

REINTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN SOUL IN THE DIGITAL AGE

LYCEUM INSTITUTE 2025 ACPA SATELLITE SESSION PANEL



We are subject to a technologically-mediated fragmentation of our very souls. This fracturing is caused by an extrinsic formal causality affecting our intentional habits away from discernment of the truth. The advent, development, and integration of LLM technologies exacerbates this fragmentation a thousandfold. But neither Luddite rejection nor quiescent capitulation will affect a reintegration of the soul. Through this panel, we aim at identifying the fundamental shifts which are necessary at both a **use** and a **design** level to reform our technological paradigm in a manner fitting to and therefore complementary to the nature of the human soul.

To focus our discussion, we wish to take up these three propositions:

1. It belongs to human beings by nature to develop technologies for the stewardship of the world and the convenience of their own lives.
 - a. Among these natural technologies are those through which we affect the social constitution of our living and thinking.
 - b. Developing technologies that are good for us as human beings is a moral obligation.
2. Digital technologies can be good for us as human beings—but they are not currently designed in a way that resolves to our natural good.
 - a. First, current technological paradigms emphasize efficiency above all else. This results in an *instrumentalization* of all communication media.
 - b. Second, the *discarnate* nature of our communication media often deceives us into similarly disincarnating communication itself, instead of locating it in the person.
3. Such resolution requires a re-thinking of how technology is both designed and used:
 - a. First, there is a certain recursion between design and use in technology at all levels (including government, economy, particular languages, etc.).
 - b. Second, this recursion means that we are neither 1) powerless to affect change nor 2) ever freed from the responsibility for ensuring our technological developments are well-used.
 - c. Third, digital technology provides us an opportunity not only to store and recover enormous quantities of information (its inherent archivality), or to partially recover elements of interpersonal communication (video chat), but also the opportunity to retrieve a more originally poetic sense of human creative activity.
 - d. Fourth, as an example of this poetic activity, we can look to the Catholic traditions of liturgical form, themselves a kind of media in which something is uniquely disclosed to us in a properly-human manner.