



NEWSLETTER

June 2023, Edition 1a



With the participation of
the students from Istituto
Marymount:
Barranquilla
Bogotá
Medellín
New York
Paris
Rome

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first number of the Students League Newsletter. We are a group of students from Marymount Institute who will be writing articles on fascinating topics that are not usually read from the perspective of a younger generation. We want to add something new and different to our usual school year while simultaneously having some place where we can write about our future. That is the ideal goal of Students League. We hope you will enjoy reading our first newsletter.



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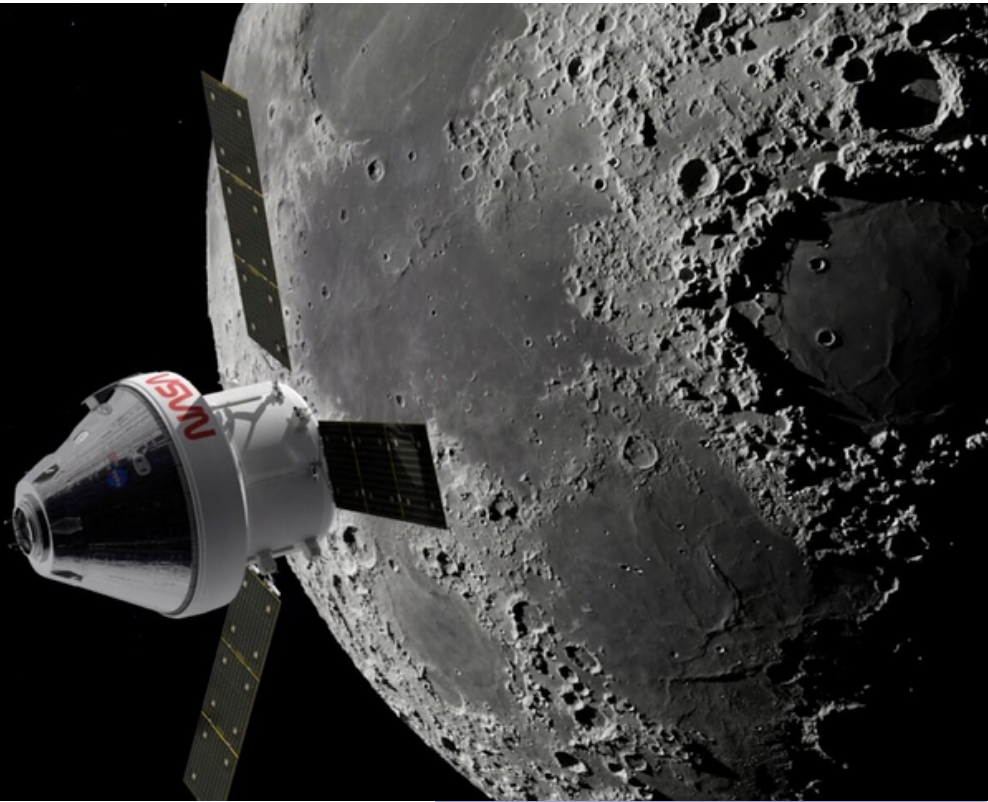
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SCIENCE AND TECH



BACK TO THE MOON WITH ARTEMIS - APOLLO'S SISTER

Naria Azizi, Italy

On July 20, 1969, the Apollo 11 crew successfully completed the national goal of landing humans on the Moon which had been set by President John F. Kennedy during the Cold War's infamous Space Race against the USSR. In 1972, Apollo 17 was the last mission to achieve this feat. Since then, no human has set foot on the Moon. So now, fifty years after the last lunar landing, what is pushing NASA to return with Artemis 1?

Artemis 1 is the first significant spaceflight of NASA's Artemis mission and consists of an uncrewed lunar orbit. Artemis 1 was successfully launched on November 16, 2022, at 06:47:44 UTC from the Kennedy Space Centre. The Artemis 1 mission marked an important milestone in several ways, including the first launch of the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and the Orion spacecraft, which will pave the way for future human missions to the Moon and beyond.

The NASA Artemis program is a series of manned and unmanned missions that are focused on establishing a sustainable human presence on and around the Moon by the end of the decade, with the eventual goal of sending humans to Mars.

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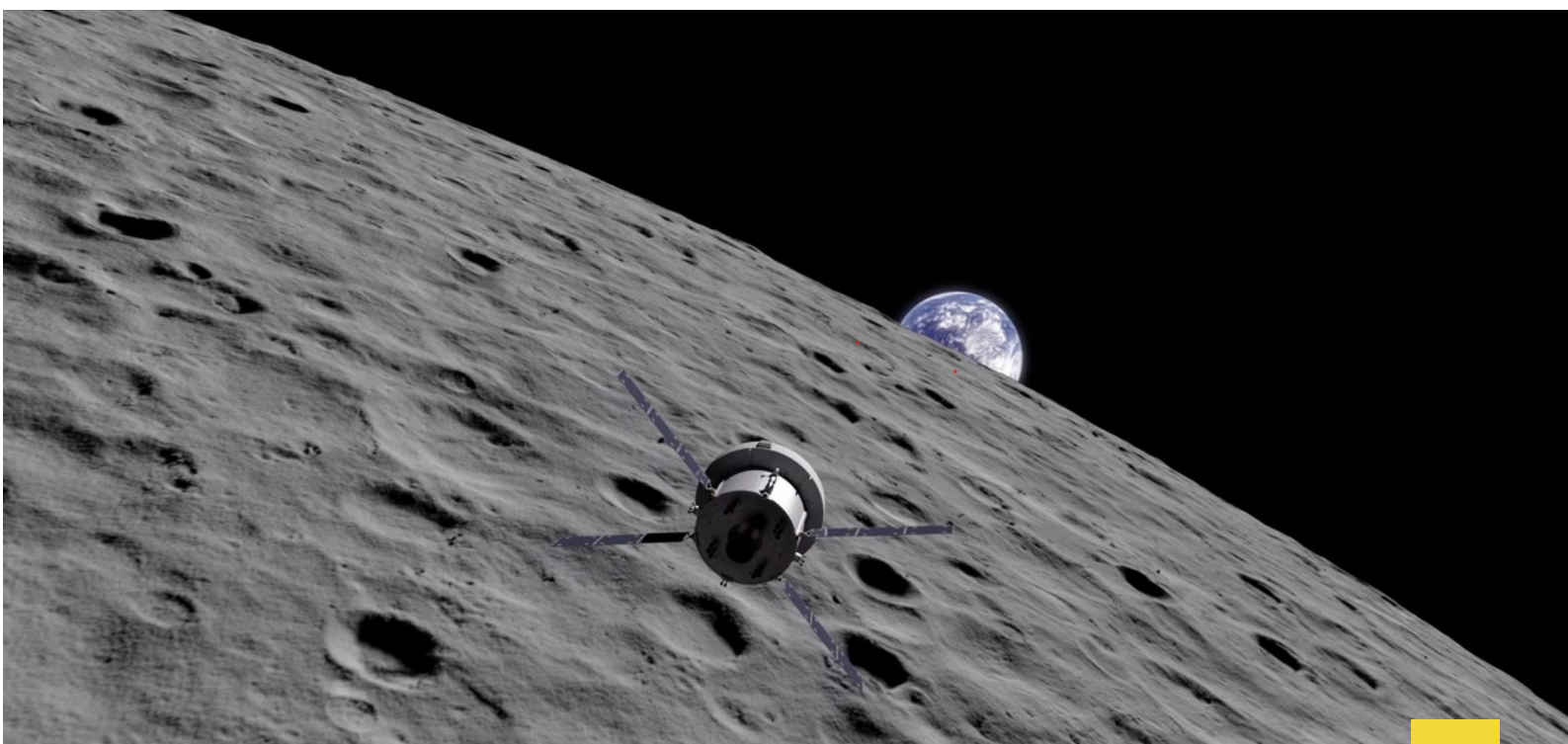
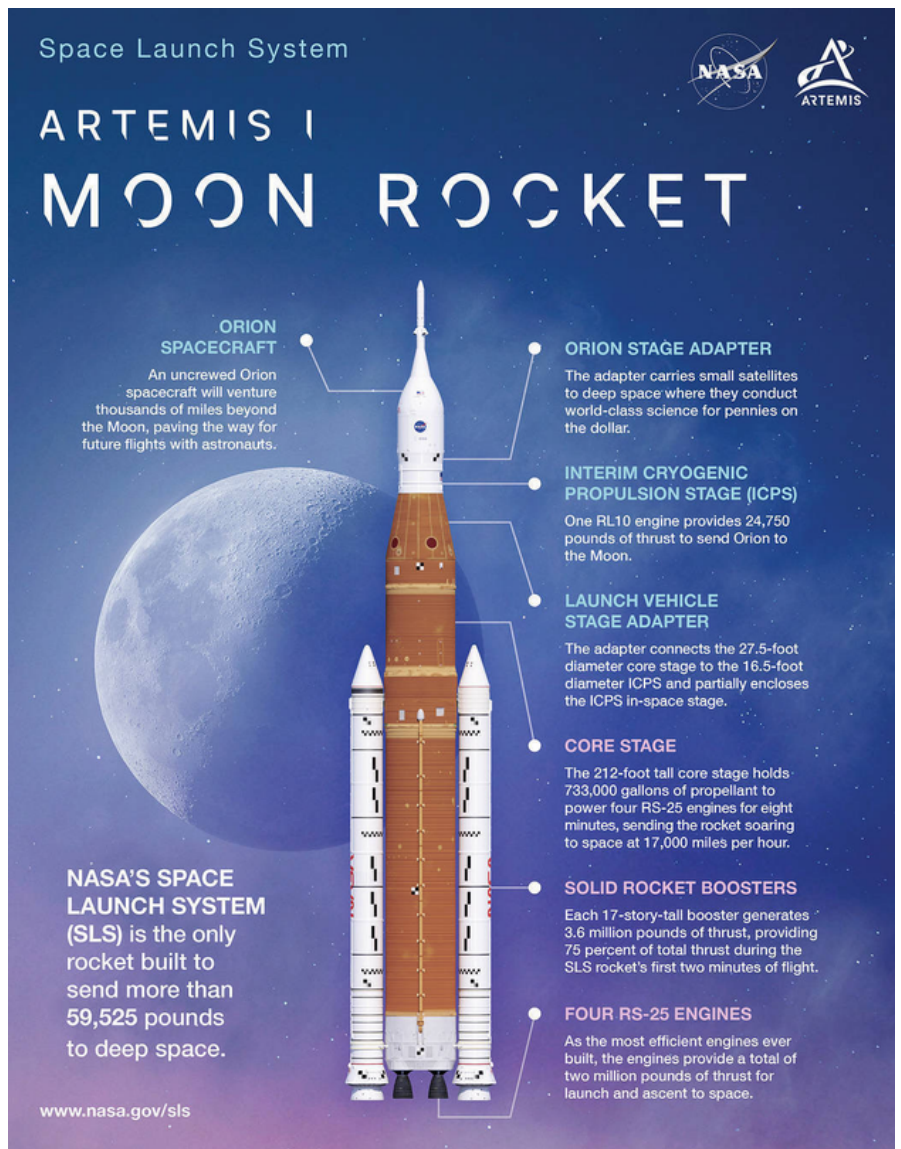


