

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE · RESEARCH WORKSHOPS

Interreligious Dialogue “Assisted by” and “in Dialogue with” AI

Concepts, Approaches and Challenges

19–21 OCTOBER 2026 · UNIVERSITY OF MONTREAL

Conference Room C-3061, Carrefour des arts et des sciences
Lionel-Groulx Pavilion, 3150 Jean-Brillant Street

SCIENTIFIC RATIONALE · PROGRAM · PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

FORMAT

The scientific conference will take place on 19 October and on the morning of 20 October. The research, experimentation and validation workshops devoted to Dialogia will be held on the afternoon of 20 October and throughout 21 October.

19 OCTOBER

Sessions 1 to 3 · Knowledge, mediation and dialogical transformation

20 OCTOBER

Session 4 · Ethics and governance · Workshop 1

21 OCTOBER

Workshops 2 and 3 · Sources, evaluation and roadmap

SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK RATIONALE

Why Think Artificial Intelligence and Interreligious Dialogue Together?

The religious field is undergoing a profound transformation under the impact of the rise of generative artificial intelligence and digital environments. Technology is no longer merely a vehicle for transmitting knowledge or religious discourse. It intervenes in the production, selection, prioritization and reformulation of information, while also participating in the construction of reciprocal representations among individuals, communities and traditions. Digital spaces can amplify stereotypes, disinformation, polarization and hatred, but they can also foster translation, contextualization, verification, mediation and mutual understanding. The project brings together the humanities, religious studies and intelligent technologies to examine the conditions for using AI in ways that respect plurality and human dignity.

The conference therefore does not merely ask how artificial intelligence can be used in interreligious dialogue. It examines the transformations that AI introduces into the very structure of knowledge, mediation and dialogue. When systems interpret discourse, mobilize sources, reformulate positions, clarify statements and make perspectives visible, they move from assistance to mediation, and even toward interlocution. This evolution requires us to rethink agency, understanding, responsibility and the boundaries between human initiative and algorithmic intervention.

Conversely, the reflection also considers what religious studies, philosophy, ethics and mediation practices can contribute to the development of AI. The project therefore places the humanization, ethicization and governance of AI at the heart of its approach. The aim is to integrate dignity, plurality, equity and responsibility into the design, use and evaluation of systems, while keeping human expertise at the center of verification and decision-making.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

How does artificial intelligence reconfigure knowledge, discourse, representations of religion and interreligious dialogue? How far can we move from AI conceived as a support tool to AI as a mediator, or even as an interactive interlocutor, without reducing religious plurality or weakening the centrality of the human? Under what epistemological, ethical and governance conditions can this relationship foster a nuanced understanding of difference and the construction of common ground?

FOUR SCIENTIFIC AXES

- 1 Artificial Intelligence and the Reconfiguration of Knowledge, Discourse and Representations of Religion**
- 2 Rethinking Interreligious Dialogue in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Concept, Agency and Limits of Mediation**
- 3 From Polarization to Dialogical Transformation in Digital Space: Analyzing the Structure of Disagreement and Measuring the Quality of Dialogue**
- 4 Humanizing, Ethicizing and Governing Artificial Intelligence in Religious Contexts**

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Schedule of the main sequences

Sessions

Discussion

Workshops

Breaks / meals

Opening / closing

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER · SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

Time	Sequence	Overview
8 h 30–9 h 15	Welcome & opening	Participant welcome followed by presentation of the scientific objectives
9 h 15–11 h 00	SESSION 1	Knowledge, discourse and representations of religion
11 h 00–11 h 15	Coffee break	Transition
11 h 15–13 h 00	SESSION 2	Concepts, agency and limits of mediation
13 h 00–14 h 00	Lunch	Meal break
14 h 00–15 h 45	SESSION 3	Polarization, prevention and dialogical transformation
15 h 45–16 h 00	Coffee break	Transition
16 h 00–17 h 00	Cross-cutting discussion	Plurality, authority, dialogical quality, sources and oversight

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER · From Scientific Reflection to Co-Design

Time	Sequence	Overview
9 h 00–11 h 30	SESSION 4	Humanizing, ethicizing and governing AI
11 h 00–11 h 15	Coffee break	Transition
11 h 15–15 h 45	WORKSHOP 1	Testing Dialogia's dialogical mediation pathway
15 h 45–16 h 00	Coffee break	Transition
16 h 00–17 h 00	Synthesis	Preparation of the comparative protocol

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER · Experimentation, Validation and Governance

Time	Sequence	Overview
9 h 00–11 h 45	WORKSHOP 2	Sources, plurality, verification and human oversight
11 h 45–13 h 00	Lunch	Meal break
13 h 00–15 h 15	WORKSHOP 3	Comparative protocol, ethical principles and roadmap
15 h 15–15 h 30	Coffee break	Transition
15 h 30–17 h 30	SPECIAL ACTIVITIES Debrief & closing	Validation of results, conclusions and next steps

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER

OPENING · SESSIONS 1, 2 AND 3

8 h 30 – 9 h 00 Participant welcome

9 h 00 – 9 h 15 Opening and presentation of the scientific objectives (SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE) *

SESSION 1 · 9 H 15 – 11 H 00

Artificial intelligence and the reconfiguration of knowledge, discourse and representations of religion

