

REVIEW PAPER

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Katharina Lebenbauer¹ 

¹ Doctorate Paneuropean Studies, Austria

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Katharina Lebenbauer, Doctorate Paneuropean Studies, Austria. E-mail: katharina.lebenbauer@gmx.net

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence enables machines to imitate human capabilities such as logical thinking, planning and creativity. This implies that learning something and then using the new learned knowledge characterizes artificial intelligence. Once artificial intelligence learns how algorithms, programs or systems work, it can always retrieve them. Thus, artificial intelligence could be in the position to support our everyday lives and our working lives if we use it properly. The present paper explores how artificial intelligence can be used in working life, especially in the field of public affairs, and what advantages and disadvantages it could have for public affairs managers. There is not much information about this matter so far, although it is a very interesting issue since public affairs is a communication profession in which adequate communication cannot simply always be the same and must be customized for individual persons. Based on actual articles, studies, internet sources and books, the current study shows what available literature reveals about this topic.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Advantages and Disadvantages, Public affairs



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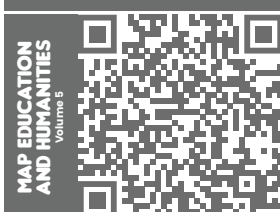
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Introduction

The use of digital and social media platforms has increased in the public affairs sector in recent years (Rest, 2021). Nowadays, if a lobbyist or public affairs manager wants to be heard in the industry, they must use digital or social media platforms (2017, Köppl), which enable digital networking and topic exchange (Koch, 2021). The fact is that the industry needs to grow to remain competitive in the age of digitalization (Köppl, 2021). The public affairs sector has also developed immensely in recent times with public affairs managers in Austria becoming increasingly open to digitalization, which was especially noticeable in times of the Corona crisis (Resl, 2021). However, the way in which artificial intelligence will affect the public affairs sector is still unclear. It is difficult to show how artificial intelligence could be consciously used in the everyday life of a public affairs manager and what advantages and disadvantages it might bring. Therefore, the aim of the current paper is to familiarize public affairs managers and lobbyists with the use of artificial intelligence in the public affairs sector. The paper is based on extensive research of current articles, internet sources and textbooks. The research was conducted analyzing various online databases paying attention to the topicality and scientific nature of the sources used.

Use of AI in companies

Artificial intelligence is expected to change the way of performing various jobs in the future. In particular, it will modify business models, operational processes, human resources management and the skills of managers and employees. Companies are tasked with managing these opportunities and risks and with thoroughly analyzing this change. The decision of whether and how to leverage it lies solely with them. They determine the extent to which they engage with artificial intelligence, the level of their knowledge about it, and its conscious application within their operations. Moreover, it is also within their discretion to decide if they choose not to utilize artificial intelligence at all. However, companies should not ignore the change and the increased emergence of artificial intelligence as it could lead to a rude awakening. It is, therefore, advisable that companies deal with the opportunities and challenges of a possible use of artificial intelligence. They should determine whether the introduction and use of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in work design and change management processes would benefit them, whether enhancing their learning and innovation capabilities would be advantageous for them. Although each company

decides upon advantages and disadvantages of the artificial intelligence use, they should all consider them carefully (Frost et al., 2019) as digitalization has increased enormously. Linked to this, there is a study that has so far dealt with the topic of digital transformation, in which the most frequently used keywords between 2017 and 2020 were identified. The results showed that they are all associated with digital transformation. In 2017, these included terms such as Industry 4.0 and digitalization. In 2018, the terms innovation, strategy and big data were selected. In 2019, the following terms were included: Dynamic Capabilities, Strategy, Industry 4.0, Value Co-Creation, Big Data, Change Management and Business Model. In 2020, these terms were Digital Capability, Strategy, Industry 4.0, Big Data, Business Model, Artificial Intelligence, Value Creation, Value Co-Creation and Change Management (Kraus et al., 2022).