The Artemis 1 mission specifically aimed to test the capabilities of the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft, as well as prepare for future missions by demonstrating technologies and procedures needed for deep space missions. During the mission, the Orion spacecraft performed a non-crewed test flight around the Moon for 25.5 days before returning to Earth.

The SLS rocket is currently the most powerful rocket in the world, with the ability to produce 8.8 million pounds of thrust at liftoff. It is designed to be flexible and versatile so that it can be used for various missions. The Orion spacecraft, on the other hand, is designed to carry humans beyond low Earth orbit and into deep space, with a focus on long-duration missions.

The Artemis 1 mission will also include the first flight test of the European Service Module, which was developed by the European Space Agency and is a significant contribution to the Artemis program. In addition to testing new technologies, it provided critical data on the environment around the Moon, such as radiation levels and potential landing sites. This information can be used to help plan and prepare for future missions, including the eventual establishment of a lunar Gateway, which will serve as an outpost for crewed missions to the Moon.

Overall, the Artemis 1 mission represents an important milestone in the broader goal of human exploration of the solar system. It will test important technologies, gather critical data, and lay the groundwork for future human missions, including a permanent base on the Moon and a landing on Mars. Since 2017, the Artemis program has made steady progress toward the realization of its goals, and, with the successful launch of Artemis 1, we are one step closer to taking humanity to the stars again.

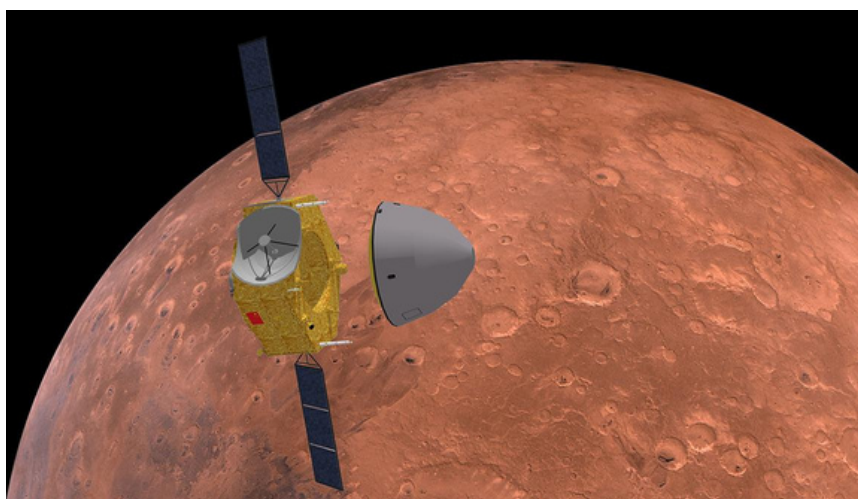




LIFE ON MARS

Maria Marcon, Italy

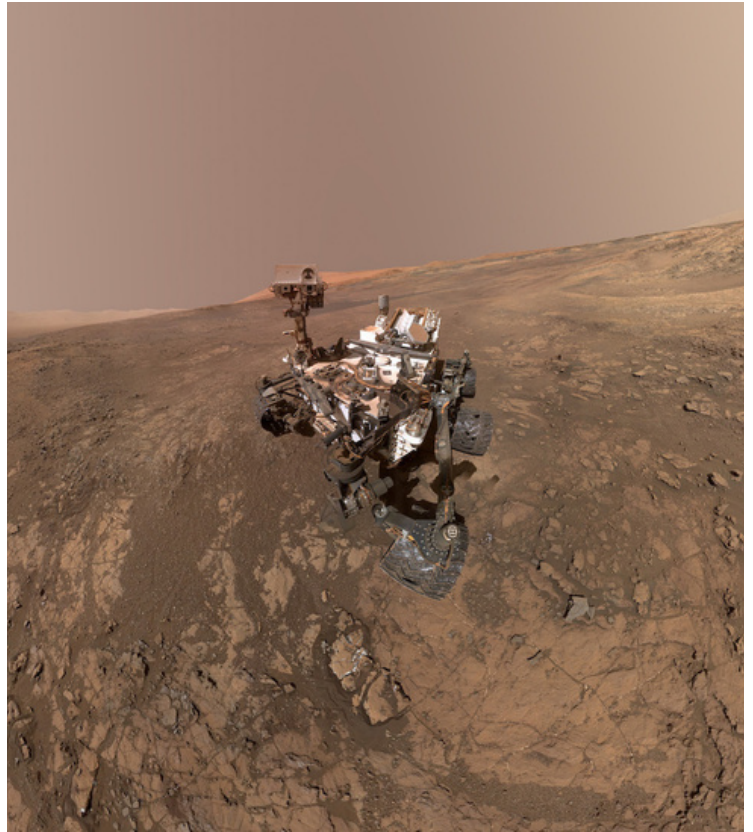
Since the dawn of time, man has always looked up to the sky, either for commodity, curiosity or even with the desire to reach for the stars. Now, more than ever, space exploration and life on other planets seem to be getting closer to our reality and further from science fiction thanks to the constant advances we have made in the past century. Ever since man landed on the Moon in 1969, our target slowly shifted from our satellite towards a farther planet, a planet that is relatively similar to our own: Mars.



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Mars is the fourth planet in the solar system and appears to be an immense and cold red desert. It is colder than the Earth due to its increased distance from the Sun and its red colour derives from the abundance of iron on the planet's surface. Mars is smaller than Earth in diameter and 90% smaller in mass, making the gravitational pull 65% less. Mars possesses a thin atmosphere, caused by the smaller gravitational pull compared to the Earth's, that, at the moment, seems unfit for hosting life as we know it. But was it always like that? Recent studies have suggested that about 3.5 billion years ago, Mars and Earth might have been very similar, both containing all ingredients for carbon-based life, including water and carbon-containing organic compounds. Therefore Mars, at a time when its surface was still partially covered in water and its atmosphere was relatively warm, might have hosted a microbiological ecosystem of impressive size. The microbes that may have once existed below Mars' surface are called methanogens due to the waste product of their respiration being methane gas.



But these methanogens might have caused their demise, robbing the atmosphere of hydrogen, a greenhouse gas without which the Martian surface became a frozen wasteland. The absolute absence of life on Mars is still uncertain and the methanogens might still exist, dormant and encased in ice, roughly 30 feet below the deserted surface of the red planet.

By analyzing different models of Mars 3.5 billion years ago and assuming that the organisms populating the planet were similar to the ones on Earth at the time, the computational ecologist, Boris Sauterey and his team concluded that there is at least a 50% chance that the shallow subsurface of Mars was once habitable (this 50% chance does not, however, include cases in which the planet was completely frozen over). Nevertheless, determining that an environment is habitable is very different from declaring it inhabited: the right conditions do not always indicate a factual existence of life. The team also mapped the areas of the planet that are more likely to have been inhabited. These were the Hellas Planitia, the Isidis Planitia and Jezero Crater, which is currently being explored by the Perseverance rover, sent by NASA. The rover has been sampling rocks from the surface, which might indicate the presence in the past of water and microorganisms.

