

# **Bridging Ethical Divides: A Critical Reflection on Generative AI and Global Governance**

## **1. Introduction**

Since late 2022, generative artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly reshaped multiple domains, from education and healthcare to finance and software development. Technologies such as ChatGPT and DALL·E have demonstrated unprecedented capabilities, sparking debates around regulation, bias, misinformation, and accountability. While AI as a discipline has evolved for decades, the exponential growth of generative models has ushered in urgent questions regarding governance and ethical standards.

Correa et al. (2023) argue that, despite the rise of over 200 global AI ethics guidelines, achieving international consensus remains elusive due to divergent cultural, political, and commercial priorities. Similarly, Deckard (2023) highlights the foundational need for trustworthy AI development grounded in fairness, transparency, and responsibility. This reflection explores the legal, social, ethical, and professional implications of generative AI and recommends actions to ensure its alignment with public good and professional integrity.

## **2. The Global Governance Challenge**

The widespread deployment of generative AI has intensified the global discourse on how to regulate such technologies responsibly. Correa et al. (2023) analysed over 200 AI ethics documents and found significant disparities in how countries conceptualise ethical AI. While common principles like fairness, accountability, and transparency appear

frequently, their interpretations and implementations vary widely. For instance, while the European Union's AI Act takes a precautionary, risk-based approach, other nations such as the United States prioritise innovation and economic competitiveness, as seen in the voluntary nature of the AI Bill of Rights (White House, 2022).

This fragmentation creates a regulatory vacuum where powerful private actors can navigate the gaps in international law to avoid accountability. It also undermines efforts to standardise AI safety across borders. Correa et al. (2023) caution that without tools to systematically compare and align governance frameworks, we risk reinforcing existing global inequalities—where less-regulated jurisdictions may become testbeds for ethically questionable AI systems.

For computing professionals, this poses ethical and operational dilemmas. Developers working in global tech firms must navigate conflicting standards across countries, often without clear guidance. Moreover, the absence of enforceable governance mechanisms makes it difficult to uphold professional codes of conduct, such as the ACM's imperative to “avoid harm” and “be accountable” (ACM, 2018). It also puts pressure on local governments, like Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, which must weigh AI innovation against cultural, legal, and societal expectations in areas such as privacy, data protection, and fairness.

In this complex landscape, there is an urgent need for more harmonised, adaptable, and inclusive AI governance structures that go beyond policy statements to address enforcement and stakeholder inclusion.

### 3. Ethical Concerns and the Role of Professionals

As AI systems increasingly influence decision-making in education, healthcare, hiring, and criminal justice, ethical concerns such as bias, opacity, and misuse have come to the forefront. Deckard (2023) emphasises that ethics in AI must move beyond abstract ideals to practical application, particularly as generative AI models can unintentionally reinforce discrimination or spread misinformation. Ethical AI, according to Deckard, must be developed through frameworks grounded in *harm reduction*, *transparency*, *accountability*, and *inclusivity*.

These principles directly align with the ACM Code of Ethics, which obligates computing professionals to contribute to society and human well-being, avoid harm, and be honest and trustworthy (ACM, 2018). Similarly, the British Computer Society (BCS) stresses the importance of public interest and competence, highlighting the need for transparency and respect for privacy (BCS, 2021). However, these standards often lack the enforcement mechanisms needed in real-world industry settings.

In practice, many professionals face ethical dilemmas when organisational objectives—such as speed-to-market or profitability—conflict with ethical safeguards. For instance, a developer in a Qatari edtech startup may be under pressure to release a generative AI tutoring tool without thorough bias testing or privacy evaluation, risking harm to students' learning outcomes or data security. In such contexts, ethical awareness must be complemented by organisational support and national guidelines that reinforce responsible innovation.

Moreover, with AI becoming more autonomous, the professional's role shifts from mere developer to *steward* of social impact. This demands not only technical skills but also ethical literacy and cultural sensitivity, especially in diverse regions like the Middle East. Equipping professionals with clear frameworks and up-to-date training is thus critical for embedding ethics into the AI development lifecycle and ensuring systems align with societal values.

#### **4. Recommendation and Action Plan**

To navigate the complex and fragmented AI governance landscape, a dual-pronged approach is recommended: the development of a **UN-backed Global AI Ethics Framework** and the **local integration of ethical training into computing education and practice**.

A globally endorsed ethics framework—similar to the Paris Agreement in climate policy—could help establish baseline standards for transparency, accountability, and data governance. The UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021) provides a strong starting point, advocating for inclusive, human-centred AI. However, Correa et al. (2023) highlight the challenge of abstract principles lacking enforceability. Therefore, the global framework must be supplemented with regional implementation strategies, tailored to national laws, cultural norms, and technological maturity. Regional initiatives, like the EU AI Act, demonstrate how enforceable legislation can be aligned with global ethics without stifling innovation.

Concurrently, ethical AI development must become an integral part of computing curricula and workplace practices. Universities and training centres—particularly in rapidly

advancing nations like Qatar—should embed modules on bias detection, algorithmic fairness, and digital rights. Industry players should be held accountable to professional codes like those of the ACM and BCS, through certification systems or regulatory oversight.

These actions would reduce legal ambiguity, strengthen public trust, and equip professionals with the tools needed to uphold ethical standards. They also address the social imperative of ensuring AI serves diverse communities fairly, rather than reinforcing global digital divides. Ultimately, responsible AI governance must balance innovation with protection—empowering professionals to innovate ethically and inclusively.

## **5. Conclusion**

The rise of generative AI since 2022 has brought forward both groundbreaking opportunities and critical ethical challenges. As Correa et al. (2023) emphasise, the global lack of consensus on governance frameworks demands urgent attention, while Deckard (2023) reminds us of the need to root AI development in fairness, transparency, and accountability. Computing professionals now play a pivotal role not just as developers but as ethical guardians. Through a combination of global policy collaboration and local educational reform, we can foster a responsible AI future that upholds public trust, reduces harm, and ensures innovation is aligned with societal well-being.

## **Reference List**

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