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Information technology — Artificial intelligence — Overview of ethical and societal concerns

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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Foreword

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This document was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 42, *Artificial intelligence*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionise the world and carry a plethora of benefits for societies, organizations and individuals. However, AI can introduce substantial risks and uncertainties. Professionals, researchers, regulators and individuals need to be aware of the ethical and societal concerns associated with AI systems and applications.

Potential ethical concerns in AI are wide ranging. Examples of ethical and societal concerns in AI include privacy and security breaches to discriminatory outcomes and impact on human autonomy. Sources of ethical and societal concerns include but are not limited to:

— unauthorized means or measures of collection, processing or disclosing personal data;

— the procurement and use of biased, inaccurate or otherwise non-representative training data;

— opaque machine learning (ML) decision-making or insufficient documentation, commonly referred to as lack of explainability;

— lack of traceability;

— insufficient understanding of the social impacts of technology post-deployment.

AI can operate unfairly particularly when trained on biased or inappropriate data or where the model or algorithm is not fit-for-purpose. The values embedded in algorithms, as well as the choice of problems AI systems and applications are used for to address, can be intentionally or inadvertently shaped by developers' and stakeholders' own worldviews and cognitive bias.

Future development of AI can expand existing systems and applications to grow into new fields and increase the level of automation which these systems have. Addressing ethical and societal concerns has not kept pace with the rapid evolution of AI. Consequently, AI designers, developers, deployers and users can benefit from flexible input on ethical frameworks, AI principles, tools and methods for risk mitigation, evaluation of ethical factors, best practices for testing, impact assessment and ethics reviews. This can be addressed through an inclusive, interdisciplinary, diverse and cross-sectoral approach, including all AI stakeholders, aided by International Standards that address issues arising from AI ethical and societal concerns, including work by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, SC 42.

Information technology — Artificial intelligence — Overview of ethical and societal concerns

1 Scope

This document provides a high-level overview of AI ethical and societal concerns.

In addition, this document:

— provides information in relation to principles, processes and methods in this area;

— is intended for technologists, regulators, interest groups, and society at large;

— is not intended to advocate for any specific set of values (value systems).

This document includes an overview of International Standards that address issues arising from AI ethical and societal concerns.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 22989, *Information technology — Artificial intelligence — Artificial intelligence concepts and terminology*