

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIAL WORK: ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Jovana Škorić^{1*}, Milena Galetin²

¹University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad, Serbia

²University Business Academy in Novi Sad, Faculty of Law for Commerce and
Judiciary, Novi Sad, Serbia

ORCID iDs: Jovana Škorić
Milena Galetin

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9028-2176>
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1489-6050>

Abstract

This paper will look at the potential of artificial intelligence in the field of social work as a helping profession focused on social justice, social development, democracy, equality and the protection of human rights. Artificial intelligence represents a complex area that is still not advanced enough, especially in the field of social work. In this sense, AI is seen as a discipline and science that should make everyday life easier, while on the other hand there are still numerous moral and ethical issues, especially in the field of human rights protection. At first glance, AI and social work may seem like an unlikely combination, or even as conflicting disciplines; however, the paper will show the strengths, and the common tendencies of the aforementioned disciplines. Additionally, the paper will present what the main ethical dilemmas and challenges in the implementation of artificial intelligence in the field of social work are, as well as what various state-of-the-art mechanisms are provided at the moment. Finally, the paper leaves room for discussion about the digitalisation of social work, the practicality of applying AI in social work, as well as the possibilities of more proactive protection of human rights and the establishment of new policies and practices.

Key words: artificial intelligence, social work, social justice, ethical dilemmas, protection of human rights.

* Corresponding author: Jovana Škorić, University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Dr Zorana Đinđića 2, 21102 Novi Sad, Serbia, jovana.skoric@ff.uns.ac.rs

ВЕШТАЧКА ИНТЕЛИГЕНЦИЈА И СОЦИЈАЛНИ РАД: ЕТИЧКЕ ДИЛЕМЕ И ИЗАЗОВИ У ЗАШТИТИ ЉУДСКИХ ПРАВА

Апстракт

У овом раду сагледаће се потенцијали вештачке интелигенције у домену социјалног рада као помоћне професије која је усмерена на социјалну правду, социјални развој, демократију, једнакост и заштиту људских права. Вештачка интелигенција представља једно комплексно подручје које још увек није довољно развијено, посебно у домену социјалног рада. У том смислу, ВИ се посматра као дисциплина и наука која би требало да олакша свакодневни живот, док са друге стране и даље постоје бројна морална и етичка питања, посебно у домену заштите људских права. Наизглед, ВИ и социјални рад могу изгледати као мало вероватна комбинација, или чак као сукобљене дисциплине, међутим у раду ће се приказати снаге, али и заједничке тенденције горепомнутих дисциплина. Са друге стране, приказаће се и које су главне етичке дилеме и изазови при имплементацији вештачке интелигенције у област социјалног рада, као и различити механизми који су тренутно актуелни. На крају рада остављен је простор за дискусију о дигитализацији социјалног рада, о практичности примене ВИ у социјалном раду, као и о могућностима проактивније заштите људских права и успостављању нових политика и пракси.

Кључне речи: вештачка интелигенција, социјални рад, социјална правда, етичке дилеме, заштита људских права.

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Social work has a long history of dealing with the protection of human rights. Bearing in mind that social workers deal largely with vulnerable and marginalised populations, as well as those whose *human rights are violated*, social work must be based on human rights.

In this context, social workers should adhere to professional ethical responsibilities, respecting the integrity of each person, while on the other hand, they often encounter various ethical dilemmas because decision-making and designing interventions in social work are almost always complex. Various authors (e.g. Ife, 2008) believe that human rights provide a moral basis for the practice of social work, both at the level of daily work with service users and at the level of community, and various forms of activism. The idea of human rights actually implies the search for universal principles that apply to all people, regardless of their cultural milieu, belief system, sex, gender, race, ability, etc. (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

It should be emphasised that human rights are not static, but differ over time and in relation to different cultures, as well as in relation to the political context, that is, they must be understood in context. *The Univer-*

sal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), although perhaps the most significant work when talking about the achievements of the twentieth century, should not be seen as a definition that will not be subject to change in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to make a sharp distinction between the *universality* of human rights and their *staticness* and/or *immutability*. Human rights should be universal, but this does not mean that they should not change over time and adapt to new trends and practices.