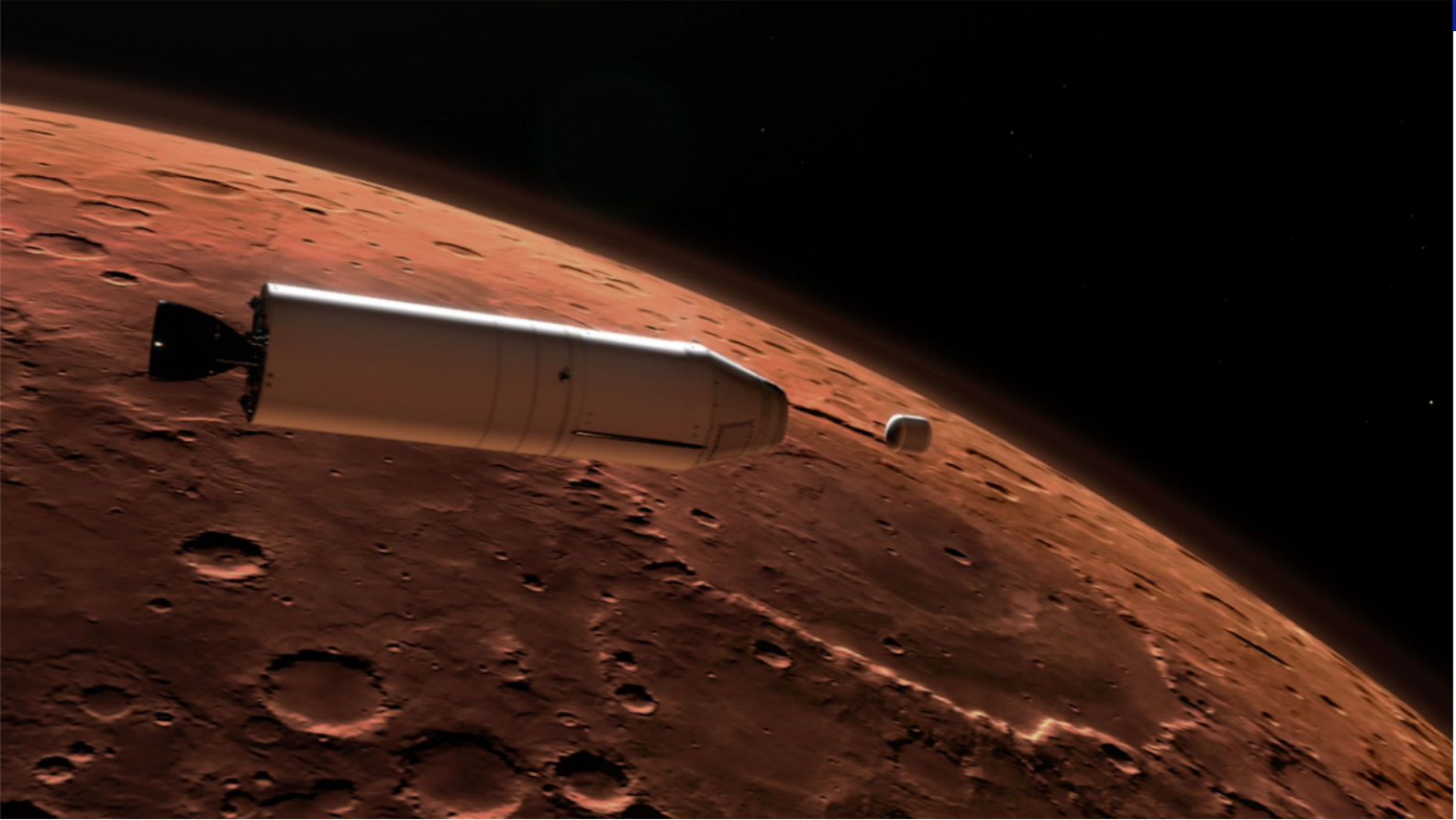


When envisioning life on Mars, it would be foolish to ignore the possible future of humanity on the red planet. In fact, amongst the planets of the solar system, Mars is the most potentially habitable, seeing as it is the only one that possesses all the raw materials needed to support life. Mars is rich in carbon, hydrogen and oxygen in the form of compounds.

The BBC writer Richard Hollingham defines five steps to the colonization of Mars: getting there, becoming self-sufficient, forming a government, expanding, and having children and establishing a culture. Advancements on the actual missions are mainly being made by private companies such as Elon Musk's SpaceX. However, the actual trip to Mars won't only be expensive, but will also take nine months and will be extremely dangerous. Self-sufficiency instead poses a bigger problem.

It concerns the creation of breathable air and an atmosphere, the search for water, the production of food on the planet's surface, reviving the planet's magnetic field and finding a stable source of energy to fuel the colonies. Oxygen may be created through electrolysis but creating and warming up a proper breathable atmosphere seems impossible with current technology even if Elon Musk suggested that it could be done by detonating nuclear bombs at the planet's poles. This strategy might warm up the atmosphere and free water from its frozen underground tomb but the effects can only be temporary. The energy needed to sustain possible human colonies on Mars can be generated using solar panels or even wind turbines that can be powered by the strong winds present on the surface. However, wind and solar power alone cannot sustain entire colonies. Fortunately, Mars is five times richer than Earth in deuterium, a stable isotope of hydrogen used in nuclear fusion, which, with the proper advancements, can fuel entire colonies without producing dangerous waste.





The final three steps of colonization, although seemingly the easiest, might actually be the biggest challenge. While the previous steps had logistics and technical obstacles to overcome, these last three steps concern the human ability to survive and organize. Human behavior, unlike most scientific phenomena, is largely unpredictable and it's uncertain how humanity might react to such an unusual environment.

Space exploration has always been a challenge that humanity is determined to conquer. Technological advancement has only developed up to a certain point. To truly achieve humanity's desire for life among the stars, there is still a need for technological advancement and, most importantly, society has to progress on the road of peace and harmony to extend it to other planets.



THE WILLOW PROJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE AND PROTEST

Giulio Maria Galli, Italy

The Willow Project consists of a complex of oil sand mines to be dug in Canada and Alaska, which has been met with significant backlash from environmentalists and Indigenous communities. The project, owned by Teck Resources, is set to be one of the largest open-pit oil sand mines in the world, with an estimated 260,000 barrels of oil produced per day.

The Project was first proposed in 2013, and in 2018. Teck Resources submitted its application to the Canadian and American governments for approval. In March 2023, the project was approved. The proposed mine will cover an area of over 24,000 hectares and require the removal of over 147 million cubic meters of material.

Environmentalists have raised concerns about the potential impact of the Willow Project on the planet, such as the destruction of critical wetlands and the release of greenhouse gases from oil sand mining. The oil sand mining process is known to be one of the most carbon-intensive methods of oil extraction, releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. In addition to the carbon emissions, the mining process also involves the release of toxic chemicals into the surrounding environment, which can have a significant impact on local ecosystems and wildlife. The mine will require the destruction of a wetland ecosystem, which is one of the most valuable ecosystems on earth and serves as a habitat for numerous bird species, including the endangered “Whooping Crane.”



Protests against the Willow Project have been organized by Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and concerned citizens around the world. These protests have taken the form of rallies, marches, and online posts and petitions, with many calling for the Canadian and American governments to withdraw approval for Teck Resources' project. Indigenous communities have been particularly explicit in their opposition to the Willow Project, citing the impact the mine will have on their traditional territories and the violation of their treaty rights. Some communities located downstream from proposed oil sand mine sites have expressed concerns about the potential impact of the mine on their traditional hunting and fishing practices.



In conclusion, the Willow Project is a controversial plan that has received numerous backlash. While the project promises to create jobs and boost the economy, the impact it will have on the planet and local communities cannot be ignored. It is essential for governments to carefully consider the environmental and social impact of the Willow Project before proceeding with the construction of the oil sand mines, which could have long-lasting negative effects on the region.

GEOPOLITICS



THE RISE OF RIGHT WING PARTIES IN EUROPE

Federico Leone, Italy

In October 2022, a right-wing government was elected in Italy and Giorgia Meloni became Italy's prime minister. Although Italy is not the only European country starting to lean to the right, many critics emerged.

One of the significant reasons for this rise of the right wing is the crisis triggered in 2008, which resulted in strengthening the idea of stronger national authority. In France, for example, Marine Le Pen's party has grown exponentially in recent years, although it lost the last presidential election. Similarly, in Sweden, the right-wing Sweden Democrats doubled their support during the last election especially among young generations. In Spain, the right-wing party Vox has gained support and is closely related to the Italian party Fratelli d'Italia, led by Giorgia Meloni. Large migratory flows across borders have produced frustration among a portion of the population and led them to be dissatisfied with the line their current governments were following. Right-wing parties have been gaining power since the start of the twentieth century and after 23 years, the results are prominent, as we can see the influence these parties have today. Another reason for the rise of these parties is the impacts of exaggerated neoliberal policies promoted by the European Union, which, over time, became one of the workhorses (together with immigration) of the right populists.

The future of Europe may depend on the results of the future elections in Spain and France, which could significantly change the EU's positions on a national and international level.



THE REASON BEHIND THE WORLDWIDE CIVIL UNREST

Sarah Gómez J., Colombia

As time has passed, civilian dissatisfaction has increased across international borders, with countries like Ukraine, Peru, France, and China being some of the most recent subjects to the repercussions of this increasing unrest. After the pandemic, particularly during 2022 and the first months of 2023, economic inflation, greater polarization, growing social inequality, and more concerns and awareness about the impacts of humanity on the world have led to the rising number and intensity of strikes, riots, and protests.

On February 24th, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine to recreate the Soviet Union's former glory. This conflict could be considered the most significant war in Europe since World War II and has had major international repercussions, including economic, social, and political destabilization. A post-pandemic world could not recover, for the actions of an extremist world leader had left the economy in shambles, taking two of the key exporters of several resources like grains, oil, gas, diesel, and fertilizers out of the market. Therefore, prices soared as these items became more scarce, and inflation became a reality. This ongoing conflict forced countries to take sides and take on an 'everyone for themselves' mindset, leading to escalating tensions and diplomatic shifts.

The Russian invasion provoked a human rights crisis, leaving more than 8 million refugees displaced and fleeing to neighboring European countries. Protests against Vladimir Putin have surfaced throughout the globe, pleading for the end of the war. As Human Rights Watch comments, "The world's mobilization around Russia's war in Ukraine reminds us of the extraordinary potential when governments realize their human rights obligations on a global scale."

