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THE EFFECTS OF AI ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A.-C. RATH-BOŞCA

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Albert-Camil RATH-BOŞCA

Faculty of Law, West University of Timișoara,

Faculty of History, Univeristy of Oradea Romania

E-mail: camilend@yahoo.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6815-9509>

Abstract

In today's world, AI seems to have invaded the day to day lives of us humans. At such a break-neck pace we must ask ourselves how will this new advancement in human history influence the most sensible of groups, the children. In this article, we will make an effort to understand how AI is molding and infringing on the most basic of rights and what is currently happening in Machine Learning (LM) development.

Key words: AI, UNCRC, Children's rights, United Nations, AI regulation.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, a strange event changed the capricious trajectory of history in a manner no one could have predicted. The advent of artificial intelligence has shaken the day-to-day life of many people. Once an absurd idea that comes from science fiction, AI became a reality that equally must intrigue us and terrify us.

On October 28th 2025, Amazon has announced it will fire about 14.000 people¹ in a very short amount of time. This is becoming more and more a usual occurrence as many companies are choosing to replace their employees that have rights, needs and sometimes even dare unionize with cold machines that do the same job.

Many people are bound to lose their jobs to these new generative AI models. This is a horrible perspective that has been covered by plenty of scholars and journalists, however, one aspect that has escaped many people who broached

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/amazon-lay-off-about-14000-roles-2025-10-28/>. Link accesat la data de 29.10.2025

or delved in the subject is how do these AI programs interact with the rights of children.

How does a soulless genie that provides information and simulated feelings interact with the rights that a state guarantees to the youth of today and the citizen of tomorrow? In this article we will try and see what rights are granted to the child by United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) how AI directly affects these rights and what change should be implemented by legislators, both in an international and national context in order to protect the normal and healthy development of kids.

I. THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND THE ISSUE OF APPLYING THE CONVENTION

According to the UNCRC, a child is considered a person under 18 years of age except for cases where the national legislation defines such persons differently². Some notable exceptions of signatories are New Zealand which considers people to be fully grown after the age of 20³ and some regions of Canada considering the age of majority to be 19. Of course, the vast majority of legislations grant different rights and obligations as a child is growing up but they do not get full rights and obligations until hitting the age of majority.

The first specific right that is given to children according to the convention is the right to not be discriminated⁴. It is specified that no child should be discriminated on the basis of: race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

All of these impediments are great on paper, however, when it comes to apply such norms there are massive issues to the way and limits of implement them. Obviously, no person should suffer from discrimination but the reality of the situation is that the vast majority of the countries that have signed the UNCRC have some level of discrimination embedded in their social and cultural fabric.

Many studies can be cited in this regard. A recent study conducted by the UN shows that an estimate of 40% of people have self-reported incidents of discrimination mostly coming from North-America and Oceania (OECD, 2025, pp. 2-4). This is solid proof that even if the law stipulates the right to not be discriminated against, the application remains faulty. There is always some form of discrimination to be expected in a global and multicultural world, as such, the treaty cannot be fully respected unless individual states take up serious initiatives to shift their societies at their core.

Article 3 of the convention states that all authorities, be them private or statal, shall always act in the best interest of the child based on all social, economic and cultural factors specific to the signatory country. In this instance,

² Art.1 of the UNCRC

³ Art. 5 of the Age of Majority Act 1970 of New Zealand

⁴ Art. of the UNCRC

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this is a more preferable approach since there is a wide spectrum of signatory countries. Each country will approach the idea of a child's best interest.

Another article that has idyllic implications but proves dishearteningly hard to implement is art. 6 which grants the child the right to life, survival and development. This notion is mired in a malevolent irony. We only have to look at UN membership to see that realistically, there are a huge number of children that have to endure severe starvation, poverty and in some cases even become child soldiers in the case of Sudan or Congo.