The foundation of the idea of human rights in social work is intrinsically connected with the concept of *justice*. It is important to note here that a distinction is usually made between retributive and restorative approaches to justice (see also Škorić & Galetin, 2022). If we take as an example a user who has committed a criminal act, the retributive approach recognises punishment as a form of sanction, that is, those who have committed a criminal act and thereby violated human rights should be made to ‘pay’ for their (mis)deeds. By contrast, a restorative justice approach seeks reconciliation, as well as the restoration of peace, security, non-violence and respect. It confronts the person who committed the crime with his behaviour and strives for corrective work and treatment, confronting the victim and creating a climate of non-violence. In that respect, social workers play a very important role, that is, this is the area of criminal justice where the profession of social work can make its great contribution to the protection of human rights.

The approach to social work related to the protection of human rights requires that users should have maximum input in making decisions concerning their future. On the other hand, social workers are expected to make a maximum effort to facilitate such contribution and to enable reciprocity in the relationship. Facilitating reciprocity and protection against oppressive practices requires social workers to be informed not only about the case they are dealing with, but also about the broader political and cultural-historical contexts of the beneficiaries (see also Ife, 2008). In this sense, it is necessary to mention human needs. When social work professionals assess needs, the actual desired state can be described as the *fulfilment of a certain right*. When, for example, social work professionals assess that the child needs special educational programs, this is done based on the understanding of the child’s right to an appropriate education and the right to realise the maximum educational potential. If the above is summarised, statements about needs within social work are also statements about (human) rights.

One of the most important characteristics of social work is the code of ethics, which serves as a work framework within which practitioners work. That is, ethics is an irreplaceable part of social work practice. However, the very nature of social work practice is often contradictory, and ethical dilemmas (as we saw earlier) are part of the practice of every social worker (Clark, 2000). In this sense, ethical codes serve to en-

courage the ethical behaviour of social workers, but also as a control function, trying to prevent unethical behaviour, discrimination and the violation of human rights.

Namely, the core of social work is to promote and protect society and defend the rights and interests of vulnerable individuals, groups and/or communities, which is currently confirmed by the international definition of social work, which states that the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect are key to social work. In this regard, the aspiration of modern social work is the incorporation of modern technologies into the profession, which will facilitate the enjoyment of the basic human rights and freedoms of citizens. One of the modern concepts is *artificial intelligence*, whose possibilities in the context of social work and human rights protection will be discussed in the following text.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK

The European Commission's Communication on Artificial Intelligence (2018) defines artificial intelligence (hereafter AI) as follows:

Artificial intelligence refers to systems that exhibit intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking actions – with a degree of autonomy to achieve specific goals. AI based systems can be purely software-based, operating in a virtual world (e.g. voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones, etc.).

(The European Commission's Communication on Artificial Intelligence, 2018, p. 3)

Artificial intelligence is not a unique tool, but a set of algorithmic computing capacities that can perform human functions in different environments (e.g. facial recognition, language processing, social intelligence, etc.). The appearance of such highly automated tools also stimulated the issue of *social justice* and *the protection of human rights*, especially in the helping professions where man with his knowledge and skills is the primary 'tool.' As a values-oriented profession with a strong ethical code, social work is in a position to engage across disciplines in order to provide information for improving policy and practice at all levels and protecting human rights. Namely, although it is spreading as an engineering tool, AI often represents a risk for vulnerable and underrepresented individuals (but also groups and communities), and it is necessary to incorporate ethical principles into these tools and products. That is, the core val-

ues of social work, such as social justice, integrity, and relationship-based practice, make it suitable to help empirically test the effectiveness of algorithmic products (Minguijón & Serrano-Martínez, 2022).