As 2022 ended, Peru went into a political crisis, which stemmed from former President Pedro Castillo's attempt at dissolving congress and establishing an emergency government. During the weekend following his impeachment, protestors brought havoc to the Peruvian streets. Vice-president Dina Boularte was named leader of the country until 2026. During this turmoil, several of Castillo's supporters died during the confrontations with the national police. They were dissatisfied: they wanted new elections and for Castillo to be released.

These marches were the most severe violence the country has faced in decades. As Boularte said: "That's not a peaceful protest march; the acts of violence generated throughout these days of December and now in January will not go unpunished."

In January, French President Emmanuel Macron presented his plan to increase the legal retirement age from 62 to 64 and make workers contribute for 43 years to France's shared pension fund before earning a full pension. Nevertheless, Macron shunned parliament and summoned the extraordinary power during a Cabinet meeting at the Elysee Presidential Palace just before the scheduled vote in France's lower house of Parliament, triggering motions of no-confidence in his government and stirring anger in France. Civilians took to the streets of several cities and towns, marching against the President's actions. Arguably, the most remarkable strike so far has been led by garbage collectors in Paris, where piles of garbage have amassed, bringing the notorious Parisian animal inhabitants out of their hiding spots: thousands of rats. Transportation has been delayed, tourists, although welcomed, are reaching a chaotic France, and violence has noticeably escalated as time passes.

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Union leaders called on President Macron to halt the controversial pension reform as clashes between police and protesters arise. Macron's excuses for implementing this change are that the rising life expectancies have left the country's pension program in an increasingly precarious state and to keep the system financially viable without adding more taxpayer money, which the government already does. Regardless, these excuses have been received as an exaggeration of the threats of bankruptcy and that there may be other ways to manage the long-term effects. Macron's reputation and popularity among French people have not aided in their acceptance of his plan.



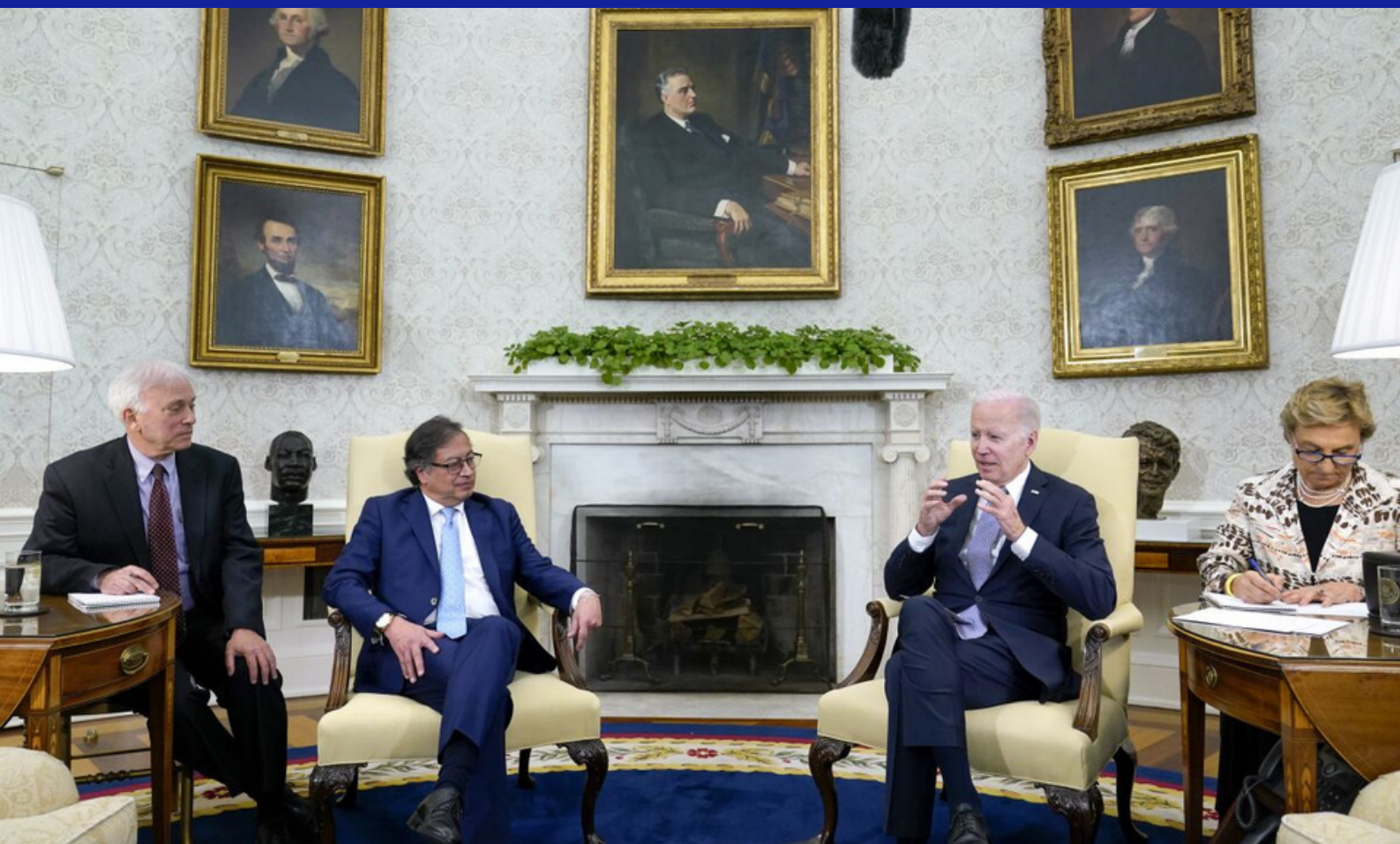
Temporal changes and the failure to remove these changes after the crisis, without much civilian consent, is common amongst protest-ridden nations. To give a notable example, even when the COVID-19 pandemic was over, China continued to enforce a zero-tolerance policy on the illness. It was one of the strictest, lengthiest policies in the world, in which citizens were required to undergo testing and be in prolonged quarantines and city lockdowns for almost three years. Economic troubles, food shortages, medicine, and other necessities were lacking because of the restrictions. There were increasingly violent acts of the local police towards individuals, mainly workers, who broke the regulations. Concern about President Xi Jinping's growing power increased, and outrage towards the outright infringement of human rights.



At the end of 2022, citizens decided to peacefully protest against the harsh and draconian conditions of the policy. Economic troubles, food shortages, medicine, and other necessities were lacking because of the restrictions. There were increasingly violent acts of the local police towards individuals, mainly workers, who broke the regulations. Concern about President Xi Jinping's growing power increased, as did outrage towards the outright infringement of human rights. At the end of 2022, citizens decided to peacefully protest against the harsh and draconian conditions of the policy.

Nevertheless, the demands expanded to taking away the power of those who had enforced the policy and created such a rupture. The national forces answered brutally: they took protestors, journalists, and others aiding the cause and locked them up. Several human rights groups stood up against such behavior. Less than two weeks later, the Chinese government suddenly dropped its zero-COVID policy, claiming their victory against the virus. However, COVID has run unhindered in the ensuing months. Despite no longer having the policy, citizens are displeased with those who are supposed to lead them. They now have to deal with the consequences of the policy.





U.S. AND COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS MEET IN WASHINGTON

Natalia Torres, Colombia

At the end of the first day of the agenda in Washington, the Minister of Foreign Affairs assured that Colombia is "consolidating the traditionally strong relations with the United States, within a new context: the war that exists in the world, the issues that have arisen, regarding the appearance of President Petro with his leadership," he indicated that the first day of the High-Level Dialogue between the two countries is progressing positively while explaining that he has also held bilateral meetings of the most significant importance.

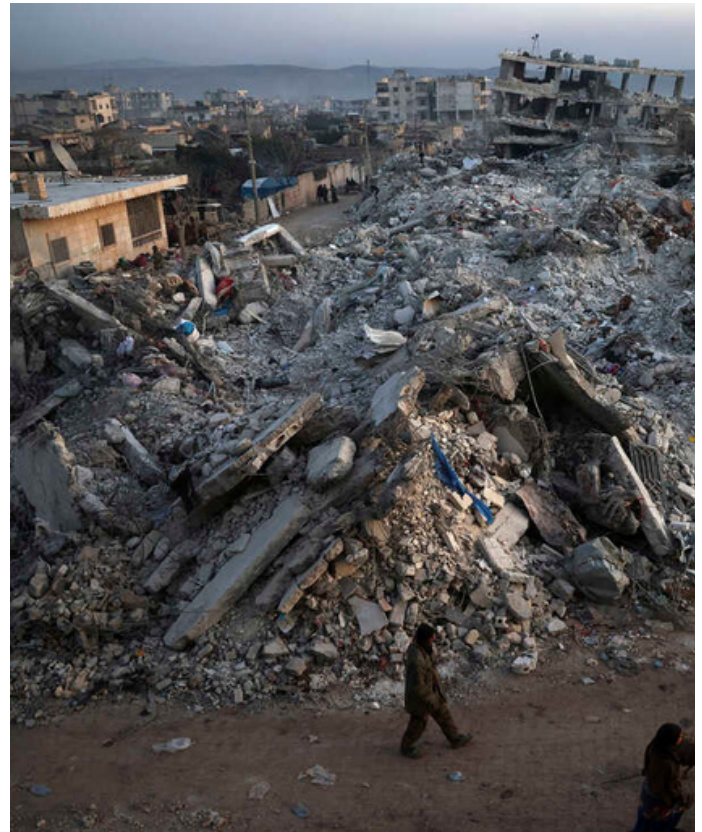
The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Álvaro Leyva, said that the main objective is to maintain the bipartisan Dialogue in the United States and that it should benefit the aspirations of the Colombian people, which have to do with total Peace, migration, and the fight against drug trafficking. He highlighted President Petro's leadership in convening regional forums on migration with the participation of Venezuela and many western countries.

