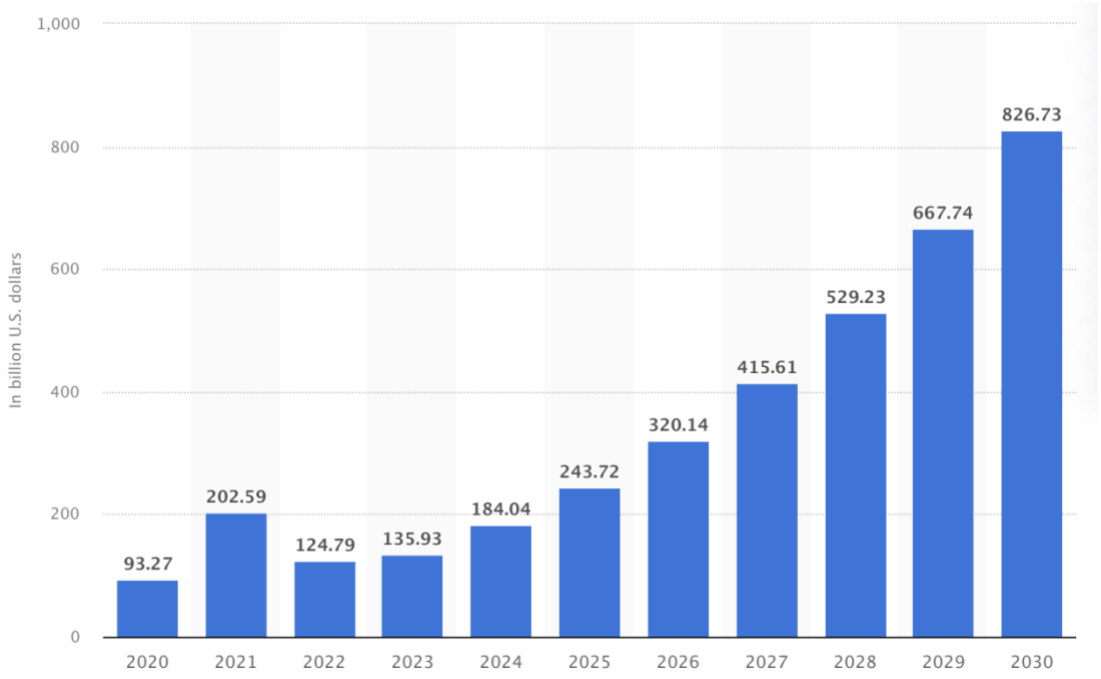

Figure 1: Artificial intelligence (AI) market size worldwide from 2020 to 2030 (in Billion USD)

There are many malicious ways of using AI. Firstly, artificial intelligence algorithms are being used to design hacking tools that automate attacks that pose threats to cybersecurity. AI has the ability to identify and exploit vulnerabilities in digital systems, which makes it easier for malicious actors to perform cyber-attacks or phishing attacks. 85% of cyberattacks in 2024 are powered or aided in some way by generated AI, and the volume of cyber-attacks have increased by 33% in 2023.

Secondly, deepfake technology—hyperrealistic videos generated by AI—has advanced very greatly to the point where it is almost impossible to identify whether a video is fake (generated) or not for an untrained eye. Malicious actors are thus able to create sensitive content using deepfakes to spread false information and mislead the public. This form of AI has been used to craft misinformation campaigns with the effect of influencing public opinion and manipulating election outcomes. There has been a 1740% increase in deepfake fraud in North America in 2023. Additionally, deepfake fraud is estimated to lose the US economy $40 billion USD by 2027.

Thirdly, facial recognition powered by AI are being misused for mass surveillance and tracking/stalking of individuals without consent, especially when this technology is acquired by malicious actors. Major privacy concerns are raised by the extensive implementation of AI-powered facial recognition regarding the lack of consent and the selling of such biometric data.

