EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ESCP Impact Papers, 4th edition
New technologies and the future of individuals, organisations, and society

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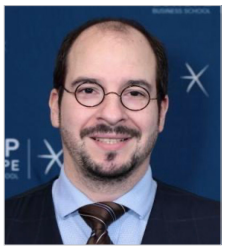

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Technological innovation is a major force for progress in the world. Novel and improved technologies are the engine of organisational change and differentiation. Nevertheless, many researchers have identified tensions between benefits and challenges of innovation and growth for organisations and individuals (Ahlstrom, 2010; Ahlstrom et al., 2020). At the organisational level, emerging technologies imply more opportunities to compete in fast-moving contexts, but also implementation challenges in incorporating them into business processes (Battaglia et al., 2023; Neirotti et al., 2021). These developments give rise to a transformed business context worldwide, varying from new types of businesses, through to completely new ways of working with technology (e.g., from virtual teams through to hybrid working). From an individual perspective, new technologies enable higher connectivity and interactivity in a boundaryless environment, leading to changing behaviours and new forms of digital engagement (Azer et al., 2021; Blasco-Arcas et al., 2016); however, this raises new types of challenges around how to manage this technological pervasiveness in everyday life (e.g., MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999). Recently, we have seen, for example, new phenomena and ensuing topics of interest relative to how we work, including an emphasis on employee well-being and new conceptualisations of work-life boundaries. These changes have had an impact of unprecedented magnitude on how leadership and management are practised, essentially leading to significant transformations of the job of the leader, among others (e.g., Chamakiotis, 2022). From a societal perspective, technologies bring citizens new and better goods and services, ultimately contributing to improving their overall standard of living — and creating a more global world with more knowledge transfer and generation of social impact in faraway spaces, such as the Global South and underprivileged communities, through digital platforms and online communities (e.g., Chamakiotis et al., 2021). Still, new technologies create challenges at the societal level too, including increased inequalities (Moll et al., 2022), discrimination and biases (Blasco-Arcas and Lee, 2021), the depletion of natural resources (Song et al., 2019), and completely new phenomena such as digital colonialism (Petrakaki et al., 2023).

At the time of writing this Editorial and Executive Summary, we are witnessing the extraordinary properties and widespread effects of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), notably the widely discussed ChatGPT, which illustrates how a technological innovation may impact our futures at all three levels (individual, organisational and societal). As researchers and educators ourselves, we begin to face some of the unique implications that generative AI is having for our own jobs (e.g., Zhai, 2022). Our position is that these technological innovations have cross-sectoral impacts, and it is for this reason that we have put together the present Impact Papers series.

As a vanguard of business thought and practice, ESCP Business School and its faculty are deeply engaged with the crucial task of understanding these profound shifts and, more importantly, shaping a discourse that is both academically rigorous and practically relevant. As a leading Business School, ESCP's mission extends beyond merely reacting to these changes; it aims to actively create a space for critical enquiry, dialogue, and learning — a space that is geared not just towards understanding the landscape of the present, but also towards envisioning the contours of the future. For these reasons, the thematic focus of this Impact Papers series revolves around a question that is at once simple and profound:

How do we understand and navigate the complex implications of technological innovations for individuals, organisations, and society?

The contributions have been organised into four thematic categories, each aligning with the pillars of ESCP's B.E.S.T. research impact framework: Business, European, Societal, and Teaching. Figure 1 summarises the different contributions and themes in the four pillars.