Leyva explained that in this regard, there was already a meeting in Mexico where the social aspect was addressed. With regard to the political Dialogue, he indicated that the United States fully supports President Petro's Total Peace policy. "I was highly satisfied and especially after speaking with Secretary Blinken. It is absolutely clear what the mission of the United States is regarding the aspirations of the Colombian people", he pointed out. Foreign Minister Leyva Durán ended his first day's agenda with a meeting with the U.S. government and private sector representatives on sustainable governance. He also met with the Chairman of Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives, Michael McCaul. Speaking of the meeting, Leyva assured that Colombia has a strong interest in maintaining a close dialogue with the two parties of that country to address critical issues such as Total Peace, migration, and the need for a change in the policy to fight the global drug problem.

DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE STRIKES TURKEY AND SYRIA

Hannah Taylor, U.S.

In the hours and days since the earthquake hit, more survivors have been pulled from beneath rubble and destruction. For example, 52 hours after the tragedy, an 8-year-old boy named Yigit was retrieved from the wreckage of a fallen building in Turkey. And Aleyna, a 17-year-old, was also saved after 248 hours, or over ten days. Every survivor pulled out sparks an eruption of joy in the Turkish and Syrian communities. However, rescue efforts have been heavily hindered by the two countries' brutal winter conditions. The UN has sent over 120 trucks full of supplies and aid to the countries, but emergency relief personnel and resources are still stretched thin.



Homes for thousands of people have been destroyed, while hospitals, highways, and bridges have all suffered significant damage. The effects of the earthquakes were so severe that tremors were felt in Cyprus, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan. So many people have lost their lives, livelihood, and loved ones, and sadly the death toll and destruction only seem destined to rise. The proceeds from Marymount's Denim Day on Friday, February 24 were used to support the people of Turkey and Syria; and, if you want to donate further or send aid, there are several nonprofits and donation sites where you can help: the Center for Disaster Philanthropy's website offers a helpful guide.



On February 6, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 decimated parts of Turkey and Syria. The epicenter of the devastating natural disaster was located in the Gaziantep Province, just outside the regional capital, close to the cities of Nurda and Gaziantep, and home to millions of Syrian refugees. The earthquake struck at a depth of 11 miles, and more than 1,600 aftershocks have occurred in the area since. Over 43,885 people have been killed, 87,000 people have been injured, and 47,000 buildings and structures have been destroyed across the region. Before the earthquake, there were already more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, and the decimation caused by this natural disaster only increased this number. Syria's most impacted city also happened to be Aleppo, which had previously been devastated by civil war and had more than 4 million residents who needed humanitarian relief.



CHINESE SURVEILLANCE SATELLITE SHOT DOWN

Celine Bell, U.S.

On February 4, the American military shot down a Chinese surveillance balloon off the coast of South Carolina. The balloon was roughly 200 feet in diameter and could carry the weight of about 60 cars. It had flown over the Aleutian Islands, Canada, and Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. Chinese officials acknowledged that the balloon was theirs but dismissed the accusation that it was intended for spying or creating traffic in U.S. airspace, claiming instead that it was a regular weather balloon. Shortly after, three more unidentified flying objects, which the military found to be harmless, were shot down over Alaska, Canada, and Lake Huron.

After the sighting of the first balloon, the Pentagon said that it did not pose a military or physical threat to American citizens. Chinese officials note that it was an airship used for meteorological purposes and say they regret its unintended entry into U.S. airspace, noting that it had been an accident caused by unforeseen circumstances. U.S. officials have cast doubt on this and believe it to be an impermissible violation of international law and sovereignty. Senator Jon Tester of Montana plans on holding a hearing on the balloon to analyze China's intentions and its ability to violate U.S. airspace.



President Biden has announced that he does not believe the three additional objects were connected to the balloon but rather that they stemmed from private companies or research institutions. Still, the president ordered the shooting down of the balloons, as they were interfering with commercial air traffic and posed a surveillance risk over military bases. Following the destruction of the aerial objects, the U.S. has placed new sanctions on Chinese military and technology, which caused Beijing to levy sanctions against U.S. defense contractors in retaliation. Despite the sanctions, President Biden wishes to defuse tensions with China and hopes to maintain open communication between diplomats and military professionals. He also expects to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping to understand what happened, mentioning that “the last thing Xi wants is to fundamentally rip the relationship with the United States that has been made, in terms of access.”





IRAN: WOMAN, LIFE AND FREEDOM

Mia Tagore, U.S.

To our readers: please note that the following article and interview contain graphic references to topics including sexual assault, torture, and extreme violence. These are traumatic events. We urge that you take a moment before reading it, use caution in doing so, and join us in working to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity. To students: if you find that you have difficulty managing your emotions after reading this piece, please reach out to a member of our health and wellness team for support (Ms. Cutts; Dr. Cosgrove; Ms. Barbalaco; Ms. Carey).

I sat down with a woman based in Tehran on the sixty-third day of the protests that have rocked Iran. It all began when Masha Amini was arrested and later brutally murdered by police on September 16. She was killed for not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, properly. Since her death, multitudes of people, especially women and girls, have taken to the streets to speak out against the Iranian government. They are taking off their hijabs and cutting their hair. They have been chanting “woman, life, freedom,” and “death to the dictator,” while authorities have been using physical force to suppress them.

After a month of protests, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a United Nations entity, reported that 23 children were killed and many injured by shootings and beatings administered by the government.

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Original interview transcript



In mid-October, Iran's Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) estimated that 222 people had been killed. By the time I spoke with my source on November 19, the OHCHR stated that more than 300 people had been killed, including more than 40 children, most being teenagers.

Here is what my source, who asked to remain anonymous and asked me not to use any identifying information for her safety, had to say about what she is witnessing on the streets of Iran.

Q: How many people have been killed?

A: "I read until today, 55 kids under the age of 15 have been killed. But you should double, triple, or quadruple these numbers because people don't dare to give the true number. Because we have to give the victim's name, family name, and how they were killed, to the UN and human rights [the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights]. Unfortunately, the government threatens families. When they lose their child, the intelligence service comes and takes the parents to jail.

Or every day they come to their home and tell them: 'if you talk with anybody, if you say your son has been killed, we're going to take your other kid to jail. We're going to kill your other kids.' So not everybody would go through these troubles. Imagine you have already lost one of your children, you don't want to lose the others.

So you might stay silent. But there are other people who say, 'I have lost everything I had in life,' and they find the courage. They say, 'We're gonna talk because we have nothing more to lose, we're not afraid of dying.' "

Q: What do women in Iran want?

A: "They want their freedom. It's not the scarf, although it's my absolute right to wear what I want. The government now is saying, 'Okay, we're going to make a correction. People don't have to wear scarves.' That doesn't solve my problem. That doesn't solve any problems in Iran. These leaders are not humans, I call them monsters. They don't have any heart. They don't have any nationality. We don't have basic human rights."

“Imagine as a woman, you have half the rights of a man. The law doesn’t accept you, as a human having the same rights as a man. If I’m killed in an accident, if a car hits me in the street, usually the insurance companies should pay money. If it’s a woman, she is going to be paid \$1,000, but a man is going to be paid \$2,000. If I want to be a witness in court, two women are equal to one man. It takes two female witnesses to be accepted, but one man’s voice is enough.”

Q: What is happening to the people being arrested?

A: “You might have seen the videos of students your age protesting. They take a risk. There have been cameras in the schools. So the day after [a protest] the police go to school, recognize all the faces, and arrest all the students who have been protesting. This is bravery. What the kids are doing is astonishing. They’re not scared of anything. We are so proud of these girls and boys.”

“When you’re injured, or when you are shot by a bullet, you can’t go to the hospital. All the hospitals are protected by armed police.

If you take the injured to the hospital, doctors are not allowed to accept them. They’re directly sent to prison. There are some brave doctors who come in the middle of the night, two, three in the morning when the streets are not crowded. A poor guy who is injured has to bear this pain until the doctor comes. They don’t have anesthesia, so they put a towel in his mouth to prevent pain and take out the bullet. They have to search for blood. They have to go from one hospital to another. It’s such a tragedy.”

My source tells me a chilling story of a 14 -year-old female protester. “She was raped violently. She had 28 stitches. She was screaming all day. Two days after, the police took her to a madhouse because she was confessing what happened to her. She was in shock. The saddest thing is after five days, we heard she was killed in the madhouse. You see what these monsters do. Her mom said, ‘I want to be her voice.’”





“People send their children to school. If I had a kid, I would have said, ‘Don’t go to school this year. You won’t lose anything. But you’re going to be alive. You’re going to stay alive.’ ”

Q: Why aren’t world leaders talking more about this crisis?

A: “They need the oil and gas of my country. They don’t care about my people. There is a war in Ukraine. The whole world is in an economic crisis, and it’s winter. There is a problem to get gas from Ukraine. In Iran, we have all of these natural resources. The smell of oil doesn’t let the leaders of the world, not the people of the world, see and help the people. They don’t care about this.”

Q: What can we do to help?