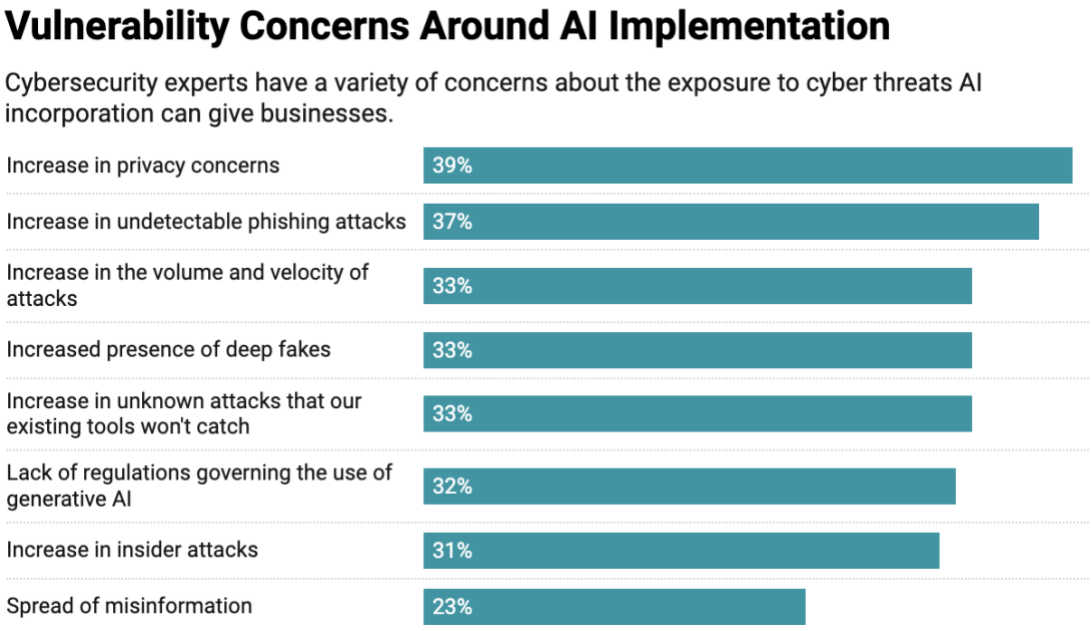

Figure 2: Statistics on Vulnerability Concerns Regarding AI Implementation

AI is also essential in the development of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). These military systems use machine learning and AI to create autonomous yet lethal weapons that are capable of making targeted decisions without human intervention (automatic missile systems that use algorithms to automatically identify

and fire at enemies). The use of AI in such military applications raises ethical and accountability concerns. A study by the Future of Humanity Institute indicated a 50% rate of errors in target identification in early AI models used in military simulations. This suggests that poorly integrated LAWS could lead to accidental military engagements, which has large consequences considering the lethality of these weapons.

There are now up to 30 countries equipped with such weapons. The global military AI market is expected to reach $18 billion USD in the next 2 years. The US leads this trend in military advancement, investing $1.5 billion USD in 2021 for the development of LAWS. In 2023, more than 30 member states have demanded an international ban for LAWS, indicating the widespread concern over these weapons.

The rise of AI has an extensive impact on the job market. AI is exceeding humans in executing certain tasks. With AI becoming more efficient thus far often cheaper than workers of certain jobs, displacement of jobs as a result of AI has become of major concern. 14% of workers has already experienced job displacement due to AI in the US. By next year, AI is expected to take over 85 million jobs and create 97 million new jobs. Even though advancement of AI leads to a net gain in job quantity, there are people who find difficulty in finding new employment due to their skillset being redundant upon the rise of AI.

With so much potential surrounding AI technology, many countries are now in an arms race to advance and lead in AI technology, since the advancement in AI is seen as a military and economic advantage over other countries. This raises geopolitical tensions around leading countries in AI development such as the US and China. These rivalries have significantly damaged international relations.