Moderator: Patrice Brodeur

Michel Younès — Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy) / PLURIEL

Toward a Renewed Perspective on Anthropologies in Dialogue in the Age of AI

Jean Druel — Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), Cairo

Rethinking Bibliographic Research in (Inter)religious Studies through a Conversational Agent

Raphaël Georgy — PLURIEL

“Answer Like an Imam?” A Design Debate Revealing the Threshold of Authority

Adrien de Fouchier — Vatican Apostolic Library

Feeding AI with Texts and Metadata

Wael Saleh — IEIM-UQAM / TRENDS / PLURIEL

Rethinking the Plurality of Contemporary Islam and Dialogue in the Name of Religion in the Age of AI: An Ethical-Onto-Epistemological Approach

10 h 30 – 11 h 00 General discussion

11 h 00 – 11 h 15 Coffee break

SESSION 2 · 11 H 15 – 13 H 00

Rethinking Interreligious Dialogue in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Concepts, Agency and Limits of Mediation

Moderator: Michel Younès

Raja Sakrani — University of Bonn / PLURIEL

Artificial Intelligence, a Substitute for the Divine? Some Consequences for Interreligious Dialogue

Patrice Brodeur — University of Montreal (UdeM)

Can the Interactive Communication Required between LLM Users and their Generative AI Platforms be compared—and potentially become—a new form of Dialogue within or beyond Interworldview Dialogue?

Eissa Ali AlMannaei — TRENDS Research & Advisory

When Artificial Intelligence Becomes a Mediator: Reliability, Responsibility and Limits in Interreligious Dialogue

Anne de Luca — Thucydide Center (Paris-Panthéon-Assas University)

Interreligious Dialogue Put to the Test by AI: Moving from the Illusion of Mastery to Productive Controversy

Anthony J. El Beainy — Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ)

Inhabiting Dialogue Without Inhabiting Faith: AI as an Interreligious Mediator

Chadi El Kahwaji — Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ) / AUB

From Narrative to Mediation: Generative AI as an Interpretive Third Party in Interreligious Dialogue in Contemporary Arabic Narrative

12 h 30 – 13 h 00 General discussion

13 h 00 – 14 h 00 Lunch

SESSION 3 · 14 H 00 – 15 H 15

From Polarization to Dialogical Transformation in the Digital Age: Analyzing Disagreement and Building Encounter

Moderator: Emmanuel Pisani

Heather Miller Rubens — Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies (ICJS), Baltimore

Developing the ICJS Interfaith Benchmark 1.0: Methodological Considerations & Choices

Karim Kardady — University of Montreal / PLURIEL

Violent Radicalization in the Name of Islam among Young People in Digital Contexts: From Polarization to Prevention—What Can Artificial Intelligence Contribute?

Hamad Al Hosani — TRENDS Research & Advisory

From Digital Polarization to Ideological Extremism: How Extremist and Terrorist Groups Use Artificial Intelligence and the Challenges That Follow

André Daher — Antonine University, Lebanon

From Artificial Intelligence to Dialogical Intelligence: Educating for Encounter with the Other in an Interreligious World

Renée Hattar — Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan / PLURIEL

From Listening to Encounter: Sacred Music as an Instrument of Interreligious Dialogue in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

15 h 15 – 15 h 45 General discussion

15 h 45 – 16 h 00 Coffee break

16 H 00 – 17 H 00 · CROSS-CUTTING DISCUSSION

Plurality, authority, dialogical quality, sources, responsibility and human oversight.

This sequence connects the first three axes and prepares the transition from scientific reflection to the experimentation and validation workshops devoted to Dialogia.

17 H 00 · END OF DAY ONE

Closing of the scientific day and preparation of the co-design sequence on 20 October.

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER

SESSION 4 AND WORKSHOP 1

SESSION 4 · 9 H 00 – 11 H 30

Humanizing, Ethicizing and Governing Artificial Intelligence in Religious Contexts

Moderator: Wael Saleh

Violaine Lemay — University of Montreal (UdeM)

Philosophical and Religious Values: The Protective Virtue of Intellectual Mobility and the Immobilizing Danger of the Hidden Technopolitical Reflex Already Imposed by the Standard Use of AI

Lyse Langlois — Université Laval / OBVIA

The title will be announced shortly.

Wassim Salman — Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI), Rome / PLURIEL

Humanity, Mediation and Responsibility: Thinking about AI-Assisted Interreligious Dialogue in Light of Magnifica humanitas

Emmanuel Pisani — Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), Cairo / PLURIEL

AI and Muslim Scholars: Reactions and Initial Assessments in Islamic Ethics.

Antonio Angelucci — Università degli Studi dell'Insubria – REDESM, Italy

Who Writes the Constitution of the Algorithm? Three Legal Limits for an AI Moving from Assisting to Mediating Interreligious Dialogue

Karsten Lehmann — KPH Wien/Niederösterreich / University of Vienna

Ambivalent approaches of religious professionals vis-à-vis AI

Hazar Haidar — UQAR / OBVIA

Governing an AI Mediator of Religion: What Ethical Principles, What Limits?

Zeyyad Saleh — University of Montreal

Dialogia Platform — Interreligious Dialogue “Assisted by” and “in Dialogue with” AI: Concepts, Approaches and Challenges

11 h 15 – 11 h 30 General discussion

11 h 30 – 11 h 45 Coffee break

WORKSHOP 1 · 11 H 45 – 15 H 45

From Theory to Application: Testing Dialogia's Dialogical Mediation Pathway

Facilitators: Zeyyad Saleh, Wael Saleh and Eissa Ali AlMannaei

Objective: Collectively test Dialogia's conceptual and methodological architecture using concrete situations of dialogue, disagreement and polarization.

