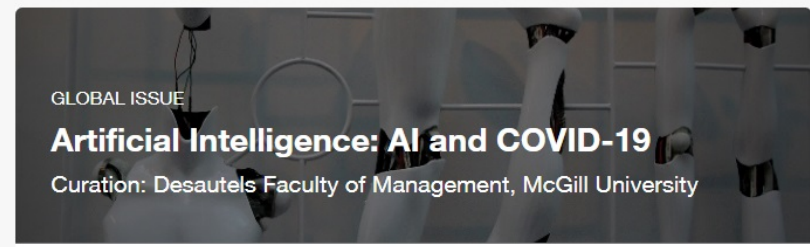
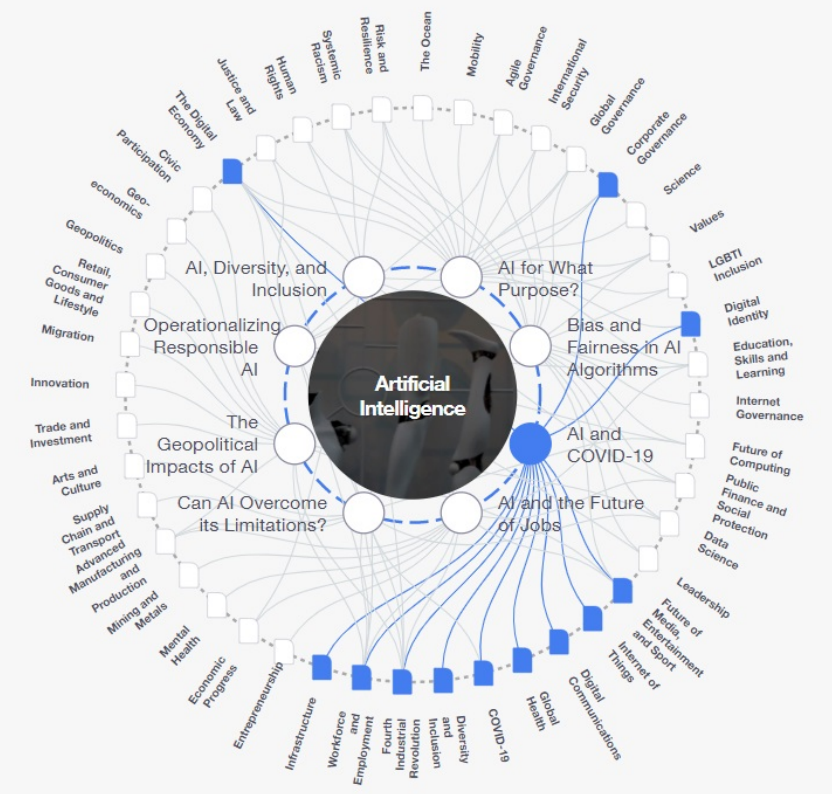


Discover



GLOBAL ISSUE
Artificial Intelligence: AI and COVID-19
Curation: Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University

The pandemic may lead to a greater appreciation of the value of human interaction

COVID-19 has had contradictory effects on artificial intelligence. The pandemic has highlighted the unusual nature of AI as both a cutting-edge technology, and one that relies on the status quo, for example. Innovative AI systems have played a role in addressing the health crisis by tracking its spread, identifying potential drug therapies, and sifting through thousands of published papers on the topic for insights. At the same time, the pandemic poses fundamental challenges to AI systems. The version of AI now in common use, machine learning, relies on historical training data and assumes that the patterns identified in that data are still relevant. However, during unprecedented situations, this type of assumption can be problematic. Approaches to addressing this problem include using human expertise to recognize the places where the underlying rules of the process still apply, and collecting new training data that more accurately reflect the changed conditions. As the pandemic lingers, we should be able to accumulate enough real-world examples of its impact to underpin AI systems that can do things like detect COVID-19 in lung scans, or automatically filter out harmful misinformation about the pandemic.

However, we must not push aside the principles that govern AI use in our rush to address the crisis. Contact tracing apps, for example, have raised concerns