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Ontario's Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) Framework

Learn how we are creating an Artificial Intelligence (AI) framework to establish rules for the safe and responsible use of AI to offer better programs and services across government.

Overview

AI has the potential to help our government transform vital programs and services to better serve people and businesses, while also saving them time and money.

As with all new technologies, the use of AI must be rooted in democratic principles and fundamental rights.

To support strategic policy development, the Trustworthy AI Framework will be made up of policies, products and guidance to set out risk-based rules for the transparent, responsible and accountable use of AI in Ontario.

Our priorities

The Trustworthy AI Framework is grounded in 3 strategic priorities. They are:

1. No AI in secret: We will provide a clear understanding of how and when AI is being used.

2. AI use that people in Ontario can trust: We must clearly define risks of AI use and work to prevent them to proactively protect the people of Ontario.

3. AI that serves all the people of Ontario: We will put the right processes in place to learn more about decisions made with the use of AI.

Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive

Ontario is committed to using AI in ways that advance innovation, improve service delivery, and save time and money while maintaining trust and protecting the people and businesses of Ontario. To meet this commitment, Ontario's Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence Framework includes a Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive (https://www.ontario.ca/page/responsible-use-artificial-intelligence-directive) that aims to guide Government of Ontario use of AI.

Ontario is the first province or territory in Canada to establish guardrails for the responsible use of AI in the public sector. We are leading the way by setting requirements for AI risk management, disclosure and accountability associated with AI use in public programs and services and this is a significant step toward ensuring that AI technologies are used responsibly and transparently.

Key features of the Directive include:

- applies to all Government of Ontario ministries and provincial agencies

- establishes 6 Principles for Responsible use of AI to support decision-making when considering the use of AI systems
    - these complement the Canadian federal principles (https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai.html) and can be used as a model for other organizations across Ontario seeking to adopt their own internal AI policies and guidelines

- requires ministries and provincial agencies to engage in AI risk management when seeking to use AI systems as part of the development or delivery of a policy, program, or service

- establishes requirements for ministries and agencies to disclose and report on AI use

- establishes roles and responsibilities for officials within the public service

The Directive took effect December 1, 2024 and its implementation is supported by additional policies, guidance and processes.

Artificial Intelligence Expert Working Group

As the AI sector evolves rapidly, we are continuously engaging with experts from industry, academia and civil society. The AI Expert Working Group provides the Ontario government with advice and recommendations on the development of Ontario's Trustworthy AI Framework and responsible use of AI within the public sector. Their expertise will help ensure our use of AI is responsible, transparent and accountable.

Dr. Teresa Scassa

Dr. Teresa Scassa is the Chair of the AI expert working group. She is the Canada Research Chair in Information Law and Policy at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law. Teresa has served on several national and provincial advisory panels on law and technology related issues. She has written widely in the area of privacy law, data governance, intellectual property law, law and technology, artificial intelligence, and smart cities. She is a co-editor of the books AI and the Law in Canada (2021), Law and the Sharing Economy (2017), and The Future of Open Data (2022). She is co-author of Digital Commerce in Canada (2020) and Canadian Intellectual Property Law (2013, 2018 and 2022).

Alan Veerman

Alan Veerman is the Chief Operations and Finance Officer at the Vector Institute. Mr. Veerman has more than 14 years of experience working in the central agencies of the Government of Ontario, as well as direct experience working closely with founding board members, government partners, and industry sponsors to establish the Vector Institute as one of three national AI institutes under the federal Pan-Canadian AI Strategy.

James Hinton

James Hinton is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, the founder of Own Innovation and an intellectual property lawyer. Mr. Hinton has worked closely with the Council of Canadian Innovators on Canada's innovation initiatives and national IP strategy. He is an assistant professor at Western University. He is also co-

founder of the Innovation Asset Collective and a proud supporter of Canadian technology companies.

Dr. Jason Millar

Dr. Jason Millar is the Canada Research Chair in the Ethical Engineering of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence and an Assistant Professor in the School of Engineering Design and Teaching Innovation at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Engineering. He has a cross appointment in the Department of Philosophy. Dr. Millar's research focuses on developing transdisciplinary knowledge (i.e. frameworks and tools) that support engineering design and policymaking for robotics and AI.

Keith Jansa

Keith Jansa is the Chief Executive Officer of the Digital Governance Council, formerly known as the CIO Strategy Council. He works with senior leaders from across Canada to address digital governance opportunities and challenges to safeguard Canadians in an increasingly digital world. Mr. Jansa is a provincially appointed member of the Ontario Health Data Council and Chair of its strategic working group on Data Governance and Data Stewardship.

Mardi Witzel

Mardi Witzel is Chief Operating Officer of Polyalgorithmic Machine Learning Inc and serves on its board of directors. Ms. Witzel specializes in AI governance and is a member of the global faculty of NuEnergy.ai. Ms. Witzel is currently serving a second term as a Public Representative on the Chartered Professional Accountants Ontario Council.

Professor Rozita Dara

Professor Rozita Dara is the Director of Data Management and Privacy Governance research program at the University of Guelph. Her research interest includes applied artificial intelligence and data and technology governance. Since joining the University of Guelph, she has spearheaded several initiatives related to ethical and responsible artificial intelligence in different sectors including human health, agriculture and food.

Professor Tesh Dagne

Professor Dagne is the Ontario Research Chair in Governing Artificial Intelligence at York University and an Associate Professor at the School of Public Policy and Administration.

Beginning his academic journey with a Doctoral Degree from Schulich School of Law, Professor Dagne later attained a tenured Associate Professor position at Thompson Rivers University Faculty of Law. His current work focuses on the legal, regulatory, and ethical dimensions of AI applications in sectors like health and agriculture, as well as cross-sectoral issues that aim to uncover insights into labour, environmental equity, and the role of copyright law in AI's economic landscape.

Tim Dutton

Tim Dutton is the Director of Corporate Affairs at Intellijoint Surgical – a Canadian technology company focused on improving patient outcomes in joint replacement surgery. Mr. Dutton leads strategy, stakeholder relations, and ecosystem development for Intellijoint and has experience and expertise in policy related to innovation, AI, and the digital economy.

What we've heard

From May 7 to June 4, 2021, we asked for your input and ideas on how government can develop an AI framework that is accountable, safe and rights-based. Learn more about what we heard and our next steps. (https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-trustworthy-artificial-intelligence-ai-framework-consultations)

Related
Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Directive (https://www.ontario.ca/page/responsible-use-artificial-intelligence-directive)
Ontario Government Data (https://www.ontario.ca/page/government-data)
Ontario Data Catalogue (https://data.ontario.ca/)

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