11 h 45 – 12 h 45 Human case analysis · Disagreements, presuppositions, essentialization, plurality and the distinction between facts, beliefs and interpretations.

12 h 45 – 13 h 45 Lunch

13 h 45 – 14 h 45 Dialogia pathway · Diagnosis, clarification, de-essentialization, reformulation, plurality and common ground.

14 h 45 – 15 h 45 Debrief and validation · Analytical grid, contextualization, mediation rules and indicators of dialogical quality.

15 h 45 – 16 h 00 Coffee break

16 h 00 – 17 h 00 Synthesis · Preparation of the comparative protocol for the third day.

WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER

Workshops 2 and 3 and closing

WORKSHOP 2 · 9 H 00 – 11 H 45

Dialogia's Cognitive and Epistemological Architecture: Sources, Plurality, Verification and Human Oversight

Facilitators: Zeyyad Saleh, Wael Saleh and Eissa Ali AlMannaei

Objective: Collectively examine how Dialogia selects, prioritizes, mobilizes and verifies the knowledge required for interreligious dialogue.

9 h 00 – 10 h 00 Independent assessment · Source quality, plurality of traditions, contextualization, bias and levels of certainty.

10 h 00 – 10 h 15 Coffee break

10 h 15 – 11 h 45 Comparison with Dialogia · Convergences, divergences, omissions, errors, biases, potential added value and situations requiring human validation.

Expected outcomes: epistemological protocol, source validation, procedural neutrality, correction and human oversight.

11 h 45 – 13 h 00 Lunch

WORKSHOP 3 · 13 H 00 – 15 H 15

Evaluating and Governing Dialogia: Comparative Protocol, Ethical Principles and Roadmap Toward a Common Framework for Evaluation and Scientific Development

Objective: Translate the results of the previous workshops into a common framework for the evaluation, governance and scientific development of Dialogia.

13 h 00 – 13 h 45 Comparative protocol · Dialogue without AI, general-purpose AI, Dialogia, human mediation and a hybrid human-AI model.

13 h 45 – 14 h 30 Governance · Oversight, source validation, contestation, responsibility, dignity, plurality, equity and transparency.

14 h 30 – 15 h 15 Roadmap · Research, architecture, corpus, experimental protocol, partnerships, publications and funding.

15 h 15 – 15 h 30 Coffee break

15 h 30 – 17 h 00 General debrief · Validation of results, conclusions and next steps for Dialogia.

17 h 00 SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

1. Official launch of the working group on AI-assisted interreligious dialogue within the University Platform for Research on Islam (PLURIEL), in collaboration with:

- TRENDS Research & Advisory
- Saint Joseph University of Beirut
- Università degli Studi dell'Insubria (Varese and Como) – REDESM
- Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), Cairo
- University of Montreal
- University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM)
- Faculty of Theology – Catholic University of Lyon
- Faculty of Theology, Loyola University (Spain)

2. Experimental launch of the DIALOGIA platform.

3. Announcement of the publication of the conference proceedings at the beginning of the 2027 academic year.

17 h 30 Official closing

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS · AXIS 1**Artificial Intelligence and the Reconfiguration of Knowledge, Discourse and Representations of Religion****Michel Younès · Catholic University of Lyon (UCLy) / PLURIEL****Toward a Renewed Perspective on Anthropologies in Dialogue in the Age of AI**

“Believers can draw anew from the most authentic sources of their spiritual traditions.” This sentence, taken from XIV’s first encyclical, *Magnifica humanitas*, dated 25 May 2026, paragraph §223, addresses the role of interreligious dialogue in relation to AI. At a time when the emergence of new technologies points to the deployment of a material approach to humanoid robotics, the encyclical invites reflection that continuously takes into account the immaterial dimension of human relationships.

The anthropology underlying this proposal invites us to frame the question of virtuality differently. In a context of diversity, can the articulation between virtuality and alterity help to “disarm AI” from radical and fundamentalist uses of religious discourse? In what ways can religious anthropologies in dialogue, particularly Christian and Muslim anthropologies, constitute a relevant resource for approaching this rapid transformation of the world differently?

Jean Druel · Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), Cairo**Rethinking Bibliographic Research in (Inter)religious Studies through a Conversational Agent**

Specialized libraries in religious studies preserve complex collections in which editions, translations, commentaries and controversies are intertwined. The adoption of the IFLA-LRM/RDA model now makes it possible to structure in detail the networks of works and authors. Thus, the Diamond catalog (and its thematic portals AlKindi for Islamic studies, Albertus for medieval Latin studies and Ignatios for Eastern Christian studies) is based on an extremely precise LRM/RDA database that includes all relationships between masters and disciples, as well as between works (commentaries, refutations, studies, etc.), together with the editorial history of works (lost, manuscript, edited and translated). Unfortunately, traditional keyword- or subject-based search tools fail to reveal the full richness of these collections.