A: “The only thing is for you to be our voices in your gatherings. Use the hashtag #womanlifefreedom on Instagram, WhatsApp, or other social networks every day. Check the hashtag to be updated with the people’s posts. Be their voice because most of the day in Iran, we don’t have the internet. As soon as the demonstrations start, the government cuts off the internet. Whatever you hear on BBC, CNN, it’s from people. So everyday people—me, my friends, my mother, everybody—have become journalists. We are risking our lives. But that’s the least we can do.”

Q: Why do you have to remain anonymous?

A: “See how violent this regime is? Right now they cannot spy on my words or my phone. But if I was in Iran, I wouldn’t have dared to talk about this. But I’m scared and I’m begging people. Please don’t mention my name.”

Q: What can we learn?

A: “We want the world to say, these are the brave people of Iran, demonstrating in the streets with empty hands in front of bullets. No matter which nation you are from, no matter what language you speak, you are human and if you see the pain and if we win, that’s a victory for every woman around the world. It proves if you stand up, if you have unity together, you can reach whatever goal you want. If you’re a human being, you’re going to protect others.”



CULTURE AND EDUCATION



HOW DO ONLINE UNIVERSITIES COMPARE TO IN-PERSON UNIVERSITIES ?

Michele Cirino, Italy

In 1989, the first online university, the University of Phoenix, was founded. From there, many more colleges began to offer online courses which allow students to learn from their homes and obtain both bachelor's and master's degrees, with some being fully online. Although it is surely more comfortable to learn in this way, is it as effective as traditional universities? In this article, we will look at some positive and negative aspects of online learning and how it will affect the future.

One of the advantages of online education is definitely that it is more flexible. In fact, not having to go to a campus to learn can be really beneficial for some people, especially for those who already have a full or part-time job or a family. Not only do online universities allow you to learn at your own pace, they might also be less stressful for those who can manage their own schedule and complete the coursework on time. In addition, online programs are often less expensive than in-person ones, with online tuition costing an average of \$55,000 less in the United States for the entire degree, according to Education Data.

SOURCES:

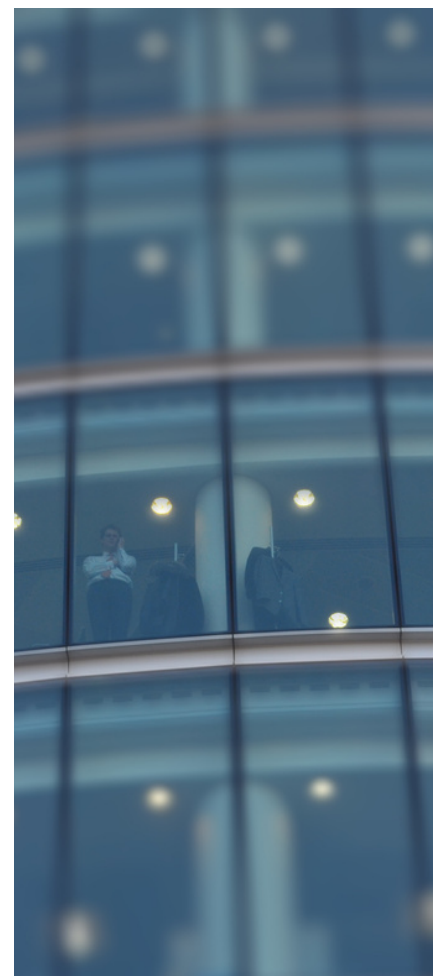
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In Italy, you can save up to 800 Euros per month by attending an online course, with similar numbers for other European nations. Another advantage of distance learning is that it offers the chance to connect with people from all over the world, which may lead to professional opportunities that students who attend a traditional university may not be exposed to. However, it may also be more difficult to create ties with other students as there are fewer occasions to meet them.

This cannot be said for traditional universities, where students attend lectures in halls with many other people. As this is a dedicated learning environment, without many distractions, it may be easier for some people to focus on their studies. Furthermore, traditional universities allow students to participate in laboratories and other hands-on activities, which may be especially useful for scientific degrees such as medicine, biology, chemistry, physics, and many others. In fact, according to a study conducted by Chapman et al., medical students who were able to complete fewer hours of hospital clerkships due to the COVID-19 pandemic were found to be unprepared to effectively perform surgery, causing great concern within the medical community. Although these students had been assigned what was considered to be an online equivalent of their practice of medicine, this proved to be ineffective.



All points considered, both online and traditional universities have their advantages and disadvantages. Although choosing to attend one or the other depends on personal preferences, some fields of study, as shown by research, are better suited to traditional schooling, while others can be effectively learned online. Even though online universities are gaining a foothold, it remains to be seen whether they will fully replace traditional schooling or if, in the future, there will be a greater implementation of technology in in-person universities too. Before deciding which type of learning journey to undertake, it is essential to consider the plethora of different fields in which each one has primacy and to determine which degree we wish to pursue.

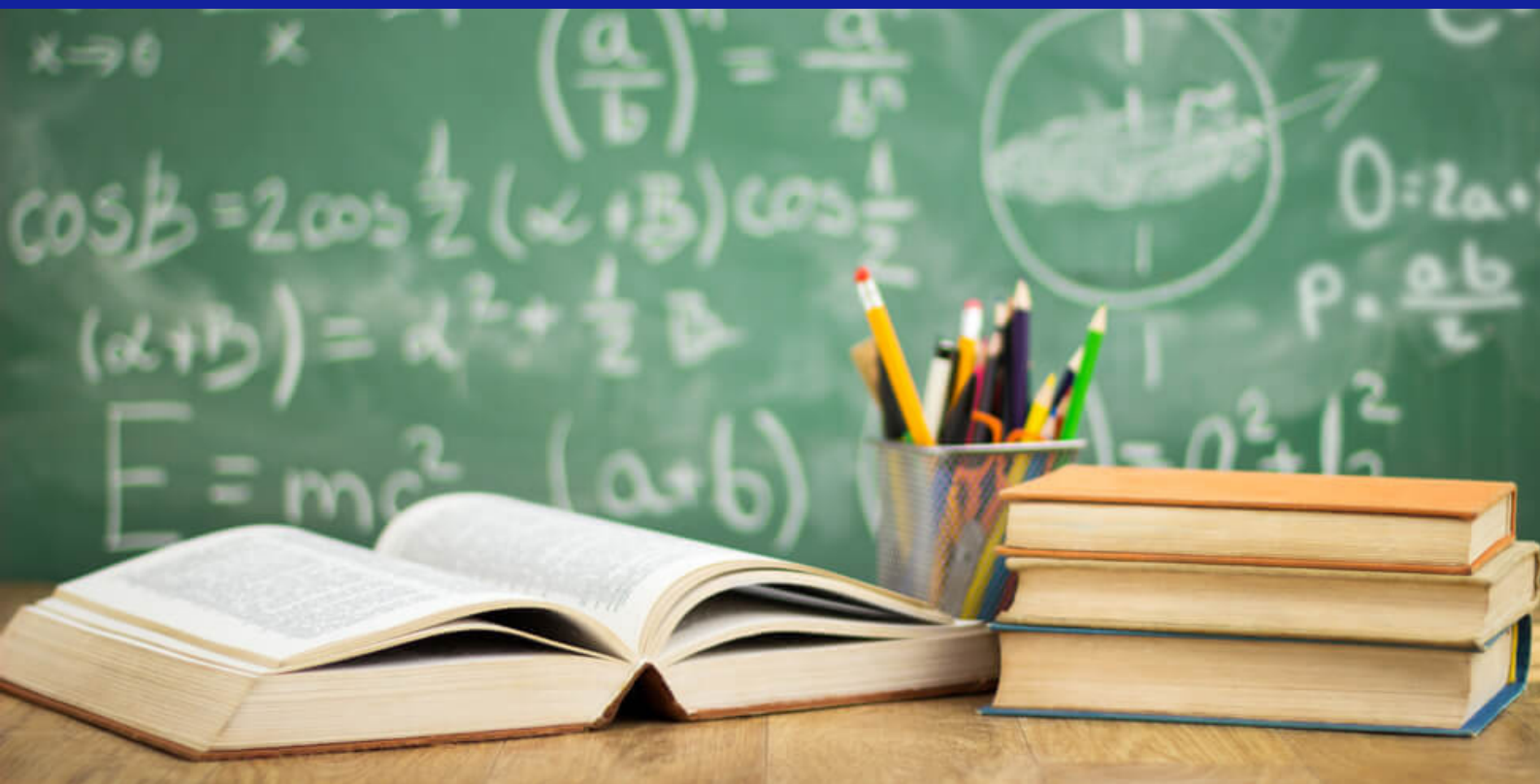
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IS EDUCATION A RIGHT OR A DUTY?

Giulia Milanesi, Italy

Before questioning whether education is a right or a duty, it is important to acknowledge that education is first and foremost an interest, both private and public. It is a fact that education is a prerequisite for improving personal and collective material conditions of life.

Moreover, education is a precondition to exercise the right of freedom. The abilities to judge, criticize, analyze, and make choices are determined by the knowledge acquired through proper education. However, we cannot ignore the fact that if someone wants to subjugate or control a society or an individual they will probably, as a first move, manipulate the education system. Therefore, if we value the principles of development and freedom, education must be recognized as the primary interest.

The school system has a superior educational function that goes beyond simple education, as it shapes citizens who respect each other's needs and common rules of coexistence. In our society, education is a crucial factor for individual growth, and those who only have low levels of education are excluded from opportunities for improvement. This exclusion ultimately leads to a material and social impoverishment of large sections of the population as we can see in job search processes where increasingly high qualifications are required. Education is also essential to make better collective choices, even if they are not always adopted, because the primary criterion for decision-making processes is consensus.

