Conference Programme

Better Algorithms
for Better Policies

Towards benevolent AI
for responsible and evidence informed policymaking

November 30, 2021,
Virtually hosted form *The Hague, The Netherlands*

STEPPS
Strengthening & Transferring Evidence
for Policies & Politics Society

Universiteit Leiden
Governance and
Global Affairs

In collaboration with:

ScienceWorks
Connecting Science & Society

Rijksoverheid

NL AI Coalitie

Transforming Evidence
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DATA COALITION

NOREA
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Universities
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Followed by the 1-2/12 STEPPS

conference 'Evidence for Policymakers'

Towards benevolent AI
for responsible and evidence informed policymaking

This conference is the follow up of the expert meeting "Making governments AI Proof", which took place in December 2020 in The Hague. It will continue the conversation on how governmental organizations can better organize data driven policymaking including the use of Artificial Intelligence for the public good. Some conclusions of this expert meeting are described hereunder.

How can we gain trust in the use of Algorithms within Governments?

AI is often regarded as a "boogy man". We therefore need to enhance awareness and regulation in order to use AI in responsible ways. Not using AI seems not an option in the long run.

Some experts state that algorithms need to be *certified and listed* in order to build more trust. In The Netherlands and Finland, algorithm registers have been established for this purpose. In order to use these registers properly we need to agree on how we wish to scrutinize or supervise AI, and make sure that transparency is not just for the sake of transparency, but is actionable for various stakeholders. Algorithms are not right or wrong in itself. It's the use of it that can lead to mistakes.

A point of attention is how to turn the stigma of the public towards AI around, leading to a more positive focus on the improvements AI may foster and is already making. It received far less attention when the Netherlands Court of Audit stated that no forms of "uncontrolled AI" had been founded, as opposed to the more regular blaming of algorithms to cover political or governmental misconduct. Therefore, algorithms might deserve to be also addressed within politics or by the media as the cause for success.

How to use AI as an integral and secure part of government innovation?

How to stimulate innovation responsibly? Best practices from industry may demonstrate which innovation will work or will not work in a sector where the turmoil is generally lower than in the public sector.

Although we may have the risk that the private sector will outclass the public sector, public-private cooperation is essential for innovation. This needs to be fully transparent on the related conditions; private ownership of data may, for example, may become a hurdle too high to overcome in the public sector.

Another point of attention is that we should leave ample space for *experiments* in order to find out how we can work with algorithms e.g. in order to enhance the prediction of specific interventions or to reduce costs. We should enable standards and create a safe environment in which these experiments may take place for the purpose of learning.

What can the government do internally to improve data driven policymaking?

Standards are important in order to be able to cooperate not only technologically but also on the process level. In all these processes we need standards in order to bridge data-use between public agencies/departments, between governmental levels and – in some cases - between public- and private parties. For creating transparent AI, we need not only to build trust between parties and on conditions but some central management and supervision is essential as well.

In general we may state that we need data engineers and data scientists to build AI, we need academia to understand the underlying principles and methods and we need policymakers to have the capacities to deal with both the conditions and the consequences for the people. This conference will discuss how to make use of each other's expertise in – particularly – the earliest phase of development, allow for piloting and a safe environment for learning. Therewith, we should investigate how we can share best practices internationally, for generating benevolent AI that is instrumental for improving the public good.

Programme

12.30 - 13.00	Registration

13.00 - 14.15	Plenary opening; How to raise the Public Value of Algorithms?

Bram Klievink, Chair of the Conference & Professor of Public Administration at Leiden University with a special focus on Digitalisation and Public Policy

Haroon Sheikh, Lead of the report *'Mission AI. The New System Technology'* at the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy

Timothy Persons, Chief Scientist and Managing Director, Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics at the United States Government Accountability Office

David Budtz Pedersen, Professor of Science Communication at Aalborg University, Knowledge Broker for the "Algorithms, Data & Democracy Initiative (ADD), Denmark

Nick Hart, CEO, Data Coalition & President, Data Foundation, USA

14.00 - 14.15	Panel Discussion and Q&A

14.15 - 14.30	Break

14.30 - 15.30	Parallel Session

Gaining trust for AI within government	How can Algorithms generate Evidence for Policy
Which instruments can generate trust on local, national and international level?	*How can we Integrate responsible algorithms closer within the policy cycle?*
Chair: **Barbara Ubaldi,** Data Lead OECD	Chair: **Nick Hart,** CEO, Data Coalition & President, Data Foundation, USA
Jiri Hradec, Analyst on Policy, Data and Text Mining at European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Italy	**Michel van Leeuwen,** Director Artificial Intelligence, Ministry of Justice and Security, The Netherlands
Linda van de Fliert, Innovation officer, Programme Coordinator Public Tech, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	**Julia Lane,** Professor at NYU Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and Co-Founder of the Coleridge Initiative, USA

15.30-15.45 Break

Programme

15.30 - 15.45	Break

15.45 - 16.45	Parallel Session

Understanding and controlling algorithms and AI	Public-private cooperation in an innovative government
Under which conditions can we use AI for public purposes responsibly?	*How can we organise AI within government together with private parties?*
Chair: **Timothy Persons,** Chief Scientist and Managing Director, Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics at GAO, USA	Chair: **Kees van der Klauw,** Strategist and Manager, the Netherlands AI Coalition
Ewout Irrgang, Vice-President of the Netherlands Court of Audit	**Erdogan Taskesen,** Lead Data Scientist, Rijkswaterstaat part of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, The Netherlands
Barry O'Sullivan, Professor of Computer Science at University College Cork, Vice Chair of the High-Level Expert Group on AI (2018 - 2020)	**Cornelia Kutterer,** Senior Director, Rule of Law, Responsible Tech, European Government Affairs, Microsoft
Frank van Praat, Knowledge Group, Algorithm & Assurance, NOREA	**Ben Zevenbergen,** Responsible Innovation Ethics & Policy Advisor, Google

16.45-17.00	Break

17.00 – 17.45	Closing panel; Points of Action for Governmental AI Strategies
17.00 - 17.10	Recommendations for the closing panel, presented by the chairs of the parallel sessions
17.10 - 17.45	*Moderator:* **Bram Klievink,** Chair of the Conference & Professor of Public Administration at Leiden University with a special focus on Digitalisation and Public Policy

Panel Members:

Nick Hart, CEO, Data Coalition & President, Data Foundation USA

Kees van der Klauw, Strategist and Manager, the Netherlands AI Coalition

Mona de Boer, Chair of the Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence Group, NOREA

Catelijne Muller, President and Co-Founder of ALLAI

17.45	Closing Remarks and virtual reception