

Responsible AI is a framework that looks to address how organizations ought to meet the challenges associated with Artificial Intelligence: particularly the ethical and legal implications of AI and pinpointing where the responsibility lies should something go wrong within an AI system.

As it stands, there is no established law surrounding AI on a governmental level other than suggested guidance from the UK Government (Data Ethics Framework, September 2020) and it is completely up to the discretion of tech-related businesses to establish their own frameworks surrounding the use of AI and machine learning algorithms. This means what could be perceived as ethical and morally right to one business are viewpoints that might not be shared by a competitor who aims to implement better AI initiatives to remain competitive or more profitable. Because of this, it's hoped that a framework of AI best practices will be adopted globally to ensure AI meets three key criteria: that it is human centred, that the source code is open and can be interpreted by data scientists, and that any relevant findings in the code can be explained in basic language accessible by the wider public.

While AI has several practical and useful applications in the real world, there are times when its implementation has failed both businesses and the general public. One such use is automated decision making in the recruitment process. Amazon was recently under fire for this as their online recruitment tool was trained using machine learning algorithms to assess the CV of a large number of successful applicants throughout the early noughties. Through this learning and without any known direct human intervention, the algorithm determined that only men should be hired for technical roles because the training dataset was almost exclusively made up of male employees and this revelation wasn't made clear until mid-2015. Today, this would almost certainly come under fire not just for the enhanced gender equality campaigns today, but also GDPR's Article 22 that states humans have a right to “not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing, including profiling, which produces legal effects concerning him or her or similarly significantly affects him or her”. This is a right that must be waived through an opt-out process, which is now extremely common throughout job applications today.

Businesses must approach their use of AI as a complement to their goals rather than making it an exclusive focus. By understanding where the use of AI sits within their business and how machine learning meets specific goals and objectives, businesses will go a long way to establishing the right structures to ensure ethical AI is properly implemented. There are several schools of thought surrounding what ethical AI looks like in actual practice, but one commonly agreed procedure is through collaboration with other businesses who act as review panels that can assess the possible consequences of AI systems. This will ensure corporate leaders are held accountable for their actions should any aspect of responsible AI be violated.