Obviously, artificial intelligence will change the world of work, partly because artificial intelligence carries out cognitive processes through systems. For example, artificial intelligence can perform rule-based or mathematical operations because it has learned to do so. The systems behind it enable that, which means that artificial intelligence has to make use of clean data. The work of artificial intelligence must be designed to be human-friendly, so that, for example, it provides learning opportunities for employees. However, the issues of responsibility and authority must also be clear. On the one hand, the use of artificial intelligence in this way promotes efficiency and increases the potential for innovation. On the other hand, safety and health can also be improved using artificial intelligence (Adolph & Tausch, 2022).

If companies do not engage with these advancements, they risk missing out on progress and maintaining their current levels of efficiency and productivity. Meanwhile, competitors who adopt artificial intelligence can achieve more efficient processes and potentially gain a significant advantage (Frost et al., 2019). In any case, the proper use of artificial intelligence is advisable (Frost et al., 2019). People do not have to do everything. They can outsource certain things to artificial intelligence. For example, they can use artificial intelligence and imitate human abilities such as logical thinking, planning and creativity. Once artificial intelligence has learned how these things work, it remembers it and can apply it when needed, which saves time and money (Current European Parliament, 2020).

Defining artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence makes it possible to imitate human abilities. Specifically, a machine can take over human abilities such as logical thinking, learning, planning, being creative, and imitate them. With the help of artificial intelligence, technical systems, for example, can perceive their environment. Then, in a further step, they can deal with what they perceive and solve problems in such a way that a goal can ultimately be achieved. In short, the computer receives data through a camera, for example, and can then process it and react. Examples of artificial intelligence are autonomous cars, web search, automatic translation, smart farming, robots in factories, personal digital assistants on smartphones or PCs and much more (Current European Parliament, 2020).

Technologies that are essential for humanity have been around for more than 50 years. However, in the last 50 years, a lot has happened. There have been numerous breakthroughs. For example, there have been advances in computing power, the availability of large amounts of data and new algorithms. All of this has ultimately led to the very big breakthrough of artificial intelligence. The ongoing change has made an immensely big change possible. Artificial intelligence is enormously important for our society today and is more than just present in everyday life. We can expect new applications in the future, which will also have an impact on people's lives (European Parliament, 2020). Basically, there are currently two types of artificial intelligence. There is the software which involves a kind of virtual assistance, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems. There is also embedded artificial intelligence including robots, autonomous cars, drones and all applications of the Internet of Things (Current European Parliament, 2020).

Artificial intelligence in everyday lives

Artificial intelligence can be applied in everyday life in different ways. For example, intelligence can assist with online shopping and advertising by giving customers personalized recommendations. These recommendations are based on previous product searches and purchases or on their online behavior. Artificial intelligence is also helpful for optimizing products, planning inventories and in logistics. Artificial intelligence can help with web searches because it learns from extensive data that users have entered in search queries based on which it can deliver relevant search results. Artificial intelligence can also support smartphones in terms

of optimal personalization. People could more often use virtual assistants' help to answer questions or make recommendations and help organize everyday life. Artificial intelligence can also help with automatic translation. Automatic subtitles can be created for video content or TV programs and it can assist with written or spoken language. Moreover, the energy supply can be supported by artificial intelligence. Intelligent thermostats can learn from usage behavior and, thus, save energy. In smart cities, traffic can be regulated in this way resulting in improved connectivity and reduced traffic congestion. Vehicles can also benefit from artificial intelligence in terms of safety. For instance, there can be sensors that indicate dangerous situations or drivers might rely more on intelligent navigation. Artificial intelligence can also support cyber security, detecting and combating cyber-attacks and cyber threats. The focus is on the continuous input of data. Patterns can be recognized, and attacks can be traced. Artificial intelligence could also be used against viruses such as Covid19. For example, thermal imaging cameras were increasingly used at airports. Artificial intelligence is also used to combat disinformation. There are already applications that can detect fake news and disinformation. They can evaluate content from the media, search for key terms and determine which sources are reliable and which are not. Artificial intelligence can also provide support in health. Researchers are currently investigating how they could use artificial intelligence to analyze large amounts of data, so that that patterns leading to new insights in medicine and improved diagnosis can be identified.