History and Current Situation

The term “artificial intelligence” is coined in 1956 by computer scientist John McCarthy during the Dartmouth Conference. During this conference, fellow computer scientists discussed ambitious goals of creating algorithms capable of simulating human learning and reasoning. This opened the doors to future research and creation of AI.

Between the 1950s and 1980s, top computer scientists in America created the first models of AI. In 1966, the first AI capable of simulating simple human conversation, ELIZA, was created. Following this, the first AI program that could understand phrases of natural language, SHRDLU, was created in 1972. These innovations impressed technologists and proved to the world that AI is possible.

After this, attention and funding on AI increased significantly. The following major AI innovation that shook the world was “Deep Blue” developed in 1997 by IBM. This is a robot that plays chess using an AI algorithm. This AI displayed its strategic and analytical capabilities that were stronger than humans when it beat world champion Garry Kasparov at chess. People realized AI’s potential to exceed humans in performing various tasks.

Around this time, malicious actors began to recognize the potential of AI for cybercrime. The first AI-based malware emerged in 1999, where machine learning AI algorithms were able to help cyber criminals find vulnerabilities in computer cybersecurity systems, increasing the chances that they succeed in cyber-attacks. New forms of utilizing AI algorithms to initiate cyber-attacks have been found in the years that follow, where automated phishing attacks and AI ransomware emerged in the early 2010s. Each of these data breaches made possible by AI has costed organizations an average of $4.88 million.

Another form of cybercrime, deepfakes powered by AI algorithms, first appeared in 2015. Alarmingly, anonymous internet users were able to access this technology.

They can swap the faces of famous individuals with those of people in other videos or in computer-generated imagery (CGI). There were major ethical concerns when these deepfakes depicted celebrities and political figures in ways that damage their reputation. With deepfakes becoming increasingly popular especially starting in 2017, deepfakes pretending to be notable figures could spread misleading information able to influence public opinion and unfairly manipulate outcomes of political campaigns and elections. An example of the use of AI in political contexts is the deepfake of President Zelenskyy of Ukraine in March of 2022, which tricked hundreds of thousands into believing that Zelenskyy surrendered to Russia in the Russo-Ukrainian War. Alarmed by this, the UNGA has passed a resolution in October of 2023, titled "Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure, and trustworthy artificial intelligence systems for sustainable development." This resolution encouraged the development of “reliable content authentication” which can detect when a piece of media is generated by AI. It also requires AI-generated media to include watermarks or labels that indicates which platform/algorithm the media is generated or manipulated with.

The military is even faster in their implementation AI. During the 1980s, the US, among other countries, has already poured large amounts of investment and resources to building unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), which is a type of LAWS. The first UAVs appeared in combat in 2001, autonomously surveilling and executing target strikes. Three years later, the U.S. Navy deployed the Phalanx CIWS—an automated weapon system often equipped with a high-caliber machine gun that uses an AI algorithm to track, aim, and fire at hostiles without any human intervention. With AI being so extensively used on weapons with such lethality, governments around the world have raised concerns with the continuous development and use of AI-enabled autonomous weaponry. The UN first discussed implications of LAWS in 2012, with a focus on ethical, legal, and operational concerns around AI-enabled autonomous weaponry. The UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) held further discussions surrounding regulations of LAWS in 2016 and 2021. With U.S, China, and Russia’s continuous arms race in autonomous weapons technologies,

many member states have already expressed apprehension and have advocated for the ban on LAWS.

Timeline

Date	Event
1956	Term "artificial intelligence" coined at Dartmouth Conference.
1966	ELIZA, the first conversational AI, is created.
1972	SHRDLU, an AI understanding natural language, is developed.
1980s	U.S. invests in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
1999	First AI-based malware emerges.
2001	First UAVs deployed in combat.
2004	U.S. Navy deploys Phalanx CIWS, an automated weapon system.
Early 2010s	Rise of automated phishing and AI ransomware.
2012	UN discusses implications of LAWS.
2016	UN CCW holds discussions on LAWS regulation.
2023	UNGA adopts resolution on AI systems for sustainable development.

