



The impact of digital technologies on us, our communities and our societies

From the invention of wheel to artificial intelligence

History shows that every leap in human progress brings uncertainty. When the wheel was invented, it was not immediately hailed as progress. It represented change: something unfamiliar that challenged tradition. Yet today, we see it as one of the most transformative tools ever created. It did not replace human effort; it amplified it. It did not eliminate jobs; it made work easier, faster, and more productive.

Now, we stand at a similar crossroads with artificial intelligence or AI. Like the wheel in ancient times, AI is often misunderstood. Many fear it as a threat: something that will replace people, eliminate jobs, and disrupt livelihoods. But history reveals another pattern: tools extend human capability; they do not replace humanity.

The wheel allowed goods to move over long distances with less effort. It reduced physical strain and opened opportunities for trade, communication, and growth. Entire economies were built upon it.

In the same way, AI reduces the burden of repetitive, time consuming

tasks. It can analyze data in seconds, automate routine processes, and assist decision making. This does not eliminate human intelligence: it enhances it. Just as the wheel did not remove the need for farmers, builders, or traders, AI does not remove the need for workers. It allows them to focus on higher value tasks: creativity, problem solving, and innovation.

Every technological advance has shifted the nature of work, not destroyed it. The wheel created new labour: cart builders, transporters, traders.

Similarly, AI is opening opportunities in data analysis, machine learning, digital services, and innovation driven industries. The challenge is not to resist change, but to adapt.

The wheel alone did not guarantee progress; it was human wisdom that transformed civilizations. The same is true for AI.

Used responsibly, it can help solve pressing challenges: improving health-care, enhancing education, increasing agricultural productivity, and driving growth.

Yet, like any powerful tool, AI requires guidance. It must be shaped by ethical principles, human values, and inclusivity. Its benefits must be shared widely, not concentrated in few hands. Workers must be equipped with skills to work alongside AI, not left behind.

Story is clear: progress comes not from resisting innovation, but from harnessing it. The wheel made human effort more effective. AI can do the same, on a larger scale.

WMCW will therefore approach AI with responsibility and vision. The national movement has the right to invest in education and training, and to involve the church in building ethical frameworks that ensure it serves humanity. Above all, workers must remember: tools do not define our future, how we use them does. ■

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The impact of digital technologies in Madagascar: An opportunity or a threat?

Digital technology offers many opportunities in Madagascar, especially in urban areas. It facilitates access to information, training, and communication, while strengthening social ties through messaging applications. Smartphones, the Internet, and social networks have become essential.

Opportunities

Digital technologies are transforming social life. Messaging apps and social networks make communication easier between families and distant communities. They also support the economy through e-commerce, teleworking (creating jobs for young people), and awareness campaigns led by administrations and NGO. They improve financial services, particularly through mobile money transfers, and enable rapid dissemination of information as well as openness to the world.

The other side of the coin

This evolution also has its limits. Excessive screen use reduces direct exchanges and can create dependency. Social networks sometimes encourage the spread of false information, which weakens social cohesion. In Madagascar, these difficulties are worsened by the high cost of internet access and frequent power cuts.

AI: an invisible workforce

Madagascar is also part of the global chain of artificial intelligence. Many Malagasy workers perform data entry tasks necessary for algorithms to function.

Ellina's testimony illustrates this reality: she works in an organic products store that uses artificial intelligence; she records up to 1,500 invoices per day for a monthly salary of 120 euros⁽¹⁾. Her work requires speed, repetition, and adaptation to automated tools.

This situation shows that digital technology creates jobs but also imposes heavy constraints. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), these jobs are often low-skilled and



poorly paid, revealing the unequal integration of developing countries into the global economy.

Conclusion

Digital technology is a powerful yet contrasting tool. While it offers opportunities for global openness, it raises crucial issues in education and working conditions. Thus, digital technology appears as an ambivalent tool: a driver of progress but also a generator of new challenges.

