ETHICAL REFLECTION

One personal project I'm working on involves building a WhatsApp-based AI assistant that helps small businesses track customer visits and offer loyalty rewards. The goal is to support informal entrepreneurs by automating basic customer engagement using AI-powered tools. While the application is simple on the surface, ensuring it aligns with ethical AI principles is crucial—especially because it handles user phone numbers, behaviour patterns, and reward data.

To adhere to ethical guidelines, I will focus on four main principles**:** transparency, fairness, privacy, and accountability. First, I will clearly communicate how the AI system works—what data it collects, how rewards are triggered, and how decisions are made (e.g., who gets rewarded and when). This fosters transparency and trust among users.

Second, I'll address fairne**ss** by ensuring that no user is excluded due to language, phone type, or technical ability. The interface will be designed for low-end devices and tested across different user groups. I'll also actively monitor for unintended biases—such as favouring users with more frequent visits even if that's not the best measure of loyalty.

Regarding privacy, the system will not store sensitive user data beyond what is strictly necessary. Users will have the right to opt out or delete their data at any time. All user information will be encrypted and stored securely using ethical data governance practices.

Finally, I'll take accountability seriously by creating an internal log of the AI's decisions and outcomes, allowing for manual review and correction if needed. If an error harms a user (e.g., an incorrect reward denial), there will be a clear appeal or support mechanism.

In summary, I believe ethical AI starts with small, intentional design choices. By embedding responsible practices from the start, this project can empower users without compromising their dignity or rights.