This paper presents a project to integrate a conversational AI agent into Diamond. The aim is to enrich conventional bibliographic research by giving the catalog a mediation capacity: the agent answers users’ factual or contextual questions while directing them precisely toward relevant resources in the collection. It will thus be possible, for example, to search for works or Arab authors with extensive reception in the East but little or no study in Western languages, to identify manuscripts that have never been edited, or to locate authors who commented on texts from

traditions other than their own. We will then examine how combining the rigor of LRM/RDA-formatted data with natural-language dialogue opens new perspectives for the discoverability of sources in (inter)religious studies.

Raphaël Georgy · PLURIEL**“Answer Like an Imam?” A Design Debate Revealing the Threshold of Authority**

“Should a chatbot answer like an imam?” This question arose during a design meeting in the development of Abdelkader, the conversational assistant of the Grande Mosquée de Paris. It goes to the heart of the conference: how far can AI move from a tool that assists (searching, translating, summarizing), to an entity that mediates (selecting, prioritizing and reformulating what others have said), and then to one that exercises authority (deciding for itself, stating the norm, speaking like an imam)? This paper explores the place of human arbitration in this question and shows that it operates upstream, in the very design of the tool, before any use takes place. Research on digital religion has shown that online religious authority does not impose itself automatically: it is constructed through interaction and depends on the choices of the communities that adopt it (Cheong, Campbell, Bunt). I propose to specify where and when this occurs: in the making of the tool itself. Drawing on my experience as rapporteur for the glossary that serves as the assistant’s knowledge base, overseen by two commissions, one religious and one civil, I analyze the criterion adopted (anchored yet open: rooted in the Muslim tradition, while seeking to foster understanding rather than advocacy) and compare it with a historical precedent specific to the Muslim tradition. From this, I derive a set of conditions for an AI-assisted interreligious dialogue platform.

Adrien de Fouchier · Vatican Apostolic Library**Feeding AI with Texts and Metadata**

Interreligious dialogue suffers from a shortage of reliable sources, a problem that general-purpose AI systems amplify in the absence of structured corpora: without precise attribution (author, work, context), AI produces a vague form of theological syncretism.

One proposed solution is a five-stage agentic pipeline — OCR, source identification, expert curation, vector indexing, and finally a dialogue AI that systematically cites its sources. [An example (a question on forgiveness in Islam) illustrates the difference between a vague response and a source-grounded answer citing the Qur’an, a hadith, and recognized commentators.]

The anticipated benefits (trust, preservation of nuance, traceability) are counterbalanced by genuine concerns: the risk of attribution hallucinations, the legitimacy of theological curation, and the danger of freezing living traditions.

Wael Saleh · IEIM-UQAM / TRENDS / PLURIEL

Rethinking the Plurality of Contemporary Islam and Dialogue in the Name of Religion in the Age of AI: An Ethical-Onto-Epistemological Approach

This paper proposes to rethink the representation of the plurality of contemporary Islam in the age of artificial intelligence by examining the regimes of knowledge, legitimation and authority that enable discourse in the name of religion. Its central hypothesis is that artificial intelligence never accesses an immediate religious reality, but rather representations that have already been configured.

Taking contemporary Islam as its point of departure, the paper distinguishes two levels of representativeness. The first, external, concerns the knowledge and mediation mechanisms through which the religious object is constructed. The second, internal, concerns the mechanisms by which actors, institutions and traditions determine what may be recognized as legitimate, orthodox, representative or marginal. Their articulation produces a stratified representativeness that reproduces hierarchies under the appearance of a general representation of Islam.

In response to this risk, the paper advances the concept of reflexive representativeness, capable of making explicit its conditions of production, recognizing religious plurality and contextualizing relations of authority. Artificial intelligence thus becomes a device for rendering visible the ethical, ontological and epistemological conditions of dialogue.

The issue extends beyond technology. It is a matter of identifying the conditions under which artificial intelligence can contribute to dialogue in the name of religion without turning plurality into homogeneity, mediation into authority, or representation into substitution.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS · AXIS 2

Rethinking Interreligious Dialogue in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Concept, Agency and Limits of Mediation

Raja Sakrani · University of Bonn / PLURIEL

Artificial Intelligence, a Substitute for the Divine? Some Consequences for Interreligious Dialogue

In the quest for the lost sacred, there has been no shortage of candidates: icons of beauty, Flanken götter (the gods of the stands), and so forth. Yet never has such a powerful form of competition emerged as with AI.

This theme asks how the rapid development of AI challenges traditional conceptions of God and what consequences this may have for dialogue among the world's religions.

Today, AI is attributed characteristics traditionally reserved for God:

- Omniscience: AI systems have access to the totality of humanity's digital knowledge and give the impression of having an answer to every question.

- Omnipresence: Thanks to smartphones and the Internet, AI is available at any time and everywhere in everyday life.

- Immortality and creative power: AI creates new worlds, works of art and texts, and outlives biological life.

When technology assumes a quasi-religious role, it changes the way the world's major religions (such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism) engage with one another and with modernity. Through AI, anyone can instantly and accessibly obtain information about the doctrine of the Trinity, the meaning of hadiths, karma, and so forth. AI thus becomes an unavoidable medium of communication among religions.

Patrice Brodeur · University of Montreal (UdeM)

Can the Interactive Communication Required between LLM Users and their Generative AI Platforms be compared—and potentially become—a new form of Dialogue within or beyond Interworldview Dialogue?

