



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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Information for All  
Programme



# Beyond AI Ethics UNESCO Recommendations

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON BUILDING KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES TO ENSURE PUBLIC  
ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

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# Why to regulate ethically and legally AI?

- The advent of artificial intelligence (‘AI’) systems is a very important step in the evolution of technologies and in the way humans interact with them. AI is a set of key technologies that will **profoundly alter our daily lives**, be it on a societal or an economic standpoint. In the next few years, decisive decisions are expected for AI as it helps us overcome some of the biggest challenges we face in many areas today, ranging from health to mobility, or from public administration to education.
- However, these promised advances do not come without risks. Indeed, the **risks are very relevant considering that the individual (My data), collective (risk incurred by groups of individuals (see profiling)) and societal (impact on our Democracy) effects of AI systems.** Recommendation 2. c): *“AI systems raise new types of ethical issues that include, but are not limited to, their impact on decision-making, employment and labour, social interaction, health care, education, media, access to information, digital divide, personal data and consumer protection, environment, democracy, rule of law, security and policing, dual use, and human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination “*
- Generating content, making predictions or taking a decision in an automated way (especially with “machine learning” systems functioning opaquely on statistical correlations , is not the same as responsible humans carrying out those activities
- AI will enlarge the amount of predictions that can be done in many fields starting from measurable correlations between data, invisible to human eyes but visible to machines, making our lives easier and solving a great number of problems, but at the same time will erode our **capability to give a causal interpretation to outcomes**, in such a way that the notions of transparency, human control, accountability and liability over results will be severely challenged.

# UNESCO AI Ethics recommendations

- More than 60 documents issued by international private and public organisations : **AI ethics a buzzword!**
- Four significant IPO documents on AI:
  - OECD Council of Ministers recommendations on AI (2019) -
  - COUNCIL OF EUROPE CAHAI « "*Feasibility study on a legal framework for the creation, development and application of AI based on Council of Europe standards*", december 2020
  - EU Commission (April 21, 2021), "Proposal for a Regulation of the EU Parliament and of the Council laying down harmonized rules on artificial intelligence and amending certain Union legislative Acts"
  - UNESCO DRAFT RECOMMENDATION ON THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE prepared by the Group of experts in September 2020 and adopted by the Special Committee of technical and legal experts nominated by Member states (April and June, more than 40 hours of Intergov. discussions) (to be definitively adopted at the next G.A.in November) – **“UNESCO with its almost universal membership, longstanding experience in ethics of science and human rights-centric approach is the right forum for discussion of AI and its ethical issues.”**

A very complete and courageous document

# Main elements (141 paragraphs)

- Non binding instrument BUT call for implementing measures in order to have effective application of the different provisions
- The text advocates an Inclusive and Multi-stakeholders (including marginalized people and indigenous collectivities) implementation of the provision
- based on a solidarity approach (including the nature) and not a purely individualistic one: “[n]either the single individual nor the community can define and pursue their respective purposes without recognising their mutual boundedness; their complementarity” (Ramosé – Ubuntu philosophy) – Para 23: “Living in peaceful, just and interconnected societies requires an organic, immediate, uncalculated bond of solidarity, characterized by a permanent search for peaceful relations, tending towards care for others and the natural environment in the broadest sense of the term. “
- As regards the relationship between Law and ethics, clear hierarchy, having the human rights law as the most important source, with the ethical values and principles providing guidance considering the fast pace of technological development.
- Par. 6: “*this Recommendation aims to bring a globally accepted normative instrument that does not only focus on the articulation of values and principles, but also on their practical realization, via concrete policy recommendations, with a strong emphasis on inclusion issues of gender equality and protection of the environment and ecosystems. “ Policy recommendations in different domains: like Ethical assessment, Health and social well being, Economy and labour; Education and research; ...)*

# Four basic Values

- **Respect, protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and human dignity** (Par. 13: *“Human dignity relates to the recognition of the intrinsic and equal worth of each individual human being, regardless of race, colour, descent, gender, age, language, religion, political opinion, national origin, ethnic origin, social origin, economic or social condition of birth, or disability and any other grounds. “*);
- **Environment and ecosystem flourishing : Precautionary Principle (Presently, Computerization is consuming more than 5% of the natural resources and with AI which needs internet of things and big data, that will considerably increase)**
- **Ensuring diversity (including multilingualism) and inclusiveness (active participation of everybody without discrimination)**
- **Living in peaceful, just and interconnected societies:** *“AI systems should not segregate, objectify, or undermine freedom and autonomous decision-making as well as the safety of human beings and communities, divide and turn individuals and groups against each other, or threaten the coexistence between humans, other living beings and the natural environment.”* (e.g. fight against disinformation – Social media contributes to a disastrous partition of the society, by aggravating the discrepancies within the public opinions)

# Nine Principles (I)

- **Proportionality – Do not harm** (Par 26: The choice to use AI systems and which AI method to use should be justified – Need for human decisions – No social scoring or mass surveillance)
- **Safety and security (hacking or introduction of false information might provoke disasters)**
- **Sustainability** (constant monitoring)
- **Right to Privacy** ( Par. 34: “*Algorithmic systems require adequate privacy impact assessments which also include societal and ethical considerations of their use and an innovative use of the privacy by design approach*”).
- **Human oversight NEED for human control and governance of the AI systems**
- **Transparency and explainability** (Par 39: “*greater transparency contributes to more peaceful, just, democratic and inclusive societies*”)

# Nine Principles II

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- **Responsibility and accountability** (Par. 41: « *Appropriate oversight, impact assessment, audit, and due diligence mechanisms, including whistle-blowers protection, should be developed to ensure accountability for AI systems and their impact throughout their life cycle* » )
- **Awareness and literacy:** (Par 44: “*Public awareness and understanding of AI technologies and the value of data should be promoted through open and accessible education, civic engagement, digital skills. ...*”
- **Multi-stakeholder and adaptive governance and collaboration (respecting national sovereignty):** (Par. 47: “*Participation of different stakeholders throughout the AI system life cycle is necessary for inclusive approaches to AI governance, enabling the benefits to be shared by all, and to contribute to sustainable development.*”).

# WG Info Ethics Policy in that context – 4 objectives

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- Provide a comprehensive Commentary of the recommendations
- Through Conferences organised with local actors, disseminate a better knowledge among all the stakeholders
- Create, at the level of the different UNESCO regions, virtual and not virtual platforms discussing and debating about the concrete significance of each of the UNESCO recommendations provisions
- Product videos and other multimedia resources in order to promote the UNESCO Recommendations and their concrete significance.





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- IF you want to know more about our Ethics WG, its composition and its project:

<https://www.crids.eu/cooperations/info-ethics-wg-ifap>

*With the hope and pleasure to see you again in the next future,*

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