

CALL FOR PAPERS

Law and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector: From Principles to Practice and Policy

Interdisciplinary Conference

10–11 March 2022
Asser Institute (The Hague)

We invite abstracts on the topic of **‘Law and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector: From Principles to Practice and Policy’**, for an interdisciplinary conference that will take place on 10–11 March 2022 at the Asser Institute in The Hague in a hybrid format (subject to change).

Background

The conference seeks to address the multiple challenges raised by the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the public sector. As AI is progressively deployed in various domains such as healthcare, energy, welfare, border security, criminal justice, law enforcement, or defence, it is essential to ensure that the development and use of AI technologies are guided by core values, in particular the rule of law and human rights.

*"Public sector will have to
lead by excellence"*

Margrethe Vestager
27 January 2020

In recent years, the sharp progresses of AI capabilities have been accompanied by a growing recognition of the need to proactively reflect on its societal implications, so as to shape the development and applications of technology in line with ethical and legal principles. Public and private institutions alike have called for a fundamental questioning on the potential impacts of AI, in order to steer AI research and policy towards beneficial outcomes, and to ultimately maintain agency over the technologies we decide to adopt.

Unfettered deployment of AI has already led to unintended consequences notably in terms of discrimination, privacy, due process, transparency, and accountability. Current debates on autonomous weapons systems, the use of facial recognition in public spaces, risk-assessment algorithms in the judicial system, or automated detection of welfare fraud, demonstrate that the implementation of data-driven policy-making and algorithmic decision-making in the public sector is a highly topical and important issue. The potentially promising and seemingly less controversial applications of AI for instance to improve healthcare or energy management should as well be the subject of close reflection and scrutiny, as they are not exempt from risks and human rights concerns.

Call for Contributions

We invite the submission of contributions that will result in an interdisciplinary dialogue aimed at generating insights on the principles, conditions, and methods that would allow to responsibly deploy AI in the public sphere. In order to develop solutions to the pressing challenges of AI, the **ethical, legal, technical, and policy aspects** must be addressed together. Indeed, both the bedrock of ethical values such as human dignity and individual autonomy, and fundamental legal norms in particular human rights, need to be translated and assimilated into the design and engineering of AI systems. The conference will thereby build necessary bridges between ethics, law, and engineering, and further seek to operationalise principles into practice and policy.

The conference will result in a series of papers addressing theoretical and empirical aspects of AI in the public sector from the combined perspectives of philosophy, law, and computer science. We aim to bring together academic researchers from various disciplines to stimulate critical reflections and generate innovative approaches towards establishing a solid legal, ethical, and technical framework for the development and use of AI by governments and public institutions.

Contributions could, for instance, address the following aspects:

- Exploring the conditions for, and conceptual underpinnings of, ethical and lawful uses of AI in the public sector
- Identifying fundamental principles emerging from law and ethics, and ponder them against engineering methods of systems design and optimisation
- Providing input for the development of engineering methods and technical standards that integrate and reinforce core values, thereby promoting trust in technology and in public institutions
- Exploring how AI advancements affect legal and ethical frameworks
- Suggesting avenues for AI policy that reflect and implement research findings

Timeline and Organisation

Abstracts of 300-600 words should be submitted, together with a brief CV or biography of the author(s), by **3 December 2021**. Please send your submission in PDF format to dilema@asser.nl, to the attention of Dr Berenice Boutin, indicating 'Conference AI in the Public Sector' in the subject line.

Selected participants will be asked to submit draft papers of 3000-8000 words by **25 February 2022**. The advance submission of draft papers will allow the conference to produce in-depth and fruitful discussions and insights.

The two-day conference will feature interdisciplinary panel sessions, each with three to four speakers representing at least two of the three main relevant disciplines (law, philosophy, computer science), and be complemented by keynote lectures. The conference will also serve as a ground for networking and forming partnerships for future research.

The conference has no registration fee. However, participants will be expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs. A limited amount of funding will be available to provide financial support to selected speakers enable to cover all of their costs. Remote participation (via Zoom) will be available for participants unable to travel due to covid restrictions.

Scientific Organisation Committee

The conference is convened by:

- Dr Berenice Boutin (Asser Institute) (*Chair*)
- Dr Machiko Kanetake (Utrecht University)
- Dr Carl Emilio Lewis (Asser Institute)
- Dr Giovanni Sileno (University of Amsterdam)
- Dr Sadjad Soltanzadeh (Asser Institute)

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