It's crucial to reflect on the relationship between the individual and the community: does education become a right for the individual and a duty for the community? Or is education a duty for the individual in their virtuous relationship with the community? In this relationship, both subjects should actively place an interest, and if one of the two subjects slows down, it will affect both. Although the community must organize an education system, the individual must also organize themselves to ensure that their education is always improving.

In Italy, the school process in several determined areas is at risk, and this is a worrying issue. The reasons for this vary from: economic and cultural capital of the family of origin, types and characteristics of school structures, preparation of teachers, background (in migratory cases), to individual aspects such as: predisposition to study, attitudes, and habits assimilated by the social or family context.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the school sector in a pivotal way, with face-to-face teaching being interrupted and distance learning systems being activated. While the methodology of distance learning has helped many students overcome the difficult period, a significant portion of them did not have access to the necessary individual IT tools to follow lessons.



Fighting against early school leaving requires both public and private action to simultaneously address all the situations mentioned above, with a significant material investment in human and IT resources and long-term programming. In particular, information technology can be helpful, provided that there is a firm commitment to the individual dissemination of technologies and the organization of telematic infrastructures.

Today, education and training are within everyone's reach, with, for example, the proliferation of video tutorials. In conclusion, a lack of education is a regressive factor both for individuals and for society as a whole. Therefore, it is the community's responsibility to remove economic and social barriers that prevent the development of education and to make it an inalienable right of every member of society.

THE “TEENAGE DREAM”

Juliana Torres, Colombia

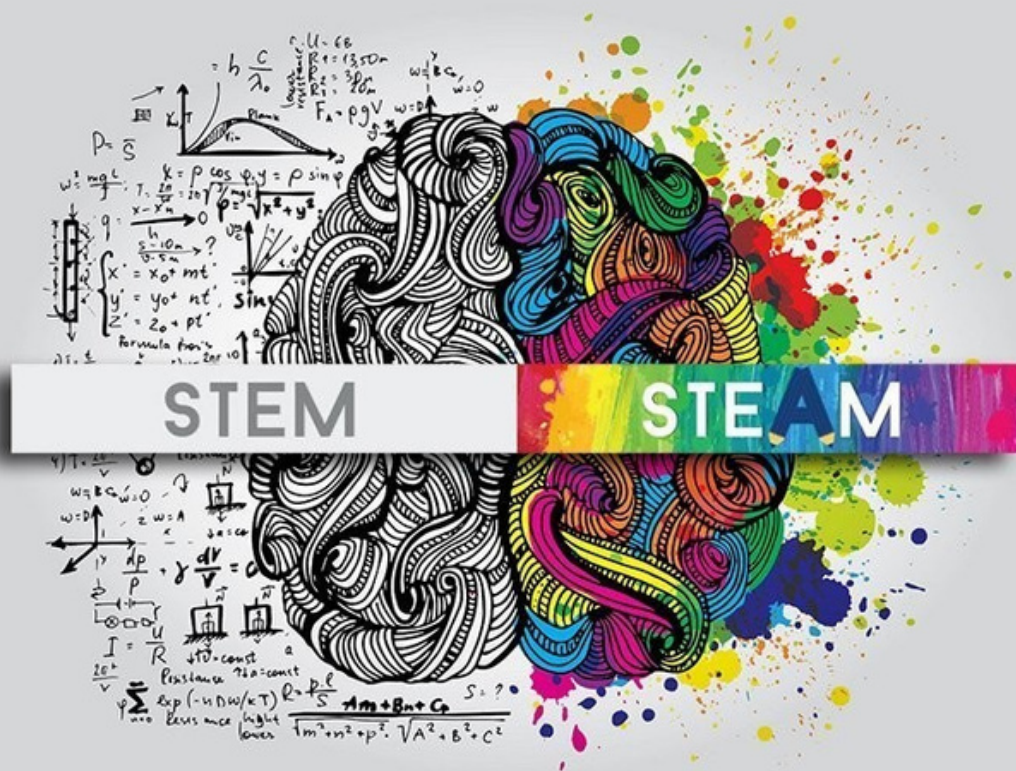
In my opinion watching movies like “High School Musical,” “Mean Girls,” and numerous others was the root of most kids’ unrealistic expectations for their teenage years. In these movies, we were taught that you had to be socially relevant to live the best years of your life. However, to be seen as popular, one had to fit into certain characteristics: be pretty, party, and be part of sports teams or the cheerleading squad. Little girls compared themselves to characters like Gabriella Montez or Cady Heron, who started as the new “freaks” that entered the school and came out as the most popular girls after coming out of their shells or transformed into another person. Similarly, boys dreamt of being Troy Bolton, getting all the girls, being the basketball team captain, and having the time of their lives. As a result of all of these high standards society has imposed since the 70’s, “the teenage dream” was created.



According to Urban Dictionary, the teenage dream is “living your best life while being a teenager. Like running away, having a great group of friends, running around at night, and so much more!” However, this idealized and stereotypical mindset that adolescents should follow to live up to standards, is harmful. This is because people romanticize these years of life as if the only aspects of it were drinking, partying, drama, and going out. Consequently, teens may feel pressured to live this life or view themselves as a “nightmare” simply because they do not fit the description provided.

Another take on unrealistic standards is when we are told: to excel at school, plan for the future, be involved in every type of extracurricular activity possible, and think for ourselves because things won’t get any better. According to these adages, in our teens we have to be successful to thrive in the future. Nonetheless, this expectation makes teenagers more anxious to strive for perfection academically and socially. If they don’t reach their goals and go out every Friday night, it will affect their mental health and instantly demean themselves as “not good enough.”

In reality, this standard is just an old myth, and represents some unreachable expectations for life that exist only on movie screens. While in truth, everybody’s teenage experience is different; some might be Regina George, others Janais Ian, and one might be the one that “doesn’t even go here.” Hence, we should not rush into living a whole life in the short span of a few years, when we have an entire lifetime ahead of us.

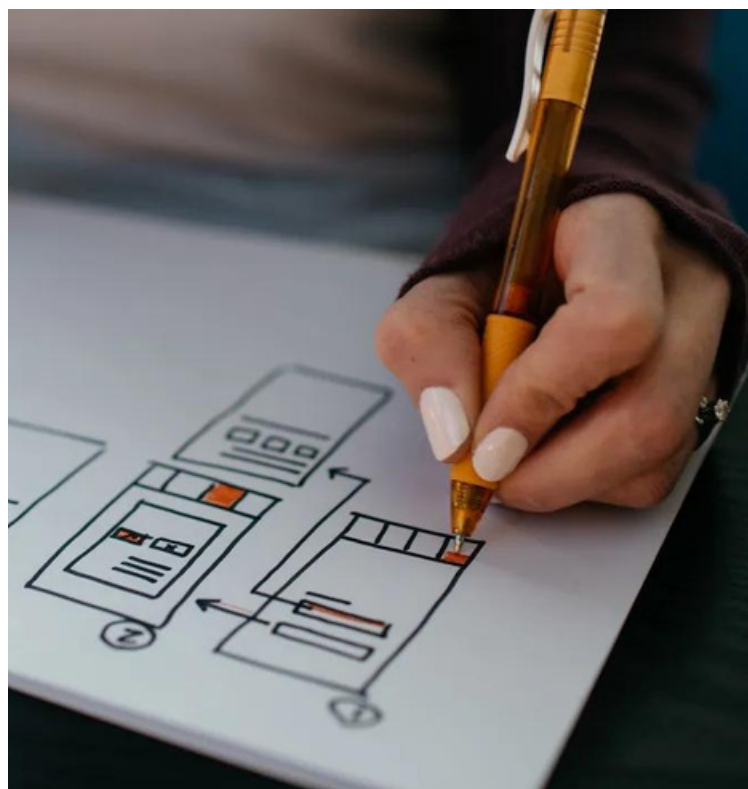


STEM VS STEAM

Naria Azizi, Italy

STEM and STEAM are two different approaches to education that are widely debated in today's world. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, while STEAM refers to science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. While both approaches emphasize the importance of education in areas related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, they differ in their inclusion of the arts.

STEM education has traditionally been the dominant approach to education in the world. It is focused on the technical skills necessary for success in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM education is often seen as the key to economic growth and a way to ensure that countries, such as the United States, remain competitive in the global economy.



The STEAM approach expands upon the STEM approach by adding arts education. This approach recognizes that creativity and innovation are essential to success in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math. By incorporating artistic skills and knowledge, students are encouraged to think creatively and solve problems in new and innovative ways.

Proponents of STEAM argue that by including arts education, students are better able to see connections between the different fields of study and apply that knowledge in creative ways. STEAM education could help in creating well-rounded individuals who can think critically and solve complex problems in a variety of fields. It also provides a more profound education that can help students develop social and emotional skills.

On the other hand, critics of STEAM argue that adding arts education takes away from the focus on technology and the practical skills needed to succeed in those fields. They argue that STEM education is focused on the skills that are most in demand in the workforce and that adding arts education will not have a significant impact on the job market.

Overall, both approaches have their merits, and it is up to educators to decide which approach works best for their students. STEM education is focused on technical skills and practical knowledge, while STEAM education emphasizes the importance of creativity and innovation. However, both approaches share the same goal of preparing students for success in the domain of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

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TIME

Elisa Sorrentini, Italy

Time runs quicker than a hare,
It devours every second of beauty like a hungry bear.

What is time?

It's somewhere in which light does not shine,
It's something in which you are enveloped and confined,

It can heal deep wounds one day, just to create new ones the next.

Time can make you ecstatic,
Time is enigmatic.