Article 8 specifies that the child has the right to identity. Again, here we have another impasse regarding interpretations. How do we allow all children to preserve their identities when many signatories don't recognize their identities? Kids belonging to ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, racial backgrounds, religious beliefs are attacked both nationally and internationally by the people that are meant to protect them.

We could spend pages, volumes and tomes to critique both the UN and the UNCRC, however, it would prove useless. Many more qualified people have done just that either from a place of honesty or due to monetary interest. We should however retain 2 main ideas from this brief analysis.

Firstly, due to the nature of the UN there is a fundamental flaw in the manner that all international treaties are implemented. Technically, the UN can even intervene with peace forces, it can implement a variety of economic sanctions, but all of these are ultimately dysfunctional. Even if a peace force would intervene to stop a war, we would just witness another Yugoslav style disaster, if they implement economic sanctions they will unavoidably worsen the situation of both citizens and broadly of children. Any and all solutions allowed by the UN charter, chapter VII are fundamentally inefficient.

Secondly, the fact that individual countries get to define what it means to protect the rights of a child is a double-edged sword. On one hand it allows different countries to maintain cultural aspects that have history behind them and make the country unique, on the other hand, this also allows for faulty definitions and for the living standards of children across the many signatories be wildly different.

Let us take the example of education. While most signatory countries offer free primary, secondary and high school education for the children, the economic and social conditions of individual countries shape how this is applied. While Qatar offers free school supplies, countries like Romania cannot offer free transport and basic necessities regarding the simplest of needs like heating or indoor bathrooms for rural schools. In some countries that experience severe poverty that even Romanian conditions would be wonderful.

The UNCRC is the groundwork and the blueprint for all national legislation that protect the rights of children. This relatively basic set of rules has

severe issues of application, and as such, we must be careful in how we approach any and every issue regarding to the rights of children.

II. HOW DOES AI REALLY WORK?

Artificial intelligence as it is known, is not as advanced as we may initially think, and it's not an innovation in itself. The earliest form of artificial intelligence is referred to as expert systems.

The initial push for AI starts in the 1950's and until recent developments it was capable of offering a fact-simile of an expert. The first models used symbolic logic which used expert knowledge in order to make binary decisions. It is either 0 or 1, hot or cold. This type of logic required an expert in the given field to grant his knowledge to be programmed in the code. The machine itself could give positive or negative answers, nothing more, nothing less.

In 1965, mathematician Lotfi A. Zadeh developed the idea of fuzzy logic, by which a system can identify more variables (Kultaran Kumari, pp. 155). Values can exist between 0 and 1 in the binary of truth and false. If we are to use the example of an engineer, early symbolic logic could not process the structural integrity of a building but fuzzy logic could estimate the possibility of an accident happening.

These initial breakthroughs were important but were nowhere near what we commonly refer to as AI. These early research attempts and the evolution of symbolic logic towards fuzzy logic were essential steps in the progress but they were of niche use and unreliable for broader use. Nowadays fuzzy logic is still used but in a more advanced state (Kultaran Kumari, pp. 156-158)

In its current state, AI has become defined by Machine Learning systems. Also called ML (Daphna Idan and Sharon Einav, 2025, pp. 02-04), these systems process data in order to slowly develop a notion of what the user wants to gain from interacting with it. Such a process was unfeasible due to the lack of data but with the advent of the internet a huge swath of information just ripe for the taking.

There is both controversy and legal issues for Open Ai, the company that created ChatGPT, the first Large Language Model (LLM) available to the public. There is public knowledge that the company has pirated an immense number of books, articles, scripts, and any other form of written media and research⁵. This has led to lawsuits in the ballgame of millions of dollars.

One could write a whole book about the shady practices of AI research companies, but that is not the purpose of this specific paper. The point we are making is that yes, LLMs are a huge breakthrough, however, the foundation upon which these new machines were built is rickety at best if not downright law infringing. This aspect will be essential in the latter pages.

⁵ <https://futurism.com/artificial-intelligence/openai-danger-authors-internal-slack-messages> accessed on the 28th of October.