Building on numerous previous forms and theories of dialogue within human communication (Littlejohn & Foss 2009, Livnat 2012, Cornille 2013, Driessen 2023), interworldview dialogue (IWVD) (Brodeur 2022) is a relatively new form of dialogue theorized to include all human beings with their numerous identities inescapably intertwined with power dynamics. IWVD aims to provide a broader framework than other kinds of dialogue, such as intercultural, interreligious, interspiritual, interconvictional, intercivilizational, and solidarity dialogues, among others. However, up until now, IWVD has taken for granted that its participants and facilitators are human beings. What happens when one of the 'dialogue partners' is an IA(g) agent (i.e. LLM platform)? What new form(s) of 'mutuality' is possible, or not, in this new kind of human-machine communication? Do human beings need to develop new rules/guidelines/norms/keys for this kind of interactive communication, and if so, what are they? These questions raise serious ethical concerns around the nature and possible limits of human agency and human communication and mediation in a new planetary Anthropocene environment.

Eissa Ali AIMannaei · TRENDS Research & Advisory

When Artificial Intelligence Becomes a Mediator: Reliability, Responsibility and Limits in Interreligious Dialogue

This paper examines the conditions under which artificial intelligence can support interreligious dialogue as a mediator without displacing human judgment, responsibility, or contextual understanding. Drawing on the practical challenges involved in designing and testing AI-assisted dialogical mediation, it focuses on three interrelated dimensions: reliability, responsibility, and limits. Reliability concerns the quality of sources, the representation of

internal religious plurality, contextualization, and the distinction between verifiable information and interpretation. Responsibility concerns who remains accountable when an AI system selects, reformulates, prioritizes, or moderates sensitive religious content, and how correction, contestation, and human oversight should be organized. Limits refer to situations in which algorithmic intervention may be inadequate or inappropriate, especially where identity, trauma, asymmetrical power relations, sacred values, or deep disagreement are involved. The paper argues for a Human-in-the-Loop approach in which AI assists clarification, de-essentialization, reformulation, source validation, and the identification of convergences and divergences, while final responsibility remains human. It concludes by proposing practical criteria for evaluating AI-mediated dialogue, including explainability, contextual accuracy, procedural neutrality, safety, dignity, equity, and transparent governance within hybrid human-AI mediation models for diverse religious, cultural, and linguistic settings. These criteria aim to guide Dialogia's experimental validation and its scientific, ethical, and institutional governance framework.

Anne de Luca, PhD · Thucyde Center (Paris-Panthéon-Assas University)

Interreligious Dialogue Put to the Test by AI: Moving from the Illusion of Mastery to Productive Controversy

The use of AI in support of interreligious dialogue raises questions about our relationship to complexity and uncertainty. Whether in decision-making or knowledge production, AI is valued chiefly for its capacity to reduce uncertainty and make complexity intelligible. In doing so, it mitigates, or even removes, the frictions generated by complexity. Yet friction can be productive, and creativity and innovation often arise from tension. In interreligious dialogue, AI tends to produce coherent responses that smooth over complexity. It thereby creates a sense of mastery over the subject, with clear-cut positions that seemingly reduce uncertainty and divergence.

What if controversy were not something to eliminate, but rather something to cultivate as the substrate of new knowledge? What if, instead of smoothing over disagreement in order to arrive at an artificial consensus, we fully accepted complexity? What if the aim were less to resolve disagreements than to understand them better?

The presentation will therefore examine the dynamics of knowledge production, which involve a tension between complex thinking and a necessary simplification that must not slide into the pitfall of simplism. It will revisit the assumption that disagreement amounts to a failure of dialogue and consider AI not as an encyclopedia, but as a catalyst for controversy that can advance knowledge.

Anthony J. El Beainy · Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ)

Inhabiting Dialogue Without Inhabiting Faith: AI as an Interreligious Mediator

Between the memory of religions and the desire to interconnect, artificial intelligence brings an intermediate space into view. This digital environment poses a double challenge: how can a common space be built without erasing the singularity of beliefs and traditions, in a context such as Lebanon, and how can a machine mediate a spiritual experience to which it remains fundamentally external?

At the intersection of architecture, philosophy and technology, this presentation explores the paradox of mediation "without faith." Drawing on Paul Ricœur's concept of "linguistic hospitality," we argue that AI should not be conceived as a mediator seeking to create consensus, but as an infrastructure of inter-translation that enables each party to understand the other while preserving their differences.

Because it does not believe, AI's exteriority becomes its strength: it allows AI to translate and articulate statements without appropriating the other's difference. AI thus offers a neutral space of encounter in which it can help different religions understand one another more fully without reducing the mystery of their faith. Ultimately, the human remains at the heart of dialogue, for only the human can turn understanding into encounter, and encounter into an experience of faith.

Chadi El Kahwaji · Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ) / AUB

From Narrative to Mediation: Generative AI as an Interpretive Third Party in Interreligious Dialogue in Contemporary Arabic Narrative

This proposal falls within Dialogia's second axis: it examines the shift of generative AI from assistance to mediation, up to the role of an interpretive third party participating in the reconstruction of meaning. It focuses on contemporary Arabic narratives of religious, confessional or cultural otherness. It asks: what becomes of dialogue when the system reformulates positions, contextualizes disagreement and proposes common ground rather than merely explaining the text? The hypothesis is that such mediation may foster mutual understanding, yet may also flatten polyphony, ambiguity and historical tension in favor of fixed identities and generalized reconciliation.