As we can see, artificial intelligence can support the most diverse areas of humanity (Current European Parliament, 2020). Fundamental advantages for citizens could be that artificial intelligence makes its positive contribution in healthcare, cars and other means of transport. However, the use of artificial intelligence can also bring customized, affordable and durable products and services to the market. The access to information can be facilitated, distance learning, a different way of continuing education becomes possible and artificial intelligence can make its contribution to workplace safety, for example by being used in dangerous work steps. New jobs can be created, new industries and much more. Companies can also benefit from it. New products and services can be developed, distribution channels can be optimized, maintenance techniques can be improved, product performance and quality can be increased and customer service can be improved. Artificial intelligence can also help to reduce costs in public services and open new opportunities in public transport, education, energy

and waste management. Artificial intelligence can strengthen democracy by intercepting disinformation and detecting and preventing cyber-attacks at an early stage.

However, we should be careful how we use it. The opportunities and risks must be consciously weighed up. If people do not engage with it, they cannot make a meaningful assessment for their own area. Only if people consciously engage with it can they assess which opportunities and risks can arise from the use of artificial intelligence in their specific field. With artificial intelligence, however, humanity should decide who will assume liability for damages if something happens. Should artificial intelligence be used in democracy and fundamental rights, questions of data protection are also very important, among other things. The question whether artificial intelligence is really being used properly arises. People must keep an eye on this and not blindly rely on artificial intelligence. In addition, artificial intelligence in the field of work can also mean that certain jobs no longer must be carried out in the familiar way. They can, for example, be taken over more easily and safely by artificial intelligence than if they were carried out by a human being. Numerous security issues must also be considered. Should artificial intelligence meet the physical body, that could be abused. We should be more aware of all this. We should deal with it and be informed about opportunities and risks, especially in the areas relevant to our work and personal life. Only in this way can the person gain a comprehensive picture and act adequately (Current European Parliament, 2020), bearing in mind the fact that algorithms and artificial intelligence will play a fixed role in jobs in the future (Osztovcic et al., 2021).

Advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence has numerous advantages, but also disadvantages, when viewed as a whole. A very big advantage associated with artificial intelligence is the ability to do work faster and more efficiently than humans can do it themselves. One example of this is that with the help of artificial intelligence, large amounts of data can be analyzed more quickly, and patterns can be recognized. Artificial intelligence can do this faster than humans can. Production and business processes of companies can also be optimized and costs can be reduced. Artificial intelligence can also make personalized recommendations for people and carry out activities that are boring or dangerous for humans. It can do all this with precision and accuracy.

Disadvantages are that artificial intelligence can eliminate jobs, there can be privacy issues by misusing data or there can be data leaks when using artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence can also be error prone. It is ultimately based on algorithms and errors can occur when data is incomplete or incorrect and, therefore, programmed incorrectly. Humans can also become dependent on artificial intelligence. If man relies only on artificial intelligence, this can lead to dependence. That is why people might no longer use their abilities for something on an ongoing basis and outsource everything to the artificial intelligence. If this is faulty or manipulative, it can lead to serious problems. Artificial intelligence can also lead to numerous prejudices and unfair decisions. Incomplete or inaccurate can lead to distortions. Artificial intelligence can be expensive when it comes to company-specific things. Artificial intelligence, therefore, offers numerous advantages and disadvantages. People should be aware of both and make a conscious decision for or against the use of artificial intelligence, which depends on their human ability to assess (Techparadies, 2023).