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What does an LLM actually do? In practice, an LLM will take input information and using a vast network of neural networks in order to process an answer. The machine does not comprehend what it is writing, it has no notion of what the words in the answer mean. By estimating what the input demands the machine will give a fact simile of a human answer. It is an estimated word salad that mimics an expert answer.

Depending on the complexity of the question, the machine will give a more or less intricate and accurate answer. ChatGPT was launched in the year 2022 and since it had some major and minor improvements towards the process and results of input data, but it still has some issues regarding it's functioning.

In day-to-day use LLMs prove useful for general queries, not quite human yet, but close enough to replace menial tasks like email writing or basic descriptions of items, elementary concepts and historical or mundane events. It stands to reason that LLMs function as jack of all trades utilities with the potential to make hyper specific tools such as Juro for contract drafting or SciSpace for academic research.

Another type of AI which is particularly important for our discussion is Text to Video (T2V). This form of AI fundamentally does the same thing but it differs by very little. Instead of estimating what a person wishes to read, the machine will grant the user an estimation of what they wish to see based on previous data. It's a game of estimating based on given data.

In both cases, AI has been prone to what experts call hallucinations. On some occasions, the LLM will give off an overconfident answer that is factually wrong. These instances of wrong information being spread by machines is a price that must be paid in order to progress their learning.

Between a model that is programmed to never give a false information and one that is allowed to produce results that may be factually wrong, the latter will have a better success rate due to the hardship of programing what an error is (Dang Anh-Hoang*, Vu Tran and Le-Minh Nguyen, 2025, pp. 03-06). The one that never spells misinformation will simply state that it doesn't know, the other one can learn from mistakes if the users or new data given may prove its mistaken.

III. FIRST AS A TRAGEDY....

We have analyzed the concepts of child's rights and what AI is, does and how it works. With these two notions mastered we can finally reach the purpose of this article, how does AI impact the rights of children?

We have to tread lightly since there is not sufficient long-term studies that can prove in an uncontestable manner that AI is good or bad for children's development. We are going to engage in a level of cautious speculation based on what little research we have, previous research that is similar enough like the effects of social media on children and current trends in AI uses and research.

A first obvious right that the machines infringe is the right to education. As mentioned above, AI models will unavoidably give erroneous answers. This factual statement will lead to children learning falsities as truth and propagating it amongst its peers. It is very much similar to a virus, if one kid in a class will be sick, all of them will be sick.

During a podcast hosted by Harvard University⁶, researcher Ying Xu explained that still AI can be used for good purposes. If the AI tool is made for educational purposes, it can offer a child some help with developing academic skills. Most AI tools are not used as such, they pose challenges regarding the true nature of the given information even for adults. We can only imagine how hard it would be for a child to sieve through fact or hallucinations.

As previously stated, AI does not understand what it gives back from the input task and as such it cannot correct itself unless the user points out the error it made. The other issue is the piracy that was committed by Open AI in order to train their model. Those sources may be out of date or even false in their nature.

A spark of the creator is seen in every art piece, and so is the spark of the maker in every tool. If the creators of these sites had no issue in stealing millions of written, filmed, or recorded pieces of art or non-fiction, how is a parent certain that this specific behavior may not be imbued in the user?

Fundamentally, a child using AI to do homework is stealing a non-tangible item. It's information devoid of source or review that would result in the ending of any academic career. As such, why are teachers made to fight with

From a teacher's standpoint, the use of AI for making essays and homework is an atrocity. The whole point of giving out homework is to train the student in the specific curricular area, not to just be made. Beyond the shady quality of the work, the cognitive skills are not developed.

Education serves to create the mental stamina and patterns necessary for work and ultimately for the better enjoyment of life. Literature and art are essential to enriching one's life, so is mathematics and physics for developing logic. History is essential to develop critical thinking skills as it is based on understanding data in order to reach a competent conclusion.

