



FACTSHEET #3

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to software applications that, given a specific goal, can **learn, reason** and **make decisions**. AI technologies have many different applications - such as smartphone assistants, translation tools, self-driving cars, facial recognition - and AI systems are already used in fields including farming and detecting natural disasters. But while AI opens up many possibilities, it also raises ethical and legal concerns that must be examined and addressed. This factsheet gives an overview of AI and offers practical advice about its opportunities and pitfalls.

KEY MESSAGES

- AI systems display intelligent behaviour by **analysing their environment and acting** – with a degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals.
- AI is the basis for many **automated decision-making (ADM) systems**, such as assessing students' exam grades or online decisions about giving someone a loan.
- The rationale for the decisions given by an ADM system should be **transparent and explainable**, even if the process is not - but this is not always possible in practice, depending on the technology used.
- You always have the right to ask for **human intervention** to contest a decision based on an ADM (Article 22, GDPR).

VULNERABLE PEOPLE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI systems don't simply learn according to a fixed set of rules; instead, they are fed with examples, or 'training data'. This builds their knowledge on a topic, enabling them to make decisions, find solutions or predict outcomes. The quality of the training data is hugely important in ensuring that AI systems avoid **replicating or multiplying discrimination** against vulnerable people. This problem can arise from biased data (e.g. racially or gender biased), or missing data on certain minorities (e.g. migrants, LGBTQIA+). If the training data is biased, the AI system may produce biased results.

HOW IS AI USED IN EVERYDAY LIFE?

Amazon began using AI to **score candidates for technology positions** in 2014, but realised in 2015 that this was not rating candidates in a gender-neutral way. The AI models used had been 'trained' by observing previously submitted résumés - which



mostly came from men. Amazon stopped using the AI tool in 2018, but similar tools are still widely used in recruitment processes. Meanwhile, accessible data about **users' behaviour** (e.g. Facebook page 'likes') can accurately predict sensitive personal attributes, including sexual orientation, ethnicity, political views, age and gender.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- There is a lively debate in the EU on the regulation of AI. Don't miss the chance to have your say in the public consultation windows: bit.ly/2Slwlql
- Keep updated on civil society campaigns and initiatives on AI use; for example Reclaim Your Face seeks a ban on facial recognition AI for biometric mass surveillance: bit.ly/2Sja5gE
- Follow organisations focused on ADM accountability, such as Algorithm Watch, and ask them for help if you think your rights have been violated: bit.ly/3j4KqTX

FIND OUT MORE

READ: PANELFIT's Guidelines provide many more examples of how AI is used: www.panelfit.eu/. Other useful resources include the Automating Society report, by Algorithm Watch (bit.ly/3h342p4); the Artificial Intelligence and Fundamental Rights: Document Pool, by EDRI (bit.ly/3j2oNDF); and the Council of Europe's Guidelines on facial recognition (bit.ly/3d1Hzaw).

WATCH: We recommend the *Coded Bias* documentary by Shalini Kantayya on Netflix (bit.ly/3gYF9e4), and the *Artificial intelligence and algorithms: pros and cons* documentary, by Deutsche Welle (bit.ly/3gPQaOw).