Bloc Positions

China

China views AI as essential for economic growth and military modernization. China supports and funds the advancement of AI for civilian and military applications including LAWS. LAWS are widely implemented in China already. Development of civilian-use AI such as chatbots have been successful in China, catching up to the

leading AI companies. However, there has been multiple serious cases of AI deepfakes spreading misinformation to affect the public image of famous figures. Additionally, China is also regarded as the country with the strongest facial recognition system, effective for surveillance.

European Union (EU)

The EU demands regulations especially concerning deepfakes, surveillance, and usage of LAWS. The European Parliament already started implementing strict guidelines within Europe to ensure lawful and ethical creation and usage of AI. The EU has a more cautious attitude towards AI.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

This is an international organization consisting of around 125 member states. Even when some of the countries such as India and Iran have LAWS, NAM still called for a legally binding regulation of laws repeatedly. Out of this organization, 30 of the member states have called for a complete ban for LAWS due to risks involving ethical and operational concerns.

Russia

Russia focuses their efforts of AI advancement on military applications. Russia believes the only way to maintain military strength parity with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is to modernize their military force through integrating LAWS. AI is seen as vital for Russia's national security strategy.

USA

The U.S. is investing heavily in building AI systems for both national defense (LAWS) and cybersecurity. The U.S. has previously faced cyber threats, including data leaks from AI-driven cybercrime and deepfakes aimed at manipulating public perceptions of politicians. Currently, the U.S. is a leading innovator in AI, having developed many early models and hosting influential companies such as Nvidia, IBM, and OpenAI. The U.S. supports aggressive AI development for national defense and military

applications, and all political parties unanimously advocate for stricter regulations to address potential misuse of AI and its threats to privacy.

Possible Solutions

To address cybersecurity threats, AI-powered cyber-attacks can be more effectively detected and countered through the implementation of AI-driven cybersecurity systems. These systems may also aid in identifying system vulnerabilities to prevent data breaches and other forms of compromise. Furthermore, raising awareness about phishing attacks among member states that are particularly susceptible to such threats is crucial.

AI-driven cybersecurity systems are especially adept at identifying traces of activity associated with AI-powered attacks. Given their self-learning nature, these systems can autonomously adapt and enhance their capabilities to combat emerging methods of AI-based attacks without human intervention. However, the implementation of such technologies entails significant costs and time, as vast datasets are required to effectively eliminate cyber threats, making development both resource-intensive and time-consuming. Moreover, the development of countermeasures may inadvertently fuel an arms race between malicious actors and defense mechanisms, indicating that AI-driven cyber-attacks may persist.

In the case of deepfakes, detection tools that analyze both video and audio content to identify inconsistencies can significantly improve the capacity to authenticate media shared online. Moreover, legislation should be introduced to criminalize the malicious use of non-consensual deepfakes, particularly in cases of misinformation or inappropriate content. Raising public awareness about the possibility of deepfake manipulation can further reduce the impact of such media in spreading disinformation.

Regarding facial recognition and tracking, ethical guidelines should be established to govern the deployment of facial recognition technologies. These guidelines would ensure that consent is obtained for facial tracking while regulating and controlling access to such systems to prevent their misuse for malicious purposes, such as stalking.

To mitigate the negative effects of job displacement caused by AI, reskilling and upskilling programs should be implemented to ease unemployment. These programs would allow those affected by job displacement to transition into new roles more effectively by providing them with the necessary skills for emerging fields.

For Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), international treaties should be developed to regulate their creation and establish rules regarding the levels of autonomy permissible in their use. Additionally, guidelines should be set to determine accountability in cases where LAWS unintentionally cause damage. Regulating the use of LAWS may prevent an arms race, thus reducing the likelihood of escalation and addressing the ethical challenges associated with autonomous warfare. However, ensuring compliance with international treaties may prove difficult, as certain nations may choose to disregard these regulations in pursuit of military superiority.

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