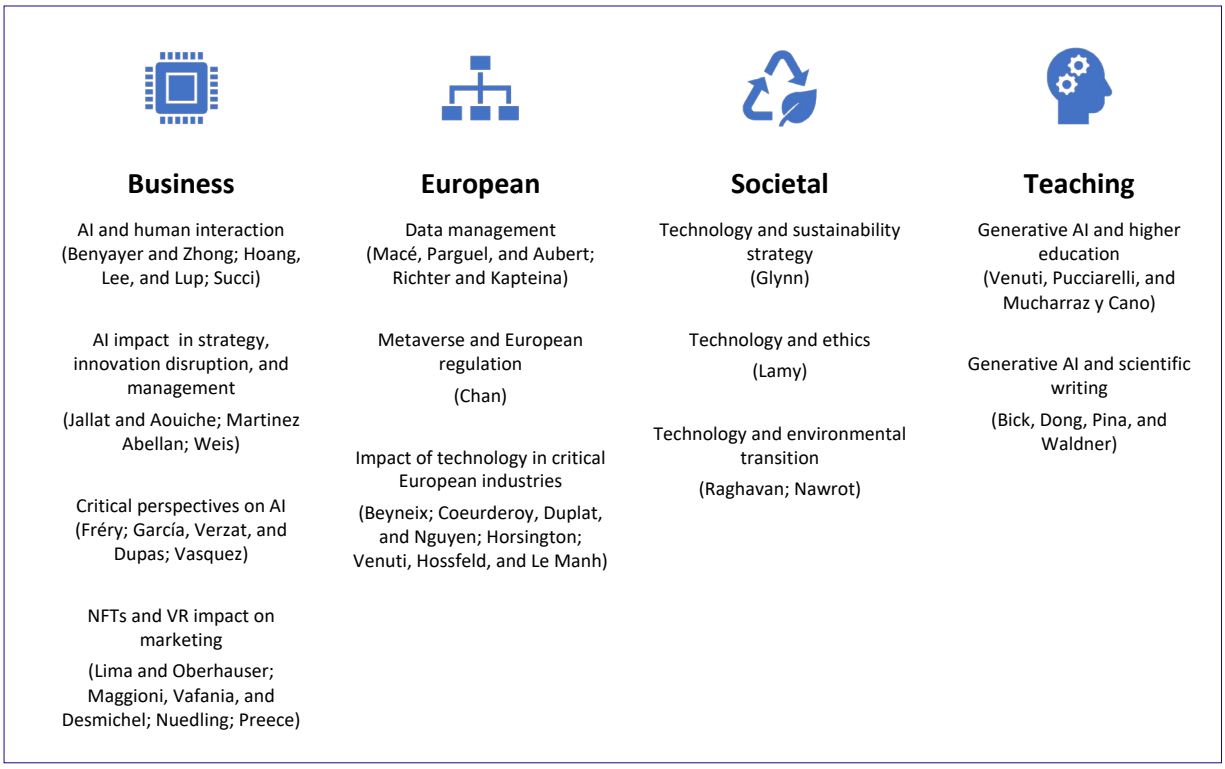

Figure 1. Contributions and themes per pillar in the B.E.S.T. framework

The themes covered in this fourth edition of the Impact Papers series are both current and future-oriented. A significant part of this edition explores the impact of AI at different levels. For example, in the business pillar, different authors in the series focus on addressing aspects related to AI and human interaction such as collaboration (*Benyayer and Zhong*) and their

impact in the work context (*Hoang, Lee and Lup; Succi*). AI is also analysed from a critical perspective focusing on the potential challenges and opportunities (*Fréry; García Quevedo, Verzat, and Dupas Amory; Vasquez Bronfman*), as well as through the lens of its impact in strategic and management processes (*Aouchiche and Jallat; Abellan Martinez; Weis*). Other contributions in the business pillar address the complex implications of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) and Virtual Reality (VR) in various industries, such as arts, media, luxury, and sports (*Lima and Oberhauser; Desmichel, Maggioni and Vafainia, and; Nuedling; Preece and Whittaker*).

Several authors grapple with the questions new technologies raise for critical industries at the European level. Thus, different authors have studied different industries, including biopharma, energy, banking or arts (*Beyneix; Coeurderoy, Duplat, and Duong Nguyen; Horsington; Venuti, Hossfeld, and Le Manh*). Moreover, European regulatory and normative aspects are also tackled by looking at data management and surveillance capitalism (*Aubert Hassouni, Macé and Parguel; Richter and Kapteina*) and exploring the impact of metaverse regulation on innovation (*Chan*).

At the societal level, the contributions focus on the exploration of technology's role in addressing environmental sustainability, including carbon capture utilisation and storage, and the transition to net-zero, underscoring the centrality of technology in the contemporary discourse on sustainability (*Glynn; Raghavan; Nawrot and Walkowicz*). Moreover, ethical implications of emerging technologies are also discussed (*Lamy*). Finally, the transformative role of technologies such as generative AI in higher education and scientific activities is also explored in this series (*Bick, Breaugh, Dong, Pina, and Waldner; Venuti, Pucciarelli, and Mucharraz y Cano*).

In conclusion, we believe that this collection of papers represents a significant step towards fulfilling the School's commitment. Through these papers, we aim to provide our stakeholders with useful insights and some of the tools needed to navigate today's complex landscape of technological innovation, with all its opportunities and challenges. More importantly, we hope that this collection will spark conversations, inspire ideas, and shape a better understanding of the role that we can all play in harnessing the power of technology for the benefit of individuals, organisations, and our society at large.

After all, the future is not something that merely happens to us; it is something that we shape through our ideas, our actions, and our collective will. We hope this fourth Impact Paper series will be a catalyst for such shaping, as we embrace the promise and navigate the complexities of new technologies in our shared journey towards the future.

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