Artificial intelligence in communication industry

Artificial intelligence has also made its way into the communications industry. There is no doubt that the way communication managers operate will be transformed by artificial intelligence. This is largely due to the ability of artificial intelligence to generate advertising copy and press releases at a much faster rate than humans. The ChatGPT system is very helpful here. The question that arises here is how people are supposed to recognize when something has been written by artificial intelligence and when it has been written by a real human being. There are already answers to this question because there is artificial intelligence that recognizes exactly when something has been written in ChatGPT, for example, and when it has not. This applies at least to texts that were written to inform a press release or similar. How it looks here with social media contributions is questionable. However, the possibility of artificial intelligence publishing posts online just like that is a social question that humanity should consider carefully because this could change society and togetherness. People could become even more anxious and insecure because they no longer know whether, for example, the post was written by artificial intelligence or a human being who really wants to say something moving, which would cause confusion. Of course, when humans communicate something, it is usually at least endowed with more emotions and more feelings than when

a machine does it. This distinction is no longer so clear. Communication managers really need to become aware of this, and they should consider whether a labelling obligation would not be useful so that the reader knows who really wrote what. This means that communication managers should also consider when they are using artificial intelligence and when they are deliberately not doing so. They should, therefore, be fully aware of the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence in their professional field. Another point is that artificial intelligence can now write concepts for companies. A way of dealing with this should also be found. The question is whether they want to rely on such concepts and then no longer need consultants, or whether a company even has concepts written for it by artificial intelligence. There would also be the possibility of consultants using artificial intelligence for concepts, but then presenting them with the human component. However, these are questions that individuals must consider for themselves. It is essential to determine how they wish to engage with such advancements. Regardless, communicators must address artificial intelligence proactively. The sooner they familiarize themselves with it, the better equipped they will be. Otherwise, they can be replaced more easily than thought. However, if communicators use artificial intelligence consciously and learn to apply artificial intelligence it can only bring them advantages. What is recommended here is that communicators learn how to prompt. This means they must learn how to use artificial intelligence properly. If they can do that, truly great results can be made possible with the help of artificial intelligence, but the fact is that communicators have to know at least what output is possible with artificial intelligence. They must not close their eyes to it (PRVA, 2023).

Artificial intelligence in politics

Artificial intelligence is also becoming increasingly important in politics, but humans remain humans. The more artificial intelligence is integrated into politics, the more the human being counts again in the end, because the human being makes the central difference. Ultimately, that is what politics is all about. If texts need to be written quickly or summarized, this can be done well with artificial intelligence. It is also helpful when documents need to be scanned quickly. This is especially important for organizations or companies that have a smaller communication budget. However, politics is not about long texts and a lot of explanation in writing. In politics, the focus is on the recipients of the communication. When communicating with them, what is said must stand out. This can be done by means

of communication that is specifically selected and set up for this purpose. Communication has to be short and to the point and artificial intelligence is of no use here. Politicians are often presented with countless press releases, statements, position papers, outlooks, monitoring, target images and the like while the content is effective when it is short and clear. Thus, in the age of artificial intelligence, human beings are still needed. It takes a flesh-and-blood human being to talk to political decision-makers. It needs conversations from person to person. Behind political decision-makers there are people again. This means that the human component is still the central element in the communication of interests since communication takes place from person to person. For this to happen authentically, the communication must also be made and prepared by a human being. Therefore, key to advocacy in the age of artificial intelligence is human authenticity. There needs to be a clearly recognizable signature in communication.

Communication here must be thought out by humans and then implemented. Artificial intelligence must not take over the bulk of the work here. That would be noticeable. Nowadays, speeches from a box are not popular. One way to use artificial intelligence is to use it specifically and consciously for preparatory work. It can help to screen people in advance and, for example, bring details about people into a conversation. In the end, however, political communication must be human again. It needs human communication and emotional proximity. Artificial intelligence cannot hold a candle to humans as communicators here. Moreover, artificial intelligence cannot replace human conversation or participate in human conversation as an interlocutor. It cannot communicate face to face with someone. The Corona pandemic also brought to light that a lot can be done digitally, but it can never replace a face-to-face conversation. People crave for face-to-face communication nowadays (Politics & Communication, 2023).