AI and social work may seem like an unlikely combination, or even conflicting disciplines. However, it turns out that there are three main intellectual points of convergence between these disciplines: complexity, uncertainty, and the importance of practice (see also Ohlenburg, 2020). The following *Figure 1* presents the activities of the social worker and the attempt to integrate AI in the field of social services. Namely, a few years ago there were tendencies to transform social work in relation to (new) technologies for the sake of improving social services. Special attention was drawn during 2020, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, when social services around the world rapidly adopted new technologies due to physical distancing measures.

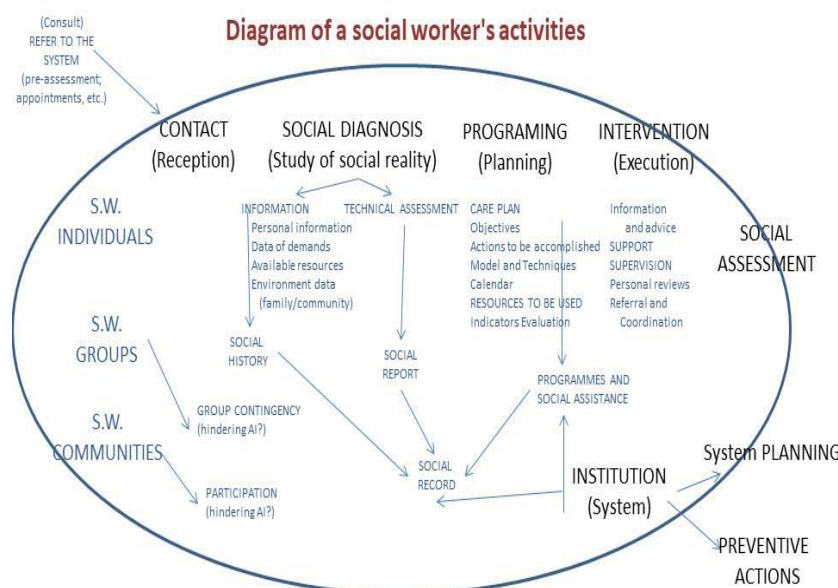


Figure 1. Diagram of a social worker's activities (Minguijón & Serrano-Martínez, 2022, p. 335)

AI, as shown, is certainly one of the mechanisms that facilitate the enjoyment of the basic rights and freedoms of citizens; however, it also represents a *risk* for certain rights and freedom: for example, the right to physical integrity and data integrity, the right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to access information, the right to privacy, and espe-

cially important in this context, the right to equality, non-discrimination and the protection of marginalised and deprived groups.

In other words, artificial intelligence can be a force that helps society overcome the great challenges of our time (e.g. poverty, homelessness, etc.), but it can also have negative effects. Some authors (e.g. Goldkind, 2021) argue that the potential for achieving social justice goals lies at the intersection of social work and artificial intelligence. By integrating AI into new initiatives, social workers can generate data-driven insights and formulate better protocols to promote social justice. A good example in this context is a project that used predictive modelling to create a six-point index that assesses the main predictors of youth homelessness, which could help communities proactively identify and prioritise housing interventions for youth at risk. In short, “AI has the power to promise the promotion of diversity, equality and inclusion. However, limited availability of data, biased nature of available data and lack of resources need to be overcome” (Chauhan & Kshetri, 2022, p.1).

Discrimination and biases are inherent problems in many AI applications (such as in facial recognition systems that fail to recognise dark-skinned women). These outcomes, that is, discrimination and bias can arise from limited data sets that do not fully represent society as a whole, which in the long run reinforces the inequality and injustice already present in certain communities. Some of the topics for further investigation in this domain are as follows.

- What happens when AI and algorithmic decision-making lead to someone being disadvantaged or discriminated against?
- What ethical considerations must be taken into account when developing artificial intelligence in social work and what are the priorities? If ethical parameters are incorporated and programmed into AI, whose ethical and social values are they, bearing in mind that every society, cultural group, system and/or state views ethics through contextual lenses? That is, variations in ethical and social values underlie our global society and are variable over time;
- What qualities must a robot have in order to get along or connect with a human being (which is a very important issue in social work)? It is also questionable whether it is possible to program a robot to conduct basic communication and understand some additional instructions;
- Who is responsible for the actions and abuses of AI? Is it the developer, the manufacturer, the end users, the AI itself, or someone else? (Russell & Norvig, 2010).

