
Editor's Note

We are now in a post-industrial, digital world. That doesn't mean that the analog world is no longer with us. We know from historical inflection points in society that transformational changes are not only a shift to the new, but also layer on top of the old. It will be important to view the articles in this special issue on "Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Negotiation" in this way—sometimes replacing what might be called analog bargaining, but also layering on top of interpersonal patterns that persist.

The logic of intersecting new and old regimes was outlined in *The Second Industrial Divide* in 1984 by Michael Piore and Charles Sabel. They observed that although the first industrial divide involved mass production that replaced craft production, craft production was still needed to make the machinery for mass production, as well as to serve niche markets. Furthermore, they observed that the post-industrial era had certain flexible features that harkened back to the craft era. In the same way, the articles in this issue document how the rise of AI-informed negotiation technologies are replacing some interpersonal interactions—for example, online dispute resolution (ODR) systems are replacing interpersonal alternative dispute resolution (ADR) systems. But the articles also document how AI technologies may enhance and improve interpersonal negotiations (with prompts that generate information exchange and identify options that might not have been considered) and how social media can make visible crucial interests that need to be taken into account.

For the many of us who teach negotiation and conflict resolution, all of the articles in this special issue have relevance in the classroom. Substantively it would be hard to teach negotiation today without addressing bargaining in a virtual context. Moreover, as some of the contributions to this issue demonstrate, there are innovations in pedagogy that are transforming teaching in our field with new forms of feedback, improved simulation experiences, and other innovations.

Despite the power and potential of AI in negotiation, the articles in this issue also make clear the many limits and risks associated with these new technologies. The pace of change in digital contexts can be much faster than analog. Biases are embedded in software that can distort perceptions. Social media intrudes and sometimes undermines bargaining. Furthermore, there is evidence documented in this issue that the technologies may accentuate the worst tendencies in negotiation, such as misrepresentation, exaggeration, coercion, deceit, and other

behaviors that cross ethical lines. In this way, this issue is not only an overview of what is emerging with new technology, but it also serves as a call to action. Now is the time to lean in on the challenges associated with the newly emerging technologies—when they can still be shaped.

We know from history that it only gets harder to mitigate the risks of new technologies as time goes on and the patterns become institutionalized. Witness how hard it is to address weaponized social media today compared to what might have been possible with a concerted focus on norms, standards, and strategies just one or two decades ago. In fact, it was over two decades ago, in 1994, that the Program on Negotiation hosted its first workshop on “Computers and Negotiation,” which was followed by a 1995 special section of *Negotiation Journal* that surfaced themes still relevant today. Pioneering as this early work was, it did not prove foundational for broader dialogue in society. That is a lot to ask for any issue of a journal and it may have been too early for some of the technology challenges to resonate fully. Still, I am reminded of advice given to technology entrepreneurs in four words: early, early, early, and late. That is, new ideas are early and continue to be early during many twists and turns, until, seemingly suddenly, they are late. In this context, this special issue comes “late” on some technologies and still “early” for many other emerging technologies. It is particularly for these emerging technologies that this issue provides “weak signals” for the challenges to come. This issue stands as an invitation for us all to tune our minds to receive these signals and engage more fully and intensively. It also stands as a challenge for how to build on powerful ideas in a journal to make broader meaningful change in society.

On a personal note, it is a delight to have Michael Wheeler serve as guest editor for this issue. Not only did he co-conceptualize and co-lead the working conference on AI, technology, and negotiation that generated the material for this special issue, but he is editor-in-chief emeritus for *Negotiation Journal* (and my immediate predecessor). So there is special meaning to have him back in an editorial role. My comments here are brief since he is more fully introducing each of the contributions to this issue.

Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld