



AI Policy Matters

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Abstract

AI Policy Matters is a regular column in *AI Matters* featuring summaries and commentary based on postings that appear twice a month in the *AI Matters* blog (<https://sigai.acm.org/aimatters/blog/>). We welcome everyone to make blog comments so we can develop a rich knowledge base of information and ideas representing the SIGAI members.

What Can Biden Do for Science?

A *Science—Business Webcast* presented a forum of public and private sector leaders discussing ideas about the need for the president-elect to convene world leaders to re-establish ‘rules of engagement’ on science. Participants in the Webcast urged that a global assembly “should press leaders of the big industrial nations to open – or re-open – their research systems, while also ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines are freely available to everyone in the world.” About an international summit, Robert-Jan Smits, former director-general of the European Commission’s research and innovation directorate said it “would really show that senior leaders are turning the page.”

Brookings Webinar on the Future of AI

On November 17, 2020, the Brookings Institution [Center for Technology Innovation](#) hosted a [webinar](#) to discuss the future of AI, how it is being deployed, and the policy and legal issues being raised. Speakers explored ways to mitigate possible concerns and how to move forward safely, securely, and in a manner consistent with human values.

Section 230

On November 18, experts from ACM’s US Technology Policy Committee (USTPC) discussed the legal liability of Internet platforms

such as Facebook and Twitter under [Section 230](#) of the Communications Decency Act. USTPC panelists were Andy Grosso (Moderator), Mark Rasch, Pam Samuelson, Richard M. Sherman, and Danny Weitzner. Politico reports that “Trump for months has urged Congress to revoke industry legal shield Section 230, while its staunchest critics largely pushed to revamp it instead. But the president’s more drastic call for a total repeal — echoed by Biden for very different reasons — is gaining traction among Republicans in Washington. The NYT reported Thursday that White House chief of staff Mark Meadows has even offered Trump’s support for a must-pass annual defense spending bill if it includes such a repeal.”

The European AI Policy Conference

AI may be the most important digital innovation technology transforming industries around the world. “Businesses in Europe are at the forefront of some of the latest advancements in the field, and European universities are home to the greatest concentration of AI researchers in the world. Every week, new case studies emerge showing the potential opportunities that can arise from greater use of the technology.” The [European AI Policy Conference](#) brings together leading voices in AI to discuss why European success in AI is important, how the EU compares to other world leaders today, and what steps European policymakers should take to be more competitive in AI. “The European AI Policy Conference is a high-level forum to connect stakeholders working to promote AI in Europe, showcase advances in AI, and promote AI policies supporting its development to EU policymakers and thought leaders.”

On the EU Data Governance Act

The European Commission is [planning to release](#) its Data Governance Act to facilitate data sharing within the EU. The goal is to increase data sharing among businesses, make

more public-sector data available for reuse, and foster data sharing of personal data, including for 'altruistic' purposes. While the goals of the act are commendable, many of the specific policies outlined in a draft would create a new data localization requirement, undermine the EU's commitments to digital free trade, and contradict its open data principles.

The Center for Data Innovation submitted feedback to the European Commission's [roadmap](#) titled "Legislative framework for the governance of common European data spaces." The European Commission published a [data strategy](#) in February 2020 with the goal of creating a single market for data. As part of that vision, the Commission has proposed creating "European data spaces" with clear and consistent rules across member states for access and use of data in key sectors of the economy. To that end, the Commission has invited feedback on its initial plans to propose a legislative framework that would 1) increase access to publicly held data; 2) support voluntary data sharing by individuals and organizations; 3) develop technical standards and promote interoperability to lower the cost of data sharing; and 4) support data intermediaries to share data between different stakeholders.

Possible meta solutions for policymakers to keep up with technological advances are discussed in "[AI Ethics and Data Governance: A Virtuous Cycle](#)" and the Center for Data Innovation [Response to the European Commission's Inception Impact Assessment "Legislative Framework for the Governance of Common European Data Spaces"](#)

Policy Issues from AI and Ethics

The inaugural issue of the new journal AI and Ethics contains several articles relevant to AI and Public Policy.

Jelinek, T., Wallach, W., and Kerimi, D. "Policy brief: the creation of a G20 coordinating committee for the governance of artificial intelligence" *AI and Ethics* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-020-00019-y>
This policy brief proposes a group of twenty (G20) coordinating committee for the governance of artificial intelligence (CCGAI) to plan

and coordinate on a multilateral level the mitigation of AI risks. The G20 is the appropriate regime complex for such a metagovernance mechanism, given the involvement of the largest economies and their highest political representatives.

Gambelin, O. "Brave: what it means to be an AI Ethicist" *AI and Ethics* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-020-00020-5>
This piece offers a preliminary definition of what it means to be an AI Ethicist, first examining the concept of an ethicist in the context of artificial intelligence, followed by exploring what responsibilities are added to the role in industry specifically, and ending on the fundamental characteristic that underlies it all: bravery.

Smith, P., Smith, L. "Artificial intelligence and disability: too much promise, yet too little substance?" *AI and Ethics* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-020-00004-5>
Much has been written about the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to support, and even transform, the lives of disabled people. Many individuals are benefiting, but what are the true limits of such tools? What are the ethics of allowing AI tools to suggest different courses of action, or aid in decision-making? And does AI offer too much promise for individuals? We draw as to how AI software and technology might best be developed in the future.

Coeckelbergh, M. "AI for climate: freedom, justice, and other ethical and political challenges" *AI and Ethics* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-020-00007-2>
Artificial intelligence can and should help to build a greener, more sustainable world and to deal with climate change, but these opportunities also raise ethical and political issues that need to be addressed. This article discusses these issues, with a focus on problems concerning freedom and justice at a global level, and calls for responsible use of AI for climate in the light of these challenges.

Hickok, M. "Lessons learned from AI ethics principles for future actions" *AI and Ethics* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-020-00008-1>
The use of AI systems is significantly more prevalent in recent years, and the concerns on how these systems collect, use and process big data has also increased. To ad-

dress these concerns and advocate for ethical and responsible AI development and implementation, NGOs, research centers, private companies, and governmental agencies have published more than 100 AI ethics principles and guidelines. Lessons must be learned from the shortcomings of AI ethics principles to ensure that future investments, collaborations, standards, codes, and legislation reflect the diversity of voices and incorporate the experiences of those who are already impacted by AI.

Please join our discussions at the [SIGAI Policy Blog](#).



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