Artificial intelligence in public affairs

Public affairs in particular is about supporting strategic decisions in the political, economic and social spheres. Companies must maintain their external relations with these areas, and it requires a precise analysis and strategic preparation of how to deal with political, economic and social issues (Althaus et al., 2005). This work requires comprehensive screening, so that public affairs managers know what is going on politically in the individual sectors. If they know this, they can react to it adequately (Köppl, 2017), and this is where artificial in-

telligence comes into play. With the help of artificial intelligence, screening, analysis and generally the preparation of data can be done quickly and efficiently. Humans save time and costs. One advantage is that artificial intelligence can quickly and efficiently complete the tasks of public affairs managers, insofar as it is a matter of processing them. However, when it comes to communicating interests, it is better to let humans do it. Artificial intelligence may write good texts, but if content is to really reach political stakeholders, it is more advisable for public affairs managers to do it themselves. It is better if they rely on personal communication with emotions (Politics & Communication, 2023).

However, it is also a fact that digitalization can no longer be ignored. Digitalization is also part of a lobbyist's job (Koch, 2021). Friday, March 13, 2020, may be recalled here. Lobbyists were no longer able to carry out their work as usual. Public places could no longer be visited due to the coronavirus in the coronavirus pandemic. The Austrian government took measures at the time that made it impossible for lobbyists to carry out their work. Personal contacts were restricted, home office was ordered, and many places were sealed off. Lobbyists could only carry out their work if they used digital tools and this is precisely why lobbyists need to be broadly positioned and prepared for all eventualities. Not taking digitalization seriously would be a mistake (Koch, 2021; Osztovcics et al., 2021). To be able to do this professionally and well, lobbyists naturally need correspondingly good digital skills. Without these, they cannot find their way in the world of digital tools and platforms (Franz, 2018). It is also important to mention that digital public affairs draw on three fundamental aspects. Lobbyists must inform, participate and mobilize (Einspänner, 2010). Those who are not represented online cannot inform others about anything, cannot participate in discussions and cannot mobilize (Köppl, 2017). It should also be noted that digital lobbying works differently to traditional lobbying. In traditional lobbying, lobbyists do not have to deal with the public and permanent transparency. They do not have always to be available online. With digital lobbying, on the other hand, lobbyists must deal with both aspects in great detail. They must be available online and engage with the public. Both types of lobbying will be able to co-exist and will be used depending on the situation (Stürmer, 2021).

Conclusion & Implications for further research

Artificial intelligence can imitate human abilities. It can think logically, learn, plan and be

creative. It can make work more efficient, do it faster and take heavy work off your hands. It can also work very accurately and carry out work with great precision and accuracy. However, artificial intelligence can also eliminate jobs and data protection issues can arise. Furthermore, it can be error-prone and create a kind of dependency. People may outsource too much to it.

However, how people use artificial intelligence, both professionally and privately, is up to them. It is important that they know both advantages and disadvantages that the use of artificial intelligence could offer them. Only if a person knows what advantages and disadvantages artificial intelligence could have for specifically selected areas can the effects be better assessed. In the end, it is the person who decides whether he or she wants to consciously use artificial intelligence or not.

Artificial intelligence can positively support both the communications industry and the political industry. To what extent this happens depends again on the people who apply it, but the fact is that artificial intelligence is good at preparing data and analyzing and summarizing data, but when it comes to personal conversations, human actors currently still rely more on human conversations. Communication is still human, especially if it is to take place face to face. Artificial intelligence cannot support this. Even if it does, then it is most likely in the preparation.

In public affairs, too, the representation of interests is still done in the classic old-fashioned way. The personal conversation still counts. Artificial intelligence is advantageous when preparing documents for a personal meeting, for example. However, it is not needed during the conversation itself. Artificial intelligence is disadvantageous when short, concise statements are needed. Professionals prefer to do this on their own and rely on their emotions and feelings.

It should be noted that the topic of artificial intelligence is still in its early stages. The extent to which it will develop in the future remains to be seen. The current status quo was shown in the article. How things will develop in the next few years remains to be seen. For the future, it is advisable to take a closer look at the topic of artificial intelligence in public affairs. It would be interesting to see if anything has changed in the use of artificial intelligence in public affairs in a few years. This investigation can be conducted as a literature review or actively through quantitative or qualitative research.

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