For Madagascar, the challenge is to move from the status of a mere executor (subcontracting) to that of an innovator. To make digital technology a true lever for human development, the country must invest in an inclusive digital culture, better regulated and accessi-

ble to all, so that it becomes a genuine tool for social and human progress. In this way, digital technology can become both an opportunity for sustainable development and a challenge for Malagasy society. ■



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⁽¹⁾ Minimum wage in Madagascar: 20 euros per month.

Impact of digital technologies on our communities, our societies, and us

In Nicaragua, understanding the impact of digital technologies requires looking beyond the mere possession of a mobile phone; it is about a profound transformation in how we communicate, work, and organize socially. Our country has moved from limited connectivity to accelerated digital integration, especially over the past decade.

Testimonies

Maribel lives with her husband and three children. A homemaker and member of the movement, she resides in a rural community on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, somewhat distant from the city of Granada.

Formerly, she devoted all her time to household tasks and her family. Today, Maribel is a shopkeeper, running a small store that offers clothing, beauty and perfume products, some basic medicines, and certain food items.

The use of social networks and new digital technologies has transformed her life: she has moved from being a dependent homemaker to an entrepreneur enjoying economic autonomy. Through her mobile phone, Maribel discovered that buying and selling via social networks was a tremendous opportunity.

This way, she avoids unnecessary risks and saves time for other household tasks. When she receives her goods, Maribel sends messages to her family, friends, and acquaintances to offer them for sale.

She is very satisfied with the income she earns each month (around \$160). She considers these earnings from her



small shop to be an essential contribution to the family economy.

Thus, the use of social networks and new digital technologies has enabled this woman entrepreneur to realize her dream: she hopes, in the near future, to own a larger and better-stocked store to support her family and strengthen both family and community economies.

Yahaira, a young woman, mother, homemaker, and member of the movement, is currently the coordinator of a sewing, cutting, and tailoring workshop, where a group of six women design, cut, and produce all kinds of clothing. With the support of the movement, this group of women was able to purchase

some machines and equipment necessary to set up the workshop.

Yahaira designs and cuts, then, together with the other women, makes wedding dresses, 15th birthday dresses, school uniforms, graduation gowns and caps, as well as any other requested garments. Some companies subcontract their services to produce shirts and t-shirts, delivered in large quantities.

To promote their services and sell their products, this group of women created a Facebook page (Sáenz Elaboraciones), where they showcase all their creations. They have reached a diverse audience, and their work has gained significant recognition in the region. The workshop has grown considerably, creating six jobs that support these families. The women do not need to migrate to the city or abroad; they remain close to their children every day. They now need new machines to improve the quality of their products.

However, there are also examples where the use of technologies has been diverted to other purposes, creating dependency among some young people and, for others, misfortunes linked to illicit uses. ■



Yahaira

Team MTC Nicaragua

Rwanda: Those excluded from the «benefits» of digital technologies

Rwanda aspires to become the technological hub of East Africa by 2050. To achieve this goal, policies, laws, and strategic plans have been put in place.

A dedicated ministry and three state agencies are driving this transition. Already, more than twenty administrative services most requested by the population are accessible online, including applications for a national passport. Financial transactions are now carried out via mobile phones and banking apps, in a context where the State promotes a «cashless» society. In education, science and technology are taught from primary school, while specialized sections exist in secondary schools and universities, encouraging young people to engage in these fields.

This digital policy has generated new jobs, often informal: selling phones and accessories, distributing phone credits, mobile money deposits and withdrawals, assistance with online administrative procedures, and more.

However, a gap remains. Many people are excluded from these advances due to lack of resources. Few households can afford a smartphone or a laptop. Internet connectivity is another obstacle: the territory is not fully covered. Official statistics indicate that 85% of households own at least one mobile phone, but only 30% have internet access at home.



A revealing example: CWM Rwanda had considered creating a WhatsApp group for its diocesan presidents. In the end, three of them did not have a smartphone. This case illustrates a broader reality: many people dream of owning a phone but cannot, due to lack of means.

Clémence, 22, is one such example. After completing primary school without

vocational training, she survives through small jobs as a saleswoman or waitress. She managed to buy a modest smartphone and launched herself on a social network, hoping to reach ten thousand followers to earn income. But the poor quality of her device limits her chances: her videos are blurry and unattractive. Like her, many young people aspire to benefit from digital opportunities but face the lack of adequate equipment.