The above implies that it is very important to also address ethical issues in the AI domain in order to minimise the ethical harms that may result from poor (or unethical) design, inappropriate application or abuse.

Modern technologies raise issues that go to the core of human rights protection, such as the issues of privacy and free expression. In other words, AI can often have implications for democracy and people's right to private life and dignity. For example, if artificial intelligence can be used to determine people's political beliefs, then individuals could also become susceptible to manipulation. That is, political strategists could use this information to identify voters who, for example, vote for the ruling party, and could increase the voter turnout in elections through various resources.

Previous research (e.g. West, Whittaker & Crawford, 2019) testifies that there are still biases in AI algorithms, primarily due to the prejudices that exist in its creators. In addition, there is a deep concern about the degree to which the AI system can 'decipher' contexts, which is crucial to the interpretation of any action, especially in the area of social work. Due to a lack of understanding of language, cultural nuances and social context, there are numerous impacts when AI technologies misinterpret the environment and lead to human rights violations.

TOWARDS THE DIGITALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK: PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

In the age of digitalisation, social work, like other professions, is faced with the challenge of reflecting on its past performance and the possibilities of digitalisation. Digitalisation and its relationship to social work are multi-layered, fluid and complex, and must be understood in context. In this sense, context includes *practices*, *people*, as well as *places* and *premises* where social work takes place (Kirwan, 2019). During the last two decades, a significant number of discussions have been conducted on the topic of digital social work, and e-social work, i.e. the application of technologies in social work (Goldkind et al., 2018; Kirwan, 2019). NASW (2017) also publishes new standards and ethics for the use of technology in social work practice, which argues in favour of the widespread implementation of technologies in this field as well. Globalisation and technological advances are opening up new opportunities for social workers around the world. Structural inequalities, oppression, discrimination, and social exclusion are just some of the human rights issues that social workers deal with in their daily practice. In the context of the digitalisation of social work, some of the questions that arise are how human rights, social justice and social inclusion are practiced and promoted in the online environment. What is the role of social workers when we talk about technology and AI? Are digital services and the implementation of AI in social welfare only available in high-income countries? (see also Reamer, 2013).

Most countries have a social welfare system that strives to build equity, enable social justice and democracy, protect human rights, and provide different opportunities for its citizens. The systems generally provide a wide range of benefits and services due to various circumstances such as poverty, economic crises, climate change, conflict, migration, etc. Despite the diversity and exceptional range of programs, certain common points can be found among them. Basically, all systems function through four stages. The first stage is *assessment*, that is, the identification of users and the assessment of their needs. After that, the user is *admitted* and a certain benefit or service is *provided*. *Monitoring* and *management* were identified as the last step, i.e. the tendency towards the fact that the social welfare program must correspond to the real needs of the users, but at the same time ensure a high quality of service (Ohlenburg, 2020).

Bearing in mind the functioning of the social welfare system, one of the key observations in the context of the digitalisation of social work is that automation (of social services) is still an insufficiently recognised field due to contradictions in the rules, but also due to the complexity of cases in different social services (see also Kirwan, 2019). Regarding the digitalisation of social work, it should be emphasised that technologies do not act in isolation from people, and perhaps this is best explained by the phrase ‘digital dualism,’ coined by Jurgenson (2011). He highlights the dangers of focusing on one side, be it the human side or the technology side. That is, digital and material reality are not separate and actually co-construct each other, even in the domain of social work, which can be seen in *Figure 2*, which shows what needs to be incorporated into digital social work.