The paper analyzes two passages: the baptism scene in « شريد المنزل » "Saint Georges regardait ailleurs" by Jabbour Douaihy and, in « الإنجليزي يوسف » "Yusuf Al Inglizi" by Rabee Jaber, the call to prayer and the news of Pastor Shafard's conversion to Islam. This non-exhaustive corpus prepares the ground for subsequent research. Each excerpt is read as literature and subjected to three interactions: explain the disagreement, reformulate the positions and intervene as an interpretive third party. The analysis verifies the source of the utterance, polyphony, degrees of certainty, context and additions not grounded in the text.

Preliminary results show that the system grasps the general event but rewrites it according to a rational model and

replaces it with a pre-established consensus. The secrecy, urgency and reversibility of the baptism become a deliberate decision; the layers of enunciation, memory and collective narrative are flattened in the call to prayer. The study will be expanded to other passages, models and indicators.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence; interpretive mediation; interreligious dialogue; contemporary Arabic narrative; polyphony; algorithmic interpretation; Dialogia.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS · AXIS 3

From Polarization to Dialogical Transformation in Digital Space

Heather Miller Rubens · Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies (ICJS), Baltimore

Developing the ICJS Interfaith Benchmark 1.0: Methodological Considerations & Choices

How are AI platforms currently responding to interfaith and interreligious inquiries? To answer this question, the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies (ICJS) is developing an academically-sound AI benchmark that attempts to systematically examine how frontier model LLMs (e.g. Claude, Gemini, Grok, etc.) answer interreligious and interfaith questions. The ICJS Interfaith Benchmark 1.0 will measure and evaluate the platforms' responses to a diverse set of questions about Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, assessing the answers for factual accuracy and hate speech, while also accounting for internal diversity within religious traditions and more subtle forms of bias. In this paper I will share the work completed to date, and invite everyone to discuss methodological choices and considerations around the benchmark, including the evaluation rubric, the inclusion of expert human evaluators, and plans for expanding and improving future benchmarks.

Karim Kardady · University of Montreal / PLURIEL

Violent Radicalization in the Name of Islam among Young People in Digital Contexts: From Polarization to Prevention—What Can Artificial Intelligence Contribute?

Our paper offers a critical reflection on violent radicalization in the name of Islam among young people in digital contexts and on the place artificial intelligence might occupy in contemporary prevention efforts. It begins from the observation that trajectories of this form of radicalization cannot be explained by the influence of technologies alone: they are embedded in complex identity-based, relational, social, political and religious dynamics, to which digital environments nevertheless give new forms of visibility, circulation and intensification.

From the perspective of interreligious dialogue assisted by and conducted in dialogue with AI, our reflection examines

how algorithmic technologies simultaneously transform the conditions of polarization, the possibilities for mediation and preventive practices aimed at young people.

Drawing on a cross-reading of international scholarship and Arabic-language scientific research, our approach will examine the promises associated with AI without separating them from their methodological, ethical and intercultural limitations. Particular attention will be paid to linguistic and religious contextualization, the protection of rights and the place of human actors.

Hamad Al Hosani · TRENDS Research & Advisory

From Digital Polarization to Ideological Extremism: How Extremist and Terrorist Groups Use Artificial Intelligence and the Challenges That Follow

This paper examines how extremist and terrorist groups are integrating artificial intelligence into their digital strategies and how these developments are reshaping the security landscape. Drawing on the perspective of terrorism and extremism studies, it focuses on the operational use of generative AI for propaganda production, recruitment, ideological targeting, narrative adaptation, synthetic media, and the amplification of polarizing content across multilingual digital environments. Particular attention is given to the way extremist actors exploit existing social grievances, identity tensions, and political conflicts, using AI not as an autonomous cause of radicalization but as a force multiplier that increases the speed, scale, personalization, and resilience of extremist communication.

The paper also considers the implications for the Middle East and other interconnected regions, where transnational networks, encrypted platforms, and rapidly evolving information ecosystems complicate detection, attribution, and prevention. It argues that effective responses require more than technological countermeasures. They must combine strategic monitoring, human expertise, contextual knowledge, cross-platform cooperation, responsible AI governance, and preventive policies addressing the ideological and social drivers of extremism. The paper concludes by proposing a balanced framework that strengthens security while preserving human oversight, proportionality, and fundamental rights. This approach also emphasizes early prevention and sustained institutional coordination internationally.

André Daher · Antonine University, Lebanon

From Artificial Intelligence to Dialogical Intelligence: Educating for Encounter with the Other in an Interreligious World

In societies marked by growing cultural and religious plurality, education for interreligious dialogue is a major challenge for living together. When a school welcomes students from different traditions, it can become a privileged space for encounter, listening and discernment. The aim is not merely to learn about religions, but to learn how to encounter the other, compare viewpoints, move beyond

stereotypes and build common ground without erasing differences.

The rise of artificial intelligence introduces a new dimension into this educational mission. AI facilitates access to religious knowledge and makes different perspectives more visible. Yet it can also reformulate, simplify or prioritize religious discourses, reproduce biases and transform the conditions of mediation and dialogue.

