

Emergence of *artificial intelligence* (AI) in society: adapting public action in the service of the *general interest*

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is omnipresent in our lives. Every day, we are confronted with it, with the recommendation of content, the optimisation of our movements or even the programming of our smartphones and social networks. The rise of AI calls into question the way we live in society and the strategic choices we have to make. So how can it be deployed in French society in the service of the general interest?

Identify the impacts of AI in all areas of French society

The ESEC analyses the major issues involved in the deployment of AI: its impact on our fundamental rights and individual freedoms, its environmental footprint, and the imperative of European strategic autonomy that dictates economic policies. The ESEC is also interested in the consequences of the rapid development of this technology throughout society: at work, at school, in public services, at the doctor's office, etc. The objective is to draw up an overview of the impacts and prospects of AI.

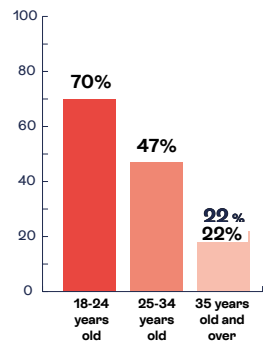
How can we create the conditions for the development of AI in the service of the general interest and human beings?

For the ESEC, technical development is only relevant if it serves human beings and the general interest. This vision must then transcend public policy, shape each of the political orientations and thus shape the way we 'create society'. Thus, in view of the democratic and geopolitical issues associated with AI, the ESEC considers it important to have our own technological resources and to create a strong Europe that is a strategist in economic and commercial terms. At the same time, the ESEC calls for collective vigilance to accompany the deployment of AI in a responsible, ethical and sustainable manner.

Citizens included in the work of the commission

In view of the concerns and perspectives raised by AI, it was important to involve the voices of those most directly affected. For this reason, ten citizens were selected at random to join the temporary commission alongside the EESC councilors. They come from different regions of France and have been participating in the work of the EESC for several months.

Proportion of French IA users per age group



Ifop for Talan, "2024 Barometer: The French and Generative AI", April 2024 - AI Report No. 3 - AI and Education: Supporting Current Developments | Senate.



What is the framework for the acceptability of artificial intelligence?

1 Systematically take into account the societal utility of AI

While the societal usefulness of AI is indisputable in certain fields such as medical research or for certain uses, such as improving accessibility for people with disabilities, it is essential to ensure that AI is always deployed in the service of human beings and the general interest, respecting four inseparable dimensions: compatibility with planetary boundaries, social progress, economic issues, and respect for fundamental rights, individual freedoms and real equality for all.

→ **In practice:** in the world of work, this means, for example, ensuring that working conditions are respected, and in particular that workers retain their autonomy and their ability to make informed decisions, despite the integration of AI. It also means allowing everyone - citizens, public or private companies, profit or non-profit - to adopt AI, by guaranteeing AI training at all stages of life, or support regardless of the structure. This also requires encouraging a frugal use of AI, to limit the environmental footprint of the technology.

2 Guarantee citizens the ability to exercise their choice and critical thinking on the uses of AI

The deployment of AI must be carried out with full awareness, and citizens must be able to make informed choices about the deployment of AI uses or infrastructures.

→ **For example:** this means, in the case of the establishment of a data center, informing the public about the actual consumption of water or electricity generated by these facilities, and anticipating the conflicts of use that are likely to emerge at the local level. This also means, in the context of the deployment of AI in public services, systematically offering support and a human welcome as an alternative to the dematerialised service, to guarantee access and freedom of choice for all citizens.

3 Ensure the transparency and explainability of technology

As AI is intrinsically biased, due to the data sets used for its training or the choices that dictated the programming of its algorithms, it is crucial to guarantee transparency and explainability of the decisions and results produced by AI.

→ **For example:** when AI systems are deployed to enforce the law (calculating taxes, allocating benefits) or to make an individual and unavoidable decision (on the Parcoursup platform, for access to higher education). But also when AIs can aggravate or reproduce inequalities (particularly gender or ethnic inequalities).

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