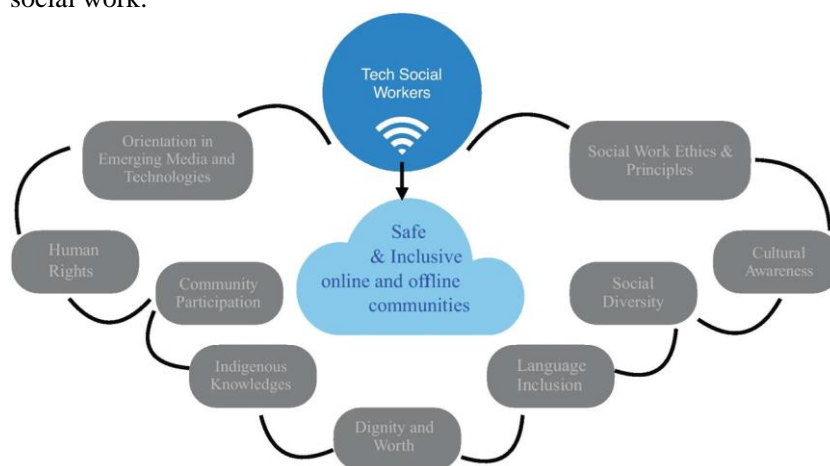


Figure 2. Social work skills and knowledge to promote human rights in emerging technologies (Kirwan 2019, p. 446)

When talking about artificial intelligence, as a special branch of technological achievements, it is still quite limited in the field of social work. However, two directions can be noticed in the implementation of digital technologies. The first is *the capacity to store and manage information*, and the second is certainly *virtual mediation as a tool for professional practice*. AI is conceived through algorithms, that is, a set of instructions designed to perform a specific task or solve a problem through a series of steps (Joyanes, 2003).

A study by Engstrom et al. (2020) in the USA, which included 157 public sector institutions in the field of social welfare, revealed only seven cases with a connection between social welfare and the AI system. Mainly, AI has been applied in the assessments of assistance to the homeless (Toros & Flaming, 2018), unemployment benefits (Kirwan, 2019) and child welfare services (Vogl, 2020). Examples of successful application of AI are also visible in Sweden in the domain of automation of social services (e.g. Ranerup & Henriskon, 2020).

However, various studies (e.g., Zhang & Dafoe, 2019) state several caveats regarding the consequences of algorithmic biases when working with humans. One of the biggest risks is the problem of *responsibility and 'explainability'*. If the AI systems recognise that a user should be denied benefits, in practice, citizens will demand that such outcomes be explained to them. However, AI-based outcomes are often non-transparent and not fully explainable because they involve various factors in multi-step algorithmic processes. Therefore, in this context, it is crucial to consider how the discretionary right fits into the framework of various legal regulations, the resolution of complaints and the responsibility of the social welfare system (Engstrom et al., 2020).

An additional risk of the AI application in social welfare and social work is *the misuse of integrated data*. That is, data is often misused for various purposes for which it was not primarily collected. It is precisely for this reason that building trust in artificial intelligence is very important. On the other hand, various surveys (e.g. Zhang & Dafoe, 2019) show that almost 80% of respondents do not trust the ability of government organisations to manage AI systems. Namely, the gathering of information for social welfare programs is a very sensitive field. The 'leaking' of information about someone's income, assets, health or work status can have serious consequences for that person or their family. Namely, safe storage of such data is an essential duty of every social welfare organisation. In case of sharing information with a third party, e.g. service provider of the AI system, data protection should extend to the third party, and protocols for responsible data sharing should be included as the standard part (Ohlenburg, 2020).

