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INTERVIEW



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Karina Gibert DEAN OF THE OFFICIAL COLLEGE OF COMPUTER ENGINEERING OF CATALONIA

«We need to turn the education system upside down to its core in favor of a more ethical citizenry»

IRINA
Rybalchenko



We talked to Karina Gibert, professor and Director of the Intelligent Data Science and Artificial Intelligence Research Group (IDEAI-UPC) and Dean of the Official College of Computer Engineering of Catalonia, about

the importance and dangers of using AI in our daily lives.

—You are the ambassador for Women in Data Science (WiDS) in Barcelona since 2021 (Stanford) and Co-Ambassador and VP of the women's chapter of the Information-Centric Networking at ACM (Association for Computer Machinery). What are you working on today?

—WiDS is an international movement born at Stanford to value the minority of women in the data science sector. WiDS appoints ambassadors around the world to hold events where only women can speak to a general audience. I have been an ambassador for WiDS-Barcelona since 2021. Every year we organize an event where women professionals talk about gender issues and different

areas of convergence with AI (AI and its influence on health, AI and cybersecurity, AI and gender harassment on networks, etc.).

On the other hand, the ACM is the association with the best computer professionals selected from around the world. It has a women's working group (Women in ACM)—my colleague Núria Castell and I requested to open this branch. I am its VP, and

the branch is headquartered at the Official College of Computer Engineering of Catalonia. The group organizes an event every year, often combined with WiDS-Barcelona. The main objective is to network and make female talent visible in this sector, and thus be able to create references for younger women in order to generate interest in this profession and, thus, be able to reduce the gender gap that we are currently suffering.

Lack of women in the sector leads to a worrying lack of a female perspective in the teams that create and design the technology. In addition, it generates important limitations in the functioning of AI-biased social inequalities that we cannot afford in any way. That is why women around the world organize a thousand networks and try to make people understand that these professions are exciting, strategic, well-paid, and promising. Women should not isolate themselves from the digital world—they should contribute to creating an egalitarian future and create technology for the digital society.

I do not believe that the education system can prevent students from accessing generative AI tools. Therefore,

it is necessary to change assessment systems and think about other formats, such as workshops dedicated to students presenting these papers and then having a discussion in which they have to defend and argue why they decided to include (or not) certain information to prove whether they have really studied the topic they worked on.

On the other hand, when we talk about education, AI provides other tools aside from ChatGPT. For example, AI can monitor a student's progress while solving online assignments, grade them, and give feedback. In this way, AI can hyper-personalize lessons. And let's talk about how students' lives have changed, especially in the fields of aviation and medicine: instead of training on real planes or on cadavers from the morgue, students can use flight simulators or operating theatres based on AI.

—Can we lose control of education and put it in the hands of AI?

—I think we need to develop intelligent tools that will accompany each student individually in the learning process and help bring out the best qualities of each person. We should have schools for gifted

children to break them out of the routine. Because when they spend all day bored, they become disorganized. They also find it hard to restrain their impulse to talk, so they can even provoke conflicts.

There are students who have to pay for additional classes because they cannot move forward with the explanations they receive in the classroom, and there are those who outright reject the education system.

We have a great opportunity now to give every student what they need to learn as much as they can and at a pace where they can learn new material...

We need to think very deeply about how we want to take advantage of this unique ability that AI provides and turn the entire education system upside down to its core in favor of a more cultured, educated, conscious, and ethical citizenry.

—What are your recommendations for parents—how to learn and live with AI?

—Parents should have a certain amount of knowledge in this area and be diligent in interacting with the various applications that are at our disposal throughout the day that are powered by AI. With this knowledge, parents will be able to recognize when their children may be misusing AI.

Prohibitions, in my experience, have never led to good results. It might be more effective to accept that children turn to ChatGPT to do their homework and solve math problems. And at the same time, we should teach them so that they can devote themselves to studying the material they receive to understand why the solution is the way it is and not the other way round.

Children should then try to solve the problem on their own without looking at the solution. In the case of assignments, they need to check with other sources to see if what the AI has indicated to them is accurate, see if they can independently document it, see if they agree with it, see if they are able to detect when the AI indicates false information, and prepare to answer trick questions to get a good grade...

Values need to be worked hard because in this whole scenario, the most important thing will be to develop in every child a genuine interest in LEARNING, a real DESIRE TO LEARN and not merely in passing an exam.

People must want to acquire knowledge in order to become productive citizens. Therefore, we must be able to restore this value of knowledge as a mechanism for personal growth, and everything else will become superfluous. ●

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