

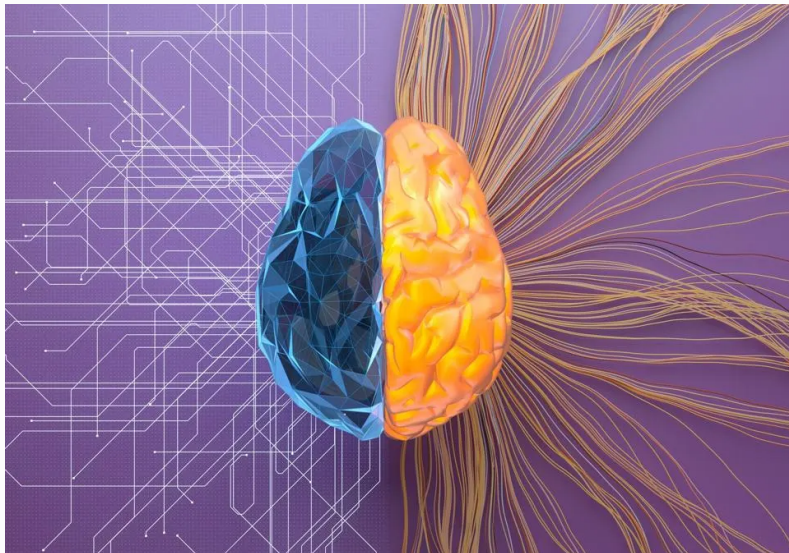
Looking Beyond Automation And Efficiency: AI For Social Good



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Forbes Communications Council **COUNCIL POST** | Membership (Fee-Based)

Aug 24, 2021, 07:30am EDT

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When we learn about use cases in AI, we often hear about them through the lens of the companies behind them: How they obtained cost savings, new revenue sources or greater efficiencies through implementation. We might also hear about how customers benefited from a more personalized or speedier experience. But what's missing from these dialogues is a crucial component to AI and its future: the social good that it can (and has) done.

Shifting The Narrative Toward Inclusive AI

Marketers and communications experts in the field of AI have a responsibility when it comes to what they choose to communicate. Their words frequently shape discussions

around key AI topics, and these dialogues can influence shifts in priorities for decision-makers. Highlighting the societal benefits of AI can drive conversations around how we can make AI more inclusive (as I've [written about](#) before) and can ultimately create lasting change. It's important that AI communications professionals use their positions to keep responsible AI top of mind for AI practitioners.

Many groups of people around the world are still [underrepresented in AI](#). As AI leaders make progress toward creating more inclusive solutions that include these individuals, communications professionals should emphasize these successes in service of not only highlighting the good that comes from AI but also encouraging companies to invest more in inclusive solutions. The more we celebrate these use cases, the more motivated AI practitioners may be to explore further applications.

The value of AI solutions for social good can't be understated. They could result in greater accessibility and participation in technology for people who have traditionally been underserved and underrepresented. Here are several reasons and case studies that illustrate the potential contributions of AI to society.

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Improved Accessibility For Individuals With Disabilities

The World Health Organization [estimates](#) that over 1 billion people around the world have a disability; some disabilities can impact the way people interact with technology. AI that caters to their needs could enable these people to use technology that may have previously been untenable for them. Here are a couple of AI use cases worth mentioning:

- **Facebook and Instagram captioning:** Millions of people have "disabling" hearing loss. For them, watching video content can be challenging or impossible without closed captioning. Facebook Live now offers automatic captioning on live videos. Instagram, likewise, is letting users add automatic captions to their Stories.

- **Automatic speech recognition (ASR) for those with speech impairments:** AI experts and companies like [Voiceitt](#) are working on providing more assistive speech technology through automatic speech recognition (ASR). With ASR, AI may be better able to understand the voices of those with speech impairments, meaning that these individuals could use voice technology more effectively.

Greater Participation For Speakers Of All Languages

Many people around the world speak low-resource languages. These are languages and dialects that aren't well-represented in technology, even though some of them have a significant number of speakers. As a result, low-resource language speakers may experience technological limitations that others don't. Here's how AI is changing that:

- **Endangered and low-resource language research:** AI practitioners are researching the development of machine learning technology for communities that speak low-resource languages. For instance, Microsoft (an Appen client) [added the Inuktitut language](#) — spoken primarily in Nunavut, Canada — to its translator app.

- **Covid-19 information dissemination:** [TICO-19](#) is a partnership between multiple companies (including mine) that includes Translators without Borders. Their goal is to provide important Covid-19 information in as many languages as possible.

Better Representation In Technology

AI practitioners should work on creating solutions that are more representative of their end-users. For example:

- **Inclusive chatbots:** Companies should train chatbots on data sourced from a wide variety of participants, including people of various genders, ethnicities and ages. Crowdsourcing and data labeling companies in the NLP space are already working to enable this. As a result, more people from diverse backgrounds may be able to use chatbots effectively. Companies like PwC offer [recommendations](#) for creating "gender-friendly" chatbots.

- **Language proofing:** Microsoft 365 already supports inclusive language in its proofing tools, including the ability to adjust grammar settings to address biased language in the text.

Numerous use cases demonstrate the power of AI for social good; I think it's time that we highlight and celebrate them for the important progress they represent.

For Communications Professionals: Reframing The AI Narrative

If communications professionals shared more use cases like those noted above, it could also become clearer to the wider population how important a role AI could play in our society. Instead of the "AI is going to take over your job" narrative, we might see a shift in the discussion to how AI stands to create a more inclusive, accessible technology experience for everyone. Those of us in the field all have a higher purpose both when building AI and when communicating about it. Our AI goals should be more than just business-oriented; more importantly, they should be centered around benefiting our society and all the people within it.

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