The rapid evolution and spread of new technologies (also in the field of social work), as we have seen, have great implications for the en-

joyment of human rights. Indeed, many contemporary challenges are inextricably linked to the growing power of digital technologies. *The Human Rights Council* regularly reviews the human rights implications of new technologies. One of the most profound benefits of the digital age has been to provide a global, open and inclusive platform for the exchange of information, ideas and opinions. However, we have seen that new challenges come with it, including the promotion and protection of human rights. Summing up the above risks and challenges, the following questions need to be answered in different domains:

- *Human rights and well-being* – does AI serve the best interest of humanity and human well-being?
- *Emotional harm* – will AI degrade the integrity of the human emotional experience or facilitate emotional or mental harm?
- *Accountability* – who is responsible for the AI and who will be held accountable for its actions?
- *Security, privacy, availability and transparency* – how do you balance availability and transparency with privacy and security, especially when it comes to data and personalisation?
- *Social harm and social justice* – how can one ensure that the AI is inclusive, without bias and discrimination, that is, aligned with moral and ethical norms and values?
- *Financial damage* – how will we control AI that negatively affects economic opportunities and employment?
- *Legality and justice* – how can one ensure that data gathering and processing by AI is done in a fair and legal manner, is subject to appropriate regulations? In that case, what would those regulations be?
- *Control and ethical (mis)use of AI* – how can we protect ourselves against unethical use of AI, and how can it remain under human control while simultaneously developing and learning?
- *Environmental damage and sustainability* – how can we protect ourselves against potential environmental damage?
- *Existential risk* – how can we avoid an AI arms race? (European Parliament, 2020).

Having the above-mentioned challenges in mind, the incorporation of AI in the field of social work requires a greater engagement of all parties, precisely because of the intersection of technology and human rights (Mathiyazhagan, 2022). *The World Summit on the Information Society* (2003) declares that compliance with the UDHR is essential to building an information society that is inclusive, developmental and people-oriented. In this sense, social workers should collaborate and co-create social policies, collaborate with community members, but also with people who design new technologies, especially in the context of social work.

Finally, it can be concluded that very few studies have been conducted to propose different ways for introducing AI into social welfare and social work. However, it is very clear that the human factor must be taken into account, the legal, managerial and ethical components that must be harmonised. Such an intervention requires a certain reinterpretation and the introduction of new protective mechanisms in the area of policies, laws and regulations that will be focused on new technological processes, including AI. In addition, there is a need for new social policies that would deal with social transformations brought about by new technologies. Also, for the sake of a positive incorporation of AI in the field of social work, it is necessary to create cooperation between social work professionals, computer scientists and other actors in order to prevent the violation of human rights and various biases in artificial intelligence systems.

REFERENCES

- Chauhan, P. S. & Kshetri, N. (2022). The role of data and artificial intelligence in driving diversity, equality and inclusion. *Computer*, 55, 4, 88-93.
- Clark, Ch. L. (2000). *Social work ethics: politics, principles and practice*. Chichester: Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Engstrom, D. F., Ho, D. E., Sharkey, C.M. & Cuellar, M. F. (2020). Government by algorithm: Artificial intelligence in federal administrative agencies. *Public Law Research. Paper*, 2, 20-54.
- European Parliament (2020). *The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence: Issues and Initiatives*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/634452/EPRS_STU\(2020\)634452_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/634452/EPRS_STU(2020)634452_EN.pdf)
- Goldkind, L. (2021). *Social Work and Artificial Intelligence: Into the Matrix*. London: Social Service Faculty Publications.
- Ife, J. (2008). *Human rights and social work: toward rights-based practice*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Jurgenson, N. (2011). *Digital dualism versus augmented reality*. *The Society Pages: Cyborgology*. Retrieved from <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/02/24/digital-dualism-versus-augmented-reality/>
- Kirwan, G. (2019). Editorial: Networked relationships in the digital age—messages for social work. *Journal of Social Work Practice* 33, 2, 123–126.
- Mathiyazhagan, S. (2022). Field Practice, Emerging Technologies, and Human Rights: the Emergence of Tech Social Workers. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, 7, 441-448.
- Minguijón, J. & Serrano-Martínez, C. (2022). Artificial Intelligence in social services: state of art and potential future developments. *Cuadernos de trabajo social*, 35(2), 331-340.
- National Association of Social Workers (2017). *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSW standards for technology in social work practice*. Retrieved from: https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf
- Ohlenburg, T. (2020). *AI in Social Protection – Exploring opportunities and Migrating Risks*. Bon: Giz.