It is a drink that before you can think, vanishes in a blink.

Its effect can leave you looking perplexed,
How it works, how badly it can hurt.

Time shatters to pieces relationships that take years to be born,
And the lack of it doesn't allow bonds to ever form.

It might never fully heal your scars,
The odds will not always be in your favor.

But don't tear yourself apart,
Have you ever seen a sailor stop believing in the stars?



LITERACY: MORE CRUCIAL NOW THAN EVER BEFORE?

Sofia Muñiz, Colombia

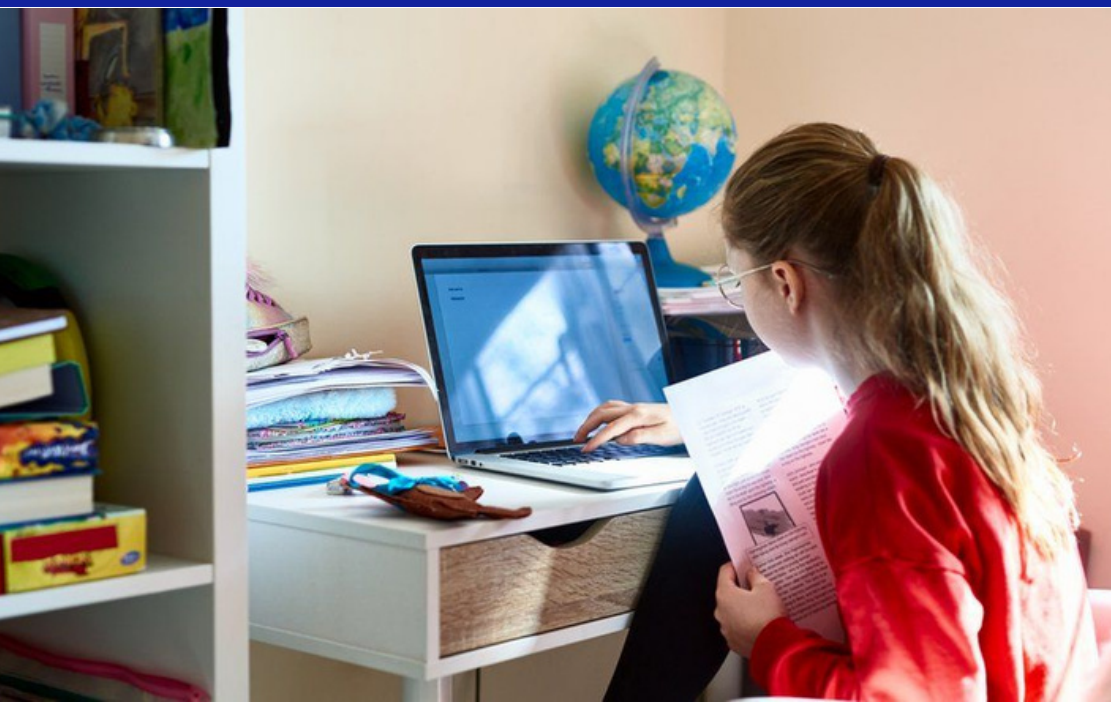
Literacy, the ability to read and write, has always been a crucial skill for individuals and societies. However, the importance of literacy has evolved, and it is now more critical than ever.

In the past, information was less readily available than it is today. People needed more access to books, newspapers, and other sources of information. However, with the advent of the internet, social media, and smartphones, information is now available at our fingertips. While this has undoubtedly made information more accessible, it has also made it more challenging to discern fact from fiction. In this context, literacy is essential for evaluating sources and making informed decisions critically.

Moreover, the job market has changed significantly, and literacy has become a prerequisite for most jobs. Some did not require literacy in the past, but with the shift towards a knowledge-based economy, literacy has become a fundamental skill for most jobs. Even in fields like agriculture or manufacturing, where manual labor was the norm, technological advancements have made it necessary to have basic literacy skills to operate machinery or read instructions.

In addition, literacy is not just about reading and writing; it is about communication and expression. The ability to articulate ideas clearly and effectively is essential for success in personal and professional life. With the rise of social media and online communication, literacy skills have become crucial to express oneself effectively and avoid miscommunication or misunderstandings.

In conclusion, literacy is essential for personal growth and development. Reading expands one's horizons, exposes one to diverse perspectives, and helps one develop empathy and emotional intelligence. Writing allows individuals to express themselves, process their thoughts, and explore their creativity. In a world where mental health is becoming a growing concern, literacy provides a means to cope with stress and promote well-being.



EXAMINING THE ETHICAL CONCERNS OF USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR SCHOOL WORK

Renata Santacruz, Colombia

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has become an increasingly important tool in many fields, including education. Using artificial intelligence technology, students can receive personalized instructions and feedback, while teachers can grade assignments more effectively and provide one-on-one support. However, the use of AI in learning raises significant ethical concerns.

One of the main ethical concerns for conceding the use of AI in school assignments is the potential for academic misconduct. With AI, students can quickly and easily complete essays, research, and other tasks that may not reflect their own thoughts and ideas. This undermines the education system's integrity because students who cheat with AI do not learn or develop the skills they need to succeed in the future, such as critical thinking and creativity (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022). Furthermore, adopting AI in schoolwork has negative effects on student motivation and engagement. If students rely too heavily on AI to complete assignments, they may not be as invested in their learning or engaged in developing their skills and knowledge. This can lead to a decrease in overall academic achievement and a lack of preparation for future challenges and opportunities (Chiu, Moorhouse, Chai & Islamov, 2022).

SOURCES:

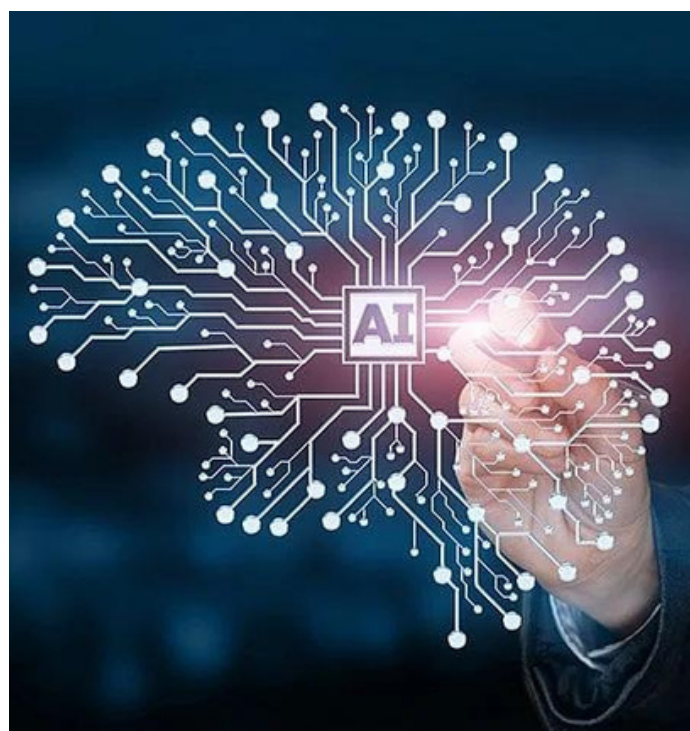
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In addition to these concerns, the recent findings on ChatGPT's filtering procedures must also be considered. OpenAI, the creator of artificial intelligence text generation service ChatGPT, which has impressed the world with its magnificent abilities, has been accused of engaging in unethical practices aimed at making its AI safer. Before this "update", the website was prone to leaking violent, sexist, and racist comments due to its inability to filter out harmful information. To solve this issue, ChatGPT administrators engaged in questionable actions. An investigation published by Time magazine found that they were exploiting Kenyan workers whom they paid less than \$2 an hour to skim through thousands of pages of hateful content to help with reprogramming. Starting in November 2021, the company sent tens of thousands of pieces of text to an outsourcing company in Kenya. Much of this text appears to have been pulled from the darkest places of the Internet, of which most depict terrible situations with graphic details. An employee, reading and labeling text for Open AI, told Time that he had repeated hallucinations after reading a particularly graphic piece of text. "You will read a number of statements like that all through the week. By the time it gets to Friday, you are disturbed from thinking through that picture" (Time, 2023).



So, what can be done to address the ethical concerns associated with AI in learning? One solution is to limit the use of AI during the development of certain types of assignments, such as essays or creative projects, where the goal is to develop critical thinking, writing, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, teachers can focus on providing personalized feedback and support to help students develop these skills on their own. Another solution is to ensure that AI systems used in education are transparent and only report ethically sourced and explainable information. Finally, it is important to promote a culture of academic integrity and honesty in schools. This means educating students about the importance of original work, giving clear instructions about citing sources, and imposing penalties for fraud or plagiarism. By fostering a culture of academic honesty, students are more likely to engage in their assignments meaningfully and develop the skills they need for future success.



NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Articles: Naria Azizi, Maria Marcon, Giulio Maria Galli, Federico Leone, Sarah Gómez J., Natalia Torres, Hannah Taylor, Celine Bell, Mia Tagore, Michele Cirino, Giulia Milanesi, Juliana Torres, Elisa Sorrentini, Sofia Muñiz, Renata Santacruz

Graphic Design: Jacqueline Vallauri

Website: Sofia Baioni, Giulio Maria Galli

Social Media: Giulia Milanesi, Diletta Marcellini, Federico Leone, Laura Rinaldi

Editorial Board: Matteo del Franco (founder), Diletta Marcellini (executive secretary), Leonardo Boscoscuro, Leonado Gabrielli, Jacopo Barbiani, Guglielmo Catanzaro

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