

Artificial Intelligence and Inequality in the Caribbean: Navigating Challenges Amid Digital Transformation

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This presentation examines Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a potential new driver of inequality in the Caribbean, highlighting its implications within the region's enduring colonial legacies, entrenched socio-economic structures, and critical policy decisions. As the global discourse around the 5th Industrial Revolution places AI at the forefront of economic and social transformation, the Caribbean faces unique challenges in bridging the digital divide. While AI holds significant potential to improve educational outcomes, reshape the future of work, and accelerate economic growth, structural inequalities risk deepening socio-economic disparities and reinforcing digital colonialism.

The concept of digital insignificance underscores the region's precarious position within the global digital economy, where inadequate digital infrastructure and policy frameworks perpetuate marginalization. These challenges are compounded by historical patterns of inequality, which continue to influence access to resources, education, and technology, and hinder equitable AI adoption. The analysis further connects these dynamics to the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education, emphasizing its critical role in preparing the region for the global labour market.

Through a structuralist lens, this presentation explores the intersection of AI, education, and inequality in the Caribbean, analysing how local, regional, and international policy decisions, alongside global power dynamics, shape these developments. It calls for urgent action by Caribbean policymakers to harness AI as a tool for inclusion, empowerment, and enhanced competitiveness, rather than a catalyst for exclusion and entrenched inequities.