The excluded are numerous: rural youth, elderly people, low-income households. Their marginalization raises a crucial question: how will these citizens access administrative and financial services now available only online?

The answer cannot come from the State alone. Civil society organizations, including CWM Rwanda, must also get involved to ensure that the benefits of digital technologies reach the entire population. Rwanda's digital ambition will only be fully realized if no one is left behind. ■

Evariste Nsengumuremyi
Member of CWM
Rwanda



The ILO International Labor Conference

From June 1 to 12, the ILO's annual conference was held in Geneva. The WMCW was represented there by Christine Isturiz, co-chair. In her remarks, the co-president discussed artificial intelligence and its impact on human labor. She also took this opportunity to engage in discussions with other Catholic-inspired or Catholic-action partner movements. ■



With Davide and Anna from CIJOC and Gilles from MTCE.

The youth of Bangui facing new technologies: societal deviations?

Young leaders in the capital of the Central African Republic (Bangui, December 2025) are increasing awareness-raising activities on technological tools and the use of social networks in institutes, colleges and universities.

These formal meetings provide opportunities for young people to be sensitized to the challenges of social media use, which is often harmful. Sadly, it has been noted that the young people of Bangui do not use mobile phones merely for calls and SMS; far fewer use internet searches for educational purposes.

More than one-third of young people with access to the internet or social networks show measurable deficits in quality. Among these are:

Disturbance of minds

Young people have become addicted to social networks to the point that they can no longer focus on their future, contenting themselves with living and following whatever is proposed to them online.

Increase in intellectual laziness

Over the past three years, as subscription rates among youth have risen, there has been a considerable decline in academic and university results. This has led to bargaining for grades and averages to move up to higher classes. A striking fact is the drop in qualification levels; young graduates struggle to find jobs because they no longer study seriously. Everything is copied from AI without reflection, as they are not –or do not want to be– properly trained in the use of new technologies.

Disrupted human relationships

Respect for parents has been affected because most young people are

hooked on various behaviours promoted by social networks.

Excessive moral degradation

Many young people, addicted to social networks, watch pornographic films that they reproduce among themselves. In three high schools in the capital, networks of pornographic relations (group sex) have been discovered, where students gather to film themselves during their encounters.

All this is the result of excessive dependence. Technological tools are not bad when used wisely. But smartphones, social networks, and online games can lead to addiction, negatively affecting productivity at work, personal relationships, and mental health. This ex-

cessive dependence can also impact individuals' ability to concentrate and live balanced lives, creating significant social and psychological problems.

Facing These Deviations

Our national movement is challenged on two points:

- In what do young people seek their happiness, and on whom do they place their hope for a better future?
- This lack of awareness creates a contrast in an emerging country striving to escape poverty. The youth environment calls for a transformation of mentality: «My people perish for lack of knowledge» (Hosea 4:6).

A transformative activity for youth is imperative: awareness, training, and guidance in the field of ICT^(*) and AI. The remedy is beginning to take shape: advocacy by the movement with partners who help young people receive training, and the creation of integration and exchange centres to enable them to use ICT wisely. ■

Guy Clotaire
Chaplain of CWM
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^(*) ICT: Information and Communication Technologies.

Chile: Digital technologies and human dignity

Advances, risks and social responsibility in the age of screens.

New digital technologies have profoundly transformed social, economic, and cultural life, facilitating communication, access to services, and efficiency in multiple areas. Social networks have brought people closer together by expanding opportunities for expression, digital systems have simplified the use of money, and artificial intelligence has optimized work, study, and access to information.

However, this progress is neither neutral nor free of risks.

Alongside their benefits, worrying phenomena have appeared: manipulation of information, social control, and malicious use of technological tools. What should, in principle, broaden freedom ends up restricting it silently, influencing public opinion, segmenting audiences, or intentionally automating users' decisions. This raises serious ethical questions about who controls these technologies and for what purpose.