If all these skills get outsourced to a machine, then the still developing child will unavoidably grow without having some essential skills for his work life or even for his day-to-day life. There is no joy in art if one can't comprehend themes that were here with the birth of humanity, one cannot write proper documents without understanding grammar, humans cannot be human without the connection of a species.

Another way AI is slowly unraveling the purpose of education is the social aspects, what social media started by dissolving what reality and digitality is, AI

⁶ <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/ideas/edcast/24/10/impact-ai-childrens-development>

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is fully finishing by stripping the student of the option to acquire basic skills necessary for personal and work purposes.

To refer back to the podcast with researcher Ying Xu, she did say that there is a pattern of rude or inappropriate language used by children in relation to AI. The lack of interference in such instances may lead to poor developmental outcomes for the young child.

In a school, a kid doesn't just gain the technical skills to understand what they want to do when they grow up, but they also learn to socialize and work as small teams or larger units. Since AI can do the essays and the homework, group projects become a boring sequence of kids exchanging their share done by an AI.

In its essence, the educational act is becoming inefficient or even futile in its two main purposes, to form critical and technical thinking and socializing a child. If these two functions cannot be met then the teacher becomes obsolete in a world of machines and children with no interest in learning anything.

The exact same issues that are caused by the lack of socialization and lack of learning in a long-term manner also infringe on the right to development and identity. Since the child can't develop normally due to a lack of education there is no requirement to expand on this point.

The one concept that we should however further explain is the right to an identity. Since education is an essential part of development and is the first aspect that is denigrated by LLMs, normal development is impeded. Part of that development is identity formation.

Forming an identity is not a science, it's a living process that involves trial and error especially for children. The lack of normal developmental steps leads to a youth that is fundamentally stripped of usual experiences.

The science does tell us that children form an identity by differentiating from the mother or generally the primary caregiver (Jennifer H. Pfeifer, Elliot T. Berkman, 2019, pp.2-3) and from others in their adolescence. If AI becomes a factor in how children self-identify we have strange predicament of a child relating to an object, not a complex human that can influence the child in a proper manner.

IV.THEN AS FARSE

Here we must ask ourselves if AI can be a force for good in regards to children, again, due to the lack of long-term studies we can only estimate how the mind of the youth will be molded by these new material conditions. But beyond the issue of cognition in children, we must also understand the purely material conditions that AI is forging from its digital fires.

So far, the studies we do have do not give us much hope for the future. Generally speaking, the use of AI can grant a personalized study experience but

most times create a dependency on the machine. Students⁷ cannot operate at the same level in the absence of a LLM (Vieriu, A. M., & Petrea, G., 2025, p.363). What is the price of having such a companion?

The first clearly observable cost of AI use is the job market. Before AI all menial tasks were done by actual humans with the help of computers. Before ChatGPT there were rudimentary forms of AI which enhanced human writing by assisting with grammar and sentence structure. Now that AI can fully replace some specific human tasks the job market has and will continue to tighten up and leave some former employees in the dust, but how deep does this rabbit hole go?

Of course, since LLMs are designed to give texts primarily they will replace the jobs of people that are hired to write texts. As such, copywriters, legal aids, secretaries, customer support and all jobs that primarily involve writing texts that answer elementary queries will slowly be cut from the market. What was the job of maybe 10 people, becomes the job of one person with a premium account for a LLM.

This is of course horrible as it is, so far about 50.000 jobs were cut down only in the US due to the implementation of AI. This can be considered as only the beginning of this trend as AI is constantly being improved upon. As a matter of fact, specialists argue that there is a chance that we may reach General Artificial Intelligence by 2060⁸. This still theoretical type of AI will be able to fully replace at least half of the entry level jobs in most white-collar sectors like programing or law.

This new artificial revolution will unavoidably affect children in 2 ways. Firstly, it will affect the earning capabilities of their parents or tutors. Since finding a profitable job will become harder and harder as machines work the entry level jobs, this will affect natality rates in all the affected countries.

