



CALL FOR PROPOSALS - SUBMIT BY 20th JULY 2024

OPUS conferences bring together reflective citizens to develop fresh thinking about organisational and societal dynamics.

This year's conference will take place online from **Friday 27th to Sunday 29th September, 2024.**

The theme is: **Examining the impact of AI on citizens, organisations, and society.**

With the development of Chat GPT, AI is now beginning to pervade many aspects of our lives with both beneficial and deleterious effects. This is a huge step in the information technology revolution. At its core is what is called 'generative AI', a range of software tools that can compose original text, write code, generate art and music, have conversations, and invent whatever needs inventing, e.g. new drugs. According to technologists, generative AI changes the game.

Over the last 50 years, global anxiety has shifted from the threat of annihilation through nuclear war to the threat of annihilation from uncontrolled climate change to this latest anxiety: the threat that AI will be allowed to develop to such an extent that humans will be its slave rather than its master.

In the meantime, the benefits of AI including the use of robotics are being manifested in many spheres including: in attempts to control the weather, in manufacturing production especially of cars, in the alleviation of mundane bureaucratic tasks, in enabling surgeons to perform even more effectively, in the development of brain/computer interfaces to help disabled and paralysed patients, in providing virtual classroom assistants for teachers, robot assistants in care homes, and in different aspects of agriculture.

On the downside we see that the impact of these developments is already a loss of jobs in certain sectors, therefore the need for re-education and re-skilling of the workforce. In warfare we see the use of AI in drone attacks, cyber-attacks and the development of new types of weaponry. We also see the growth of fake news, fake information, manipulated images, leading to confusion about what to believe and a consequent loss of trust in our institutions and leaders.

More widely there will be a worry about those who will not be able to keep up with these technological advances and who in a state of unemployment may well enact what is disturbed and uncontained. Most professions will be affected. In any enactment of this disturbance they/we could represent a threat to the stability of our society. All these anxieties feed into the current tendency to undervalue our democratic institutions and present day values, they feed into the rise of nationalism and the search for a 'strong' leader who can provide at least the illusion of security.

As we engage with our society in this post Covid era, faced now with many other deaths through war and famine, and at a time of increasing tension, splitting and polarisation, how do we rise to the challenges posed by AI and its impact on us as citizens, in our organisations and in our wider society?

This conference is an opportunity to explore the many benefits and disadvantages of a progressively AI dominated society and to consider how, as citizens, we can use our authority to augment the benefits, control the disadvantages, to ensure that AI developments are ethical and not malign, and to seek to understand and to influence what is going on both above and beneath the surface, at both conscious and unconscious levels.

We welcome proposals for papers, or experiential workshop sessions through which presenters can open up discussion on new thinking and new approaches on the conference theme.

Proposals/abstracts of approximately 500 words (ONE page, Word document NOT PDF, single spacing, excluding references, no header, footers or track changes) are invited by 20th July, 2024.

Proposals from those who have not previously presented at OPUS conferences are particularly welcome. In the case of co-authored papers, ONE person should be identified as the corresponding author. The conference language is English.

SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL HERE by 20th July 2024

For any questions contact us at director@opus.org.uk