

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ethical Guidelines

UDIT Academic Technology Services

Last updated Nov 29, 2023

The Importance of AI Ethical Guidelines

The role of AI in higher education is rapidly growing, offering exciting opportunities to enhance learning experiences and support faculty. However, the integration of AI into the academic landscape comes with its own set of ethical responsibilities. It will be important that we adhere to a robust ethical framework not only to safeguard the rights and interests of our stakeholders but to strengthen the integrity and credibility of our AI initiatives. This ethical structure helps to ensure that the technology we create and deploy aligns with the University of Delaware's values of promoting innovation, fostering diversity and inclusion, and upholding the highest standards of academic integrity.

Core Values and Principles Guiding AI Initiatives

Our core values guide the direction of our AI initiatives. Every algorithm we design, every line of code we write, and every dataset we utilize carries with it a set of implications that will impact the work of our faculty and the learning experiences of our students. Our values inform the basis for our principles, which are actionable pathways to implement our work ethically, guide our decision-making, and ensure accountability at all stages of the project. As we develop AI solutions for the University of Delaware, adhering to these values and principles is essential to ensuring ethical and responsible conduct.

ATS AI Values

1. **Inclusivity:** ATS is committed to fostering inclusivity by actively seeking diverse perspectives during the development of AI projects through methods such as focus groups, surveys, open dialogues, and consistent engagement with a wide array of stakeholders. Our efforts are geared towards creating resources that accommodate individuals with various backgrounds, perspectives, and learning journeys. This commitment is in alignment with the University of Delaware's dedication to embracing diversity and inclusion ([University of Delaware, UD Values](#)).
2. **Beneficence:** "Do no harm." Our work is intended solely to benefit students and faculty alike ([The Belmont Report](#)). This adheres to the University of Delaware's value of academic freedom ([University of Delaware, UD Values](#)).
3. **Promotion of Learning:** The ultimate goal of our work is to promote learning and provide additional engaging learning resources that enhance the educational experience of students. "The University of Delaware promotes an environment in which all people are inspired to learn, and encourages intellectual curiosity" ([University of Delaware, UD Values](#)).
4. **Educational Framework:** Our aim is to establish an educational framework designed to provide both faculty and students with a strong foundation in AI literacy and the ethical aspects surrounding the utilization of AI in education. The primary objective of AI projects will be to promote intellectual growth, aligning with the core values expressed in the University of Delaware's Mission Statement ([University of Delaware, UD Values](#)).
5. **Community Partnerships:** We will leverage partnerships across the UD Community and beyond to strengthen our work, incorporate different perspectives and promote innovation. By actively engaging with our broader community, we aspire to exemplify the University of Delaware's core values of innovation and service ([University of Delaware, UD Values](#)).

UD Study AiDE Ethical Principles

1. **Consent:** “Opt-In” basis only. The project will include willing faculty members who provide their own data and grant permission for its use. Participation is entirely voluntary, ensuring no impact on those who choose not to participate. This project serves as an optional instructional resource for interested parties.
2. **Putting People First:** The project will involve as much human oversight and involvement as possible. While AI will be used to do the computational heavy-lifting, every step of the project will involve human decision-making, feedback and control ([Google’s AI Principles](#)).
3. **Mitigation of Bias:** Through a mixture of human oversight, data practices, and algorithms, this project will focus specifically on mitigating any bias that may already exist or could be generated ([Google’s AI Principles](#)).
4. **Data Privacy & Security:** Strict measures will be adopted to ensure that data is collected, stored, and processed in a secure environment, complying with data protection laws.
5. **Accountability:** Every team member, from instructional designers to programmers, will be accountable for the ethical considerations in their respective domains. Any lapses in ethical judgment will be addressed promptly.
6. **Fair Representation:** The technology will be trained and tested to avoid the pitfalls of stereotype reinforcement and to ensure it is universally applicable.
7. **Open-Source Ethics:** Whenever possible, algorithms and methodologies will be shared with the academic community, allowing for peer-review and communal improvements to the framework.
8. **Sustainability:** Ethical considerations will also extend to the environmental impact of our technology, aiming for sustainable practices in AI training and deployment.
9. **Universal Design Compliance:** The project will explicitly align with [principles of universal design](#), ensuring accessibility and usability for as many people as possible.
10. **Traceability:** The project will use sources that can be easily referred back to. Additionally, the development processes will be well-documented to emphasize steps taken throughout the project’s design and implementation.

Avoiding Unethical Practices

While establishing ethical guidelines is essential, it is equally important to state what we will not do. We will actively avoid the following unethical practices:

1. **Data Scraping Without Consent:** We will never use publicly available faculty or student data without explicit permission.
2. **Non-Disclosure of Algorithmic Decision-making:** We commit to not deploying "black box" models without providing understandable explanations for how decisions are made.
3. **Ignoring Unintended Consequences:** Ethical lapses such as amplifying existing societal biases through machine learning models are unacceptable.
4. **Economic Bias:** No features will be developed that could provide greater advantages to users based on economic status.

Future Considerations

As we strive to maintain the highest ethical standards in our AI projects, it is imperative to plan for ongoing evaluation and growth. While our core values and principles provide a solid foundation, the ever-evolving nature of technology demands that we remain vigilant and adaptable. The ethical guidelines will be revisited periodically to include emerging ethical considerations in AI.