Drawing on the experience of an interreligious school, this contribution examines the shift from AI conceived as an assistance tool to AI as a mediator or interlocutor. It proposes the concept of “dialogical intelligence” to designate a capacity grounded in listening, decentering, discernment, recognition of otherness and responsibility. The challenge is to envision an education that uses AI without delegating human judgment to it, and that makes interreligious dialogue an apprenticeship in encounter.

Renée Hattar · Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan / PLURIEL

From Listening to Encounter: Sacred Music as an Instrument of Interreligious Dialogue in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Since the earliest centuries of Christianity, sacred music has expressed the relationship between the human being and the Sacred and has embodied a spiritual, religious and cultural tradition rooted in and preserved through the languages and liturgical rites of the different Churches. Building on previous research that identifies sacred music as a non-violent instrument of interreligious dialogue, this paper explores the role of sacred music in creating safe and creative spaces for interreligious dialogue while taking its distinctive characteristics into account. Particular attention will be paid to influences and exchanges among the traditions of Christian sacred music in the Levant, Islamic musical traditions and Arabic music. In the age of artificial intelligence, which offers numerous possibilities and tools, especially for preserving and archiving these traditions, new challenges emerge, including the risk of reducing music to data. In this process, works may risk disappearing not in terms of sound, but in terms of their deeper meaning and their spiritual expression of the relationship between the human being and God. This paper explores principles of dialogue as authentic encounter, in which listening and empathy require human intelligence.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS · AXIS 4

Humanizing, Ethicizing and Governing Artificial Intelligence in Religious Contexts

Violaine Lemay · University of Montreal (UdeM)

Philosophical and Religious Values: The Protective Virtue of Intellectual Mobility and the Immobilizing Danger of the Hidden Technopolitical Reflex Already Imposed by the Standard Use of AI

Enlightened governance is not easy. Mobilizing expertise is costly. Integrating all potentially useful information is an overwhelming task. The potential of AI as a tool for organizational management and for political action capable of taking account of the widest possible range of data is immense. Yet the prevailing mindset in which the reflexive turn to AI is taking hold today is alarming. The standards governing the construction of algorithms, which silently structure the dominant ways in which AI is used, are the product of policies centered on the financial, self-interested, and private interests of the economic powers that have massively funded its rapid advancement. All these standards rest on one and the same idea: it is advantageous to construct sequences of logical instructions that enable computers to arrive at decisions autonomously because doing so reduces the human decision-making burden and, consequently, the high costs of skilled personnel. In such a context, however, one crucial question is routinely left unasked... What of the non-economic—ethical, political, legal, and religious—value of a human decision that may cost more, yet remains capable, when necessary, of breaking free from a rigid chain of instructions when that chain, in practice, leads to the sacrifice of human values for economic efficiency?

Drawing on the “dance” of the capacity for judgment in Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot and on the “technopolitical” as understood by Asma Mhalla, this paper examines intellectual mobility as a valuable characteristic of enlightened human action, as well as the considerable potential for AI use—when unduly distanced from the silent collective reflexes already shaped by dominant usage—to impede that mobility.

Wassim Salman · Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI), Rome / PLURIEL

Humanity, Mediation and Responsibility: Thinking about AI-Assisted Interreligious Dialogue in Light of Magnifica humanitas

This paper examines the ethical and anthropological issues raised by AI-assisted interreligious dialogue in light of the encyclical *Magnifica humanitas*. As technological development profoundly transforms communication and social relations, the pontifical text reaffirms the primacy of the human person and rejects any reduction of the individual to statistical or functional data. Although AI can provide valuable assistance in accessing sacred texts and seeking knowledge, it remains confined to a logic devoid of moral consciousness, empathy and spiritual depth. The simulation of sacred authority by algorithms therefore entails serious

risks of theological leveling, manipulation and distortion of truth. To move beyond the technocratic paradigm, Magnifica humanitas advocates shared ethical responsibility and transparent governance. AI must not serve a culture of power or control, but should be oriented toward a civilization of love and peace. From this perspective, digital mediation in interreligious dialogue requires rigorous discipline in order to preserve the plurality of traditions, promote tolerance and place technology at the service of human fraternity.

Emmanuel Pisani · Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), Cairo / PLURIEL

AI and Muslim Scholars: Reactions and Initial Assessments in Islamic Ethics.

At a time when artificial intelligence is transforming Islamic knowledge to the point of automating fatwas, Muslim scholars are struggling to determine its status: is it a documentary tool? An assistant serving the *fāqih*? Could it become a potential competitor to religious authority as an interface with believers capable of engaging moral responsibility? Our paper will present the reflections and positions of several Muslim scholars, notably Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah, President of the UAE Council for Fatwa, who advocates an institutional *ijtihād* to regulate AI, and Sheikh Hichem Ben Mahmoud, Mufti of the Tunisian Republic, for whom artificial intelligence requires “a new effort of reflection” articulated with the *maqāṣid al-sharʿa*. We will also report on the positions adopted at the 10th congress organized in 2025 by Dar al-Iftāʾ al-Miṣriyya, whose theme was “Training the Enlightened Mufti in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.”

