

Cognitive Computing

Transparency and Trust in the Cognitive Era

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We are in the early days of a promising new technology, and of the new era to which it is giving birth, different from the programmable systems that have been produced by the IT industry for half a century. The tabulators that preceded them.

Commonly referred to as artificial intelligence, this new generation of technology and the cognitive touch every facet of work and life – with the potential to radically transform them for the better. They ingest and understand all forms of data, which is being produced at an unprecedented rate. Cognitive systems reason over this data, forming hypotheses and judgments. Most importantly, these systems are not limited by their own experiences, their interactions with humans and the outcomes of their judgments.

As with every prior world-changing technology, this technology carries major implications. Many of them are unanswerable today and will require time, research and open discussion to answer. But at IBM, with years of inventing and introducing transformative technologies and of guiding their responsible adoption, we have taught us that it is both pragmatic and wise to establish principles to guide what we develop and build.

Today we are establishing the following principles for the Cognitive Era:

Purpose: The purpose of AI and cognitive systems developed and applied by the IBM company is that technology, products, services and policies will be designed to enhance and extend human capabilities.

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function – all of which will and should remain within human control.

Transparency: For cognitive systems to fulfill their world-changing potential, it is vital that people understand the capabilities, limitations, recommendations, judgments and uses. Therefore, the IBM company will make clear:

- When and for what purposes AI is being applied in the cognitive solutions we develop and deploy.
- The major sources of data and expertise that inform the insights of cognitive solutions, as well as the systems and solutions.
- The principle that clients own their own business models and intellectual property and that the company will work to enhance the advantages they have built, often through years of experience. We will work with clients to understand their needs and insights, and will encourage our clients, partners and industry colleagues to adopt similar principles.

Skills: The economic and societal benefits of this new era will not be realized if the human side of the equation is uniquely important with cognitive technology, which augments human intelligence and expertise. Therefore, the IBM company will work to help students, workers and citizens acquire the skills to thrive in the new era safely, securely and effectively in a relationship with cognitive systems, and to perform the new kinds of work that will emerge in a cognitive economy.

Our experience over more than a century and our daily work with clients from every industry and sector has shown us that transparency and principles that engender trust are important for both business and society. There is much learning ahead for all of us. In that spirit, we hope that our publication of these tenets will spark, indeed, a society-wide – dialogue on the fundamental questions that must be answered, in order to realize the full potential of a cognitive future.



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