The use of AI will fundamentally boost company profitability but at the cost of jobs and intrinsically affect the economic wellbeing of families. With the slow unraveling of jobs that can ensure financial security there will be a decrease of children that live in reasonably good conditions.

The other effect of the job market being modified to this degree is that children will eventually lose hope when it comes to choosing a career. If they don't have role models, they will grow up hopeless, devoid of identity and without any interest in finding a job.

Most kids nowadays desire to work in the digital industry, primarily as influencers (Agnieszka Iwanicka, 2022, pp. 64-65). There is another issue with this perspective in employment. AI is slowly progressing to even create short

⁷ Even if the cited study is not dedicated to the experience of children using AI, it still paints a fairly accurate picture of how children use LLMs.

⁸ <https://research.aimultiple.com/artificial-general-intelligence-singularity-timing/>

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videos, images and even music. The possibility of independent artistic work is slowly eroding as well⁹.

Why would a child wish or hope to join an industry that is slowly being eroded by machines that can't even produce copyrighted material? Again, we see a way that AI is spoiling the possibility of identity development and wellbeing by making learning instruments or any artistic skills useless. One can prompt AI in such a manner that it could technically give a number of musical albums per day while an average human may need days, weeks, even months in order to make a song.

It's unfortunate that even art became an issue of economics in the age of AI. Yes, measures were taken by the EU and from 2026 all AI content has to be labeled as such, but will it matter? Will the audiences be compelled to boycott AI content or will it simply embrace the new context of being able to make the exact music or videos you want just by writing text? This is a question only the future can answer, but we can assume that the truth will not be pleasant since social media platforms are starting to be infested with AI content, some obvious, some that is excessively realistic.

One last way that AI infringes on the rights of children is the way that companies have started using both AI commercials and certain toys. By using machines to make commercials, companies have created false advertising and there have been reports of children's toys that are not well regulated in such a manner that it can't encourage dangerous behaviors¹⁰.

The question remaining is where are legislators across the globe? Legislation regulating the use and development of AI is yet to be fully implemented or even drafted. Due to the speed at which AI is being developed and the economic war between centers of power AI laws are not as restrictive as they should be in order to safeguard the rights of children across the world.

The People's Republic of China has adopted an interim law which tries to balance development and security, the US Copyright Office has decided to not grant patents or rights over works of art made by AI unless significant human input was involved, giving artists and writers a way to combat the previously explained copyright abuse, and the EU is preparing to implement legislation to limit both development and the effects of AI. All of these laws are important and essential for the average human to combat the negative effects of AI but it is nowhere near sufficient, not individually, not collectively for humanity.

CONCLUSION

In a perverse twist of faith, AI is not making life easier by taking up manual labor, but it's steadily capturing work from educated people and from the

⁹ <https://www.cisac.org/Newsroom/news-releases/global-economic-study-shows-human-creators-future-risk-generative-ai>

¹⁰ <https://futurism.com/experts-horrified-ai-toys>

arts which were beginning to gain the status of safe jobs since the last technological revolutions of social media and largely from the development of computers.

There is a cold war in which AI companies and governments are making moves both together and in antagonism of each other. The sad truth of this state of affairs is that globally, children are being affected at a higher rate than adults.

An adult is supposed to be able to differentiate from what is real and what is fabricated by a machine, what art and information which were crafted by his fellow men and how it stirs in the spirit of humans. Children do not benefit from these presupposed cognitive abilities.

A child's development, safety, education and formation of identity are essential steps in the formation of healthy, productive and fulfilled adults that will build the future in the image of their development.

There are already major issues in how UN initiatives are implemented in member countries. AI in its current state is slowly but steadily eroding the world that is supposed to protect the youth. Both economic and cultural erosion will result in a worsening of conditions for the children to grow and develop healthily.

Our only true hope is that legislators will find both the strength and the purpose to impose legislation that will limit and stop the development of AI in its rapacious state. Machines can make human life utopic and aid in ways not even science fiction could predict, but if we walk this path of greed and deregulation, we will experience a slowly creeping dystopia.

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