Antonio Angelucci · Università degli Studi dell’Insubria – REDESM, Italy

Who Writes the Constitution of the Algorithm? Three Legal Limits for an AI Moving from Assisting to Mediating Interreligious Dialogue

When an artificial intelligence system interprets religious discourse, reformulates positions and makes perspectives visible, it no longer merely assists interreligious dialogue: it mediates it and, at the limit, takes part in it. A system that assists operates on information; a system that mediates operates on persons, on their confessional identity and spiritual vulnerability and thereby classifies and ranks the religious. Assistance can be governed by an ethics of use; mediation requires a constitution. The first question is therefore who has the authority to write it. Building critically on the notions of AI safety and Constitutional AI, the paper argues that the principles binding a system operating on the religious field cannot be selected by private actors: they must be heteronomous with respect to those who produce the technology and grounded in public law, fundamental rights, secularism and constitutional pluralism, as already articulated at the multilevel scale of the European Convention on Human Rights, EU law and national constitutions. Three legal limits are derived from this framework, each read against a historical paradigm of religious institutions handling sensitive information: the prohibition on orienting spiritual choices; the exclusion of any orthodoxy control, which gives legal content to procedural neutrality; and the placement of religious

profiling within the whole GDPR system. The three limits are finally translated into operational criteria for the Dialogia protocol, as three questions to be added to the grid comparing human and algorithmic assessment. As long as responsibility cannot be attributed to the machine, the AI interlocutor remains a metaphor: dialogue stays between humans, mediated by an artefact whose constitution humans write.

Karsten Lehmann · KPH Wien/Niederösterreich / University of Vienna

Ambivalent approaches of religious professionals vis-à-vis AI

The proposed paper is based upon an empirical pre-test to the ZORA-project that will hopefully start in 2027. The paper draws from expert interviews with welfare professionals on the usage of AI within the context of religious welfare activities in Vienna, Austria. So far, the interviews document five common features: (a) All interview partners express a substantive interest in AI-related developments – while at the same time voicing the opinion that they have only a limited amount of expertise in the field. (b) They assert a knowledge gap between rank-and-file members and professionals that are in management positions. (c) They make a clear distinction between the use of AI for professional purposes and the use of AI in religious matters. (d) They underline that they are already using AI in specific fields. (e) They consider that AI is rapidly gaining significance and that it will increasingly influence their daily work.

At the same time, the interviews document three distinct differences: (a) The interviews document the distinct organizational structures of religious traditions in Austria. (b) They document a substantive difference with regard to the degree of theological legitimation of AI-related issues. (c) They document that Catholic and Sunni professionals in Vienna are integrated into very distinct socio-cultural contexts.

Hazar Haidar · UQAR / OBVIA

Governing an AI Mediator of Religion: What Ethical Principles, What Limits?

This paper examines the ethical conditions for governing an AI system called upon to operate in contexts characterized by a plurality of beliefs, traditions, and religious interpretations. The central issue is the role AI may play when it acts as an intermediary in the production, selection, prioritization, or reformulation of religious content, and what we are prepared to delegate to it within spaces of dialogue. Drawing on scholarship in AI ethics and governance, the presentation analyzes several principles capable of framing such algorithmic mediation: transparency regarding sources and generation processes; the responsibility of the actors who develop and deploy these systems; the contestability of the religious representations they produce; and the participation of the communities concerned in their governance. Particular attention is given to the conditions under which AI may intervene in spaces of religious dialogue without substituting itself for interpretive communities. Finally, the paper discusses the ethical limits of such intervention in order to preserve the diversity of interpretations, the autonomy of the communities concerned, and the centrality of human judgment.

Zeyyad Saleh · University of Montreal**Dialogia Platform — Interreligious Dialogue “Assisted by” and “in Dialogue with” AI: Concepts, Approaches and Challenges**

This paper presents Dialogia from the perspective of its design, development, and experimental evaluation. Conceived as a research platform for interreligious dialogue assisted by and conducted in dialogue with artificial intelligence, Dialogia explores how large language models can support structured interaction without replacing human judgment or responsibility. Drawing on experience in AI-assisted research design and evaluation, the paper focuses on the platform’s architecture, its conversational logic, and the criteria required to assess the quality of its outputs.

Particular attention is given to source reliability, contextualization, representation of internal religious plurality, multilingual performance, bias, explainability, and the risks of essentializing complex traditions. The paper also examines how Dialogia can integrate human supervision at critical stages of the dialogical process, especially when disagreement involves sensitive religious, political, or identity-related issues.

Rather than presenting Dialogia as a finished technological solution, the paper frames it as an evolving research prototype to be tested comparatively against general-purpose AI systems and human mediation. Its central argument is that the value of AI in interreligious dialogue lies not in autonomous mediation, but in its capacity to support clarification, comparison, reformulation, and structured reflection within a transparent, testable, and human-governed framework across diverse religious and cultural contexts worldwide.

WORKSHOPS

The workshops compare human analysis with Dialogia’s responses in order to clarify sources, criteria of dialogical quality, possibilities for correction, and scientific and ethical oversight.

Facilitators for the three workshops:

Zeyyad Saleh, Wael Saleh and Eissa Ali AlMannaei.

Workshop Participants:

Antonio Angelucci · Anthony J. El Beainy · Patrice Brodeur · André Daher · Jean Druel · Chadi El Kahwaji · Adrien de Fouchier · Raphaël Georgy · Renée Hattar · Hamad Al Hosani · Hazar Haidar · Karim Kardady · Karsten Lehmann · Violaine Lemay · Emmanuel Pisani · Heather Miller Rubens · Raja Sakrani · Wassim Salman · Michel Younès.

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