In the realm of social networks, an apparent democratization of communication has occurred, since everyone can access them, often with the help of others. For example, within families, support is frequently given to access various procedures; this speeds up and reduces waiting times, though these times are then used to remain connected to networks.

Algorithms guide users toward new content and proposals. Family communication is interrupted, giving way to personal isolation. We have thousands of friends, but we share with none of them—except to schedule a



dialogue or meeting of interest. Language itself is transformed; what we want to express today is said differently tomorrow. Many adults remain on the margins of this new social context.

Recently, during training sessions, it has been observed that a large majority of participants are absorbed by networks, busy discussing. Mothers are often seen giving devices to babies and children so they can play or simply not disturb. The greatest impact is seen in family life: «the virtual is everything» and ends up replacing dialogue and embrace.

What was once a communication tool has become a need for permanent connection, «only to feel validated by an emoji or a like» on one's post; thus, algorithms capture attention.

Pope Francis warns in *Fratelli tutti*

«Digital networks can expose us to the risk of addiction, isolation, and the gradual loss of contact with concrete reality» (FT 43).

A warning light appears, revealing evident signs of emotional and affective deficiencies, personality changes, lack of recognition and empathy, and individuals who seek in networks to fill an inner void.

Thus, it is not enough to advance technologically; it is necessary to do so responsibly, with an ethical perspective that places human dignity at the center, promotes inclusion, and ensures that technologies serve families and the common good. ■

MOAC-Chile

The WMCW International Council

The 2026 meeting of the International Council will be held in Rome from July 31 to August 4, 2026. The Executive Board will use this opportunity to visit the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, the Dicastery for Laity, Fa-

mily, and Life, and the Secretariat of State, and to discuss the WMCW's work related to the theme «Social Justice in an Economy for Life» and the prospects of our global movement. ■

Artificial intelligence?

At the annual CWME seminar in Lyon in 2025, Pascal Marin, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Lyon (UCLY), spoke about the current challenges posed by AI (Artificial Intelligence). His reflection focused on what constitutes the «common world» that AI might put at risk.

To appeal to the common world means to place the human being and the building of a shared world at the center. Today, AI is tainted by hallucinations: text, sound, and image generators. The performance of this generative AI is indeed quite astonishing. But there is an illusion in claiming that it almost reproduces human intelligence. AI is technological devices that imitate and automate human cognitive abilities... We should not speak of Artificial Intelligence but of a «computational automaton». These are algorithms performing calculations on massive quantities of data. Yet there is nothing intelligent in this. There is no consciousness.

The replacement of humans by AI particularly affects precarious, «uberized» work, such as delivery services. Couriers now have virtually no contact with another human being in the course of their work. Their only interlocutor is an application on their phone. Human common sense and sensitivity have been deliberately excluded. To what extent should our lives be subjected to powerful digital systems, and under what conditions?

This digital governance primarily concerns our societies. And yet citizens have little real influence over it, because it has already been decided in advance by the economy, by private actors, namely the major digital technology companies (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft), who control the development of AI. If AI has been able to develop, it is thanks to the growth of the gigantic data collector that is the Internet over the past thirty years. The early Internet, animated by humanist values, fell victim to a massive hold-up by a handful of private groups who managed to seize the data of human activity—those precious resources of collective

[AI] consists of algorithms that perform calculations on massive amounts of data. However, there is nothing truly intelligent about it. There is no consciousness

intelligence. By dispossessing humanity of this common treasure, these firms created the Eldorado of a new capitalism: a «surveillance capitalism» profiting from the vast market of personal data.

Moreover, major technologies always fit into a political vision, in this case, an ultraliberal and oligarchic policy. A policy that particularly abhors regulation. Hence the «marriage of convenience» in recent years between extremist, ultraliberal leaders and companies specializing in AI. Political leaders provide the Tech world with the guarantee of a world without regulation. And AI creators provide these leaders with expertise in personalization. Personalization means the end of the common world: everyone has his or her own truth. In