- Ranerup, A. & Henriksen, H. Z. (2020). Digital Discretion: Unpacking human and technological agency in automated decision making in Swedens social services. *Social Science Computer Review*, 40 (2), 264-287.
- Reamer, F. G. (2013). Social work in a digital age: Ethical and risk management challenges. *Social Work*, 58 (2), 163-172.
- Russell, S. J. & Norvig, P. (2010) *Artificial intelligence: a modern approach*. 3. Ed. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice-Hall.
- Škorić, J. i Galetin, M. (2022). Uloga forenzičkog socijalnog rada u primeni restorativne pravde i zaštiti ljudskih prava. U D. Vujisić (ur) *Sadašnjost i budućnost uslužnog prava* (str. 671-684). Kragujevac: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Kragujevcu.
- Toros, H. & Flaming, D. (2018). Prioritizing Homeless Assistance Using Predictive Algorithms: An Evidence-Based Approach. *Cityscape*, 20, 1, 117–146.
- The European Commission's Communication on Artificial Intelligence (2018). *Artificial Intelligence for Europe*. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A237%3AFIN>
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. New York: Nations General Assembly.
- Vogl, T. M. (2020). *Artificial intelligence and organizational memory in government: The experience of record duplication in the child welfare sector in Canada*. The 21st Annual international conference on digital government research. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344838279_Artificial_Intelligence_and_Organizational_Memory_in_Government_The_Experience_of_Record_Duplication_in_the_Child_Welfare_Sector_in_Canada
- West, S. M., Whittaker, M. & Crawford, K. (2019). *Discriminating systems: gender, race, and power in AI*. Retrieved from <https://ainowinstitute.org/discriminatingystems.pdf>.
- Zhang, B. & Dafoe, A. (2019). *Artificial Intelligence: American Attitudes and Trends*. Retrieved from <https://governanceai.github.io/US-Public-Opinion-Report-Jan-2019/>

ВЕШТАЧКА ИНТЕЛИГЕНЦИЈА И СОЦИЈАЛНИ РАД: ЕТИЧКЕ ДИЛЕМЕ И ИЗАЗОВИ У ЗАШТИТИ ЉУДСКИХ ПРАВА

Јована Шкорић¹, Милена Галетин²

¹Универзитет у Новом Саду, Филозофски факултет, Нови Сад, Србија

²Универзитет у Новом Саду, Правни факултет за привреду и правосуђе у Новом Саду, Нови Сад, Србија

Резиме

Област социјалног рада и социјалне заштите мења се у односу на технолошка достигнућа. Вештачка интелигенција засигурно јесте један од механизма који (потенцијално) могу да утичу на унапређење услуга социјалне заштите, олакшавајући уживање основних права и слобода грађана, али са друге стране представља и ризик. Неке од етичких дилема када је у питању инкорпорирање ВИ у област социјалног рада и социјалне заштите јесу и: шта се дешава уколико ВИ и алгоритамско доношење одлука доведе до тога да неко буде у неповољном положају или дискримисан, чије етичке и друштвене вредности су инкорпориране у ВИ, с обзиром на то да свако друштво, систем и/или држава посматрају етику кроз контекст, и ко је одговоран уколико дође до злоупотребе ВИ – да ли је то програмер,

произвођач, крајњи корисници или неко трећи. Наиме, важно питање када се прича о контексту дигитализације социјалног рада јесте и (не)могућност аутоматизације социјалних услуга због сложености случајева и потребе да се дубоко разуме људско понашање. Различита досадашња истраживања (нпр. Торос & Фламинг, 2018) показују да је ВИ и даље врло слабо заступљена и недовољно развијена у овој области.

Глобализација и технолошки напредак дефинитивно отварају нове могућности за социјалне раднике и друге запослене у социјалној заштити. Све ово захтева време, колективну вољу и различите акције како би се дигитализација спровела на адекватан начин уз пуно поштовање људских права.