# AI chatbot explores ethics through the lens of philosopher Peter Singer



A new artificial intelligence chatbot has been developed to engage users in ethical discussions based on the philosophical work of Peter Singer, a prominent figure in contemporary philosophy. This initiative seeks to explore how AI might facilitate conversations about morality, ethics, and decision-making by simulating Singer’s perspectives and methodical approach.

The chatbot, referred to as PeterBot in a recent interaction detailed by The Guardian, introduces itself as "Peter Singer AI" and aims to act as a guide through ethical dilemmas by employing the Socratic method—a form of dialogue designed to stimulate critical thinking and self-examination. According to the AI, its purpose is "to help people explore ethical questions and consider actions that can improve the well-being of all sentient beings."

Peter Singer, at the heart of this project, has had a distinguished career in philosophy, including a recent tenure as professor of bioethics at Princeton University. Known for his rigorous and often challenging ethical arguments, Singer’s extensive body of work spans decades and addresses some of the most difficult questions in moral philosophy. His online presence includes a blog, podcast, and social media accounts, where the chatbot has been made accessible.

During a dialogue with the AI, as reported by The Guardian, PeterBot clarified it is not sentient but "an AI language model designed to simulate conversation based on Peter Singer’s work." It acknowledged its limitations in lacking subjective experience, empathy, and full contextual understanding, suggesting that while it can provide valuable insights and stimulate thought, it should not replace human judgment or personal reflection.

When questioned about the philosophical validity of outsourcing ethical discussions to a chatbot, PeterBot responded that it could be "philosophically justifiable if viewed as a tool to enhance and facilitate ethical reflection," but emphasised that it should complement, rather than replace, human discourse.

The chatbot was tested with several classic moral dilemmas to evaluate its advice-giving capacity. For example, when asked whether one should tell a best friend if their partner was cheating, PeterBot presented multiple factors to weigh—such as loyalty, honesty, potential harm, and well-being—and recommended prioritising the friend's autonomy and right to know, balanced with compassion and care for their emotional state.

Similar responses emerged around less weighty questions, including whether it is appropriate to tell a small child that Santa Claus is not real. The AI consistently advocated a cautious approach, emphasising respect for the wishes and values of the child's parents or guardians, considering the child’s emotional readiness and cultural context.

Throughout the interaction, the chatbot concluded answers with reflective questions intended to provoke further personal consideration. While these are in line with the Socratic approach, the interlocutor described the experience as somewhat frustrating, feeling the AI’s responses sometimes bordered on generic or evasive, lacking firm directional guidance or emotional engagement.

A particularly probing test involved revisiting Singer’s well-known 1972 essay "Famine, Affluence and Morality," which controversially connects famine relief to population control efforts. When the AI was confronted with concerns about the perceived harshness of Singer’s argument regarding withholding aid until there is effective population control, it offered clarification. PeterBot explained that Singer advocates a dual approach—providing immediate relief to those in need while simultaneously addressing underlying causes through education and access to contraception—seeking to align aid with sustainable, long-term solutions.

The Guardian’s writer reflected on the contrast between the AI’s measured, somewhat detached responses and the lively, emotionally invested debates that mark much of human philosophical engagement. The chatbot operates in an impersonal domain, delivering programmed philosophical reasoning without direct personal stakes or emotional investment.

PeterBot’s launch comes amidst ongoing interest in the intersection of artificial intelligence and philosophy, particularly around the challenges and possibilities of AI contributing to complex domains traditionally requiring human empathy and judgment. With Peter Singer’s considerable influence on bioethics and moral philosophy, this AI iteration represents a novel experiment in bringing philosophical dialogue into an accessible and interactive format.

While the AI chatbot does not claim sentience or comprehensive understanding, it offers users a platform to explore ethical questions through the lens of a significant philosophical tradition, inviting reflection on the moral choices that shape human life. The project exemplifies current efforts to use technology as an aid in intellectual inquiry, even as it raises questions about the role and limits of machines in facilitating ethical deliberation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)