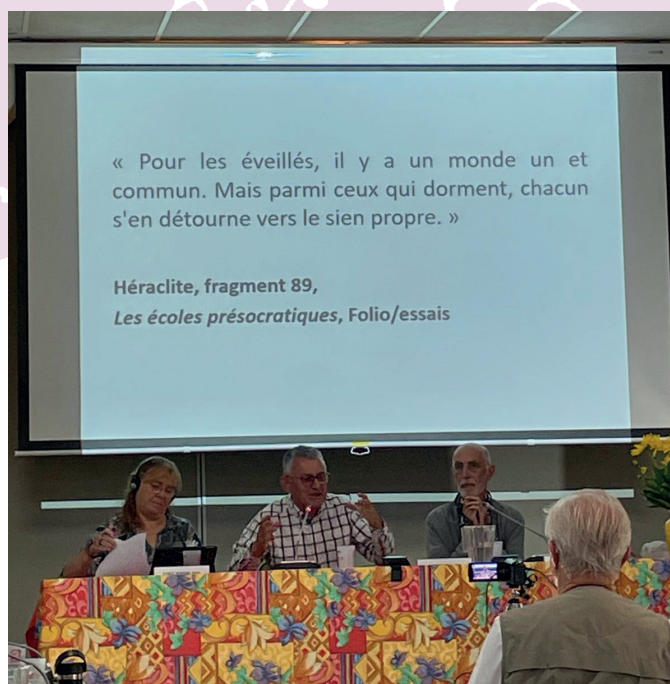
the realm of information, personalization reinforces each person's fragmented vision of the world. That these messages contradict one another pose no problem, on the contrary, they must do so to reach everyone in their own ideas. And so, our democracies are now subjected to the trial of strength of what some do not hesitate to call technofascism. Democratic life is shifting into the digital sphere, where there are no rules. It is a sphere governed only by the law of the strongest. The period of world history into which AI has ushered us is that of post-truth, the era of a civilization that holds that appearance is reality.

Pascal Marin concluded: «I have maintained a techno-critical line of thought, which does not mean techno-phobic.

That would be a misunderstanding of humanity, which has always developed alongside its technical inventions... Techno-critical reflections are necessary, because we must resist the promotional, advertising discourse in favor of AI, the dominant discourse in culture. The immense challenge is to keep our democracies afloat against the institutional violence of techno-authoritarianism».

Summary prepared by

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Digital technologies: testimonies from European workers

At the annual meeting of European movements in September 2025 in Lyon, we collected the voices of European workers on the consequences of using digital tools in their work.

Isabelle, legal expert in a trade union (France)

«A legal obligation is the right to disconnect. Today, digital technology has become important in professional life as much as in personal life. The latest forms of work organization, such as teleworking, have made the boundaries between professional and private life more porous».

Pedro, telecommunications technician (Spain)

«The communications sector is a highly technological field where one must constantly stay up to date. My work consists of developing and installing software that helps operators improve their mobile networks by



optimizing the configurations of different equipment. Artificial intelligence has recently been integrated into this software, allowing it to "learn" how the

network functions and when these configurations need to be modified. Thus, with little human intervention, they are able to change a large number of parameters and avoid a tedious and repetitive task. I can therefore say that, for now, artificial intelligence has a positive impact on our work and daily life». ■

Testimonies collected by

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Canada | Death of Jacques Archibald, former president of the WMCW (1984-1988)

Jacques Archibald was born in 1939 in the French-speaking province of Quebec, Canada. He came from the working-class neighborhood of Montmorency, near a textile factory. In 1958, he became a member of the local JOC (Young Christian Workers) and soon took on responsibilities at parish, regional, and national levels.

He witnessed the transformation of the Catholic Workers' League (LOC) into the Christian Workers' Movement (CWM) around 1966. In 1968, he married Denise Vézina, a fellow JOC member. Together they had two children.

Jacques and Denise were deeply involved in the Limoilou neighborhood of Quebec City. Alongside other activists, they founded the Popular Action Movement of Limoilou (MAPEL), raising awareness among residents about urban issues and establishing citizen resources.

A member of Catholic Action Movements for 60 years, Jacques held numerous responsibilities, including serving as diocesan staff member of the regional CWM in Quebec. From 1984 to 1988, he was President of the World Movement of Christian Workers (WMCW). ■



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