work. Data Analysis: AI can process and analyze massive amounts of data in real time, identifying patterns and helping make more informed decisions.

Improved Decision Making: With its ability to process large volumes of information, AI helps make more accurate and faster decisions at all levels, from the production to the business level.

Enhanced Security: AI is used to detect fraud, predict attacks, and monitor suspicious activity, improving security in various areas, including cybersecurity.

Personalization: AI technologies enable personalized user experiences, such as in education, where it can tailor materials to individual student needs.

24/7 Availability: AI-powered systems can operate 24/7 without interruption, ensuring continuous service and customer support at all times.

Innovation and Creativity: By automating routine tasks, AI gives people more time and opportunity to develop creative and strategic skills. In manufacturing, for example, it can assist in the creation of innovative designs.

Predictive Maintenance: In industry, AI can be used to predict equipment failures, enabling preventative maintenance before problems arise.

Artificial intelligence (AI) poses risks due to potential abuse (cyberattacks, disinformation), security issues (errors, loss of control over autonomous systems), and socioeconomic and ethical implications (unemployment, bias, privacy threats). There is also a risk of creating «superintelligence» that could run amok and act against human interests.

After my research I came to the conclusion that artificial intelligence can have both positive and negative sides. When used with good intentions, it can bring about major breakthroughs in virtually any field. When used with malicious intent, the consequences can be catastrophic.

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DIGITAL DIVIDE: ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AS A FACTOR OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Цифровое неравенство: доступ к технологиям как фактор социальной стратификации

In today's world, where digital technologies permeate all spheres of human life – from education and employment to healthcare and public administration – access to them has ceased to be simply a matter of convenience and has become a key factor determining

the social status, opportunities, and prospects of individuals and entire social groups. This phenomenon has become known as the digital divide.

The aim of this study is to analyze how unequal access to digital technologies acts as a factor in social stratification and to identify key dimensions of digital inequality (access to infrastructure, quality of devices, digital literacy, and the ability to convert digital skills into economic and social resources).

The early internet era heralded the accessibility of any information, freeing us from the intermediaries of major newspapers, magazines, and television companies, who determined and decided for us which news was most important, what should be covered in the press, and how a given event should be interpreted. However, the apparent freedom of access to information actually conceals uneven access and use of information resources. Digital inequality is emerging. Digital inequality is defined as «uneven and unequal access by countries, social groups, and individual users to network telecommunications infrastructure, digital devices, and services, of a technological, economic, sociopolitical, and individual nature, limiting people's opportunities in all areas of their lives». Primarily, the following levels of digital inequality can be identified:

- a global level characterizing the digital divide between industrialized and developing countries;
- a social level associated with the use of information and communication technologies by various socioeconomic groups within individual nation-states;
- an individual level associated with the use of ICT by different types of users.

Digital inequality is not just an indicator but also an active agent of social stratification because it:

- Perpetuates economic inequality by limiting access to competitive jobs and new economic models for those lacking digital resources and skills.
- Deepens educational gaps by creating a «digital barrier» to obtaining relevant knowledge and qualifications.
- Excludes groups of the population deprived of access to digital communication platforms from active civic and social participation.

The study identified the causes of digital inequality, its levels, and its significance for modern society. Digital inequality is a key factor in the formation of a new social hierarchy, where access to technology and the ability to use it become the most important criteria for social status and life prospects.