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The transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI), is well known. Less talked about are the ethical concerns raised by its rapid development. Ray Burnell gives us a deeper look into AI and the work with CBIS portfolio companies.

From a high level, what's the thing you most hope to achieve when you engage with a company concerning AI?

As Pope Leo XIV emphasizes, AI requires moral responsibility and wisdom. It's important to us that portfolio companies have robust safeguards around developing and deploying AI in their businesses. We're looking for an AI process that's thinking about human dignity, care for the most vulnerable, respect for the truth, and moral accountability.

Our ultimate goal is for a company to operate ethical AI policies and practices aligned with Catholic values.

Can you offer any specifics about what a safeguard might be?

First and foremost, it's critical that the final moral and life impacting decisions about the use of AI are made by people, not algorithms. In other words, the first AI safeguard is human oversight, not machine.

From there, AI systems must be transparent and, for lack of a better word, explainable. And by that, I mean the system can be audited and corrected for errors. Accountability structures like review boards and enforceable standards must be in place that require clear responsibility for outcomes. In a similar vein, an AI program must have built-in justice and inclusion, which essentially means the removal of bias.

AI design should serve all people. We need to tend to technology as a good shepherd with virtue, care, transparency, and solidarity.



**Pope Leo XIV noted,
“AI must be guided by
moral principles that
uphold human freedom
and dignity.”**

Source: Message to the Second Annual Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Corporate Governance (Rome, 17 June 2025).

Given today’s environment, we’d have to think privacy is a big thing.

Absolutely. It’s crucial that any AI system protects personal data and an individual’s autonomy. The design must resist any type of surveillance or manipulation. Privacy and freedom are important safeguards.

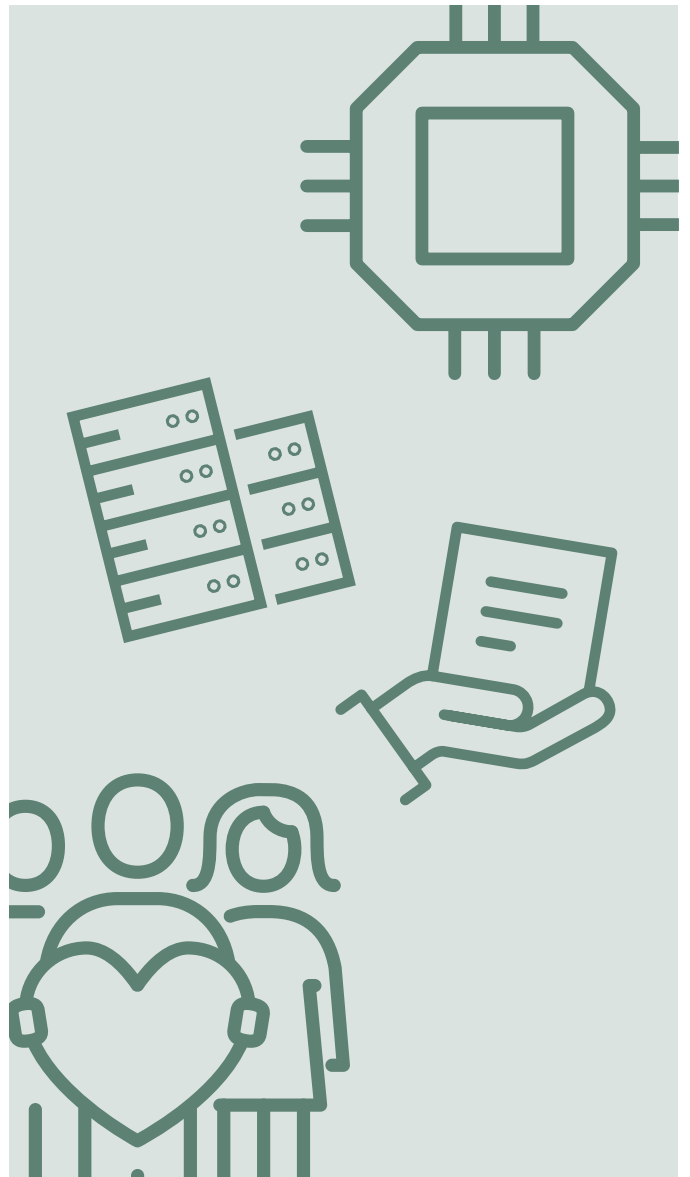
How can a company that’s large enough to employ AI balance innovation with accountability?

It starts by recognizing respect for human dignity. The goal of an ethically designed AI system should be to enhance and not replace either human work or decision-making.

Ethical governance integrates moral and social responsibility into the corporate strategy, but not as an afterthought. It should be upfront. Innovation needs to be accountable to conscience.

Can you give any specifics on the companies you’re engaging with regarding AI and why?

Right now, we’re talking with Samsung, Microsoft, Alphabet, Qualcomm, and Meta, primarily through collective impact coalitions (CIC) of the World Benchmarking Alliance. The objective is to improve these companies’ commitments to ethical AI, asking them to implement, demonstrate, and publicly disclose their results.



Any successes you can share?

At the CIC's urging, Samsung has put together a whole new AI strategy team that's looking at a human rights impact assessment component of the ethical AI framework. Microsoft, meanwhile, just put out its second **AI Transparency Report** and is working on how to use AI to identify and improve its use to identify exploitation and abuse. Both of these companies handle massive amounts of highly sensitive information.

In total, do you believe AI can affect human dignity and the common good?

Without argument. It's not at all hyperbolic to suggest that AI can free people. It can free people of drudgery. It can improve health care. It can expand education, it can promote inclusion.

There are risks, of course, not least of which is treating people like data points. But in the end, I'm confident AI can really honor people and honor each person's God-given worth.



“Ethical governance integrates moral and social responsibility into the corporate strategy...”

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