

Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Freedom of Expression
Overview on the General Focus of the Project



This project aims to promote, among all stakeholders, a clearer understanding of government, regulators, and internet intermediaries' policies and practices in their use of AI and the profound impact they have on the future of media and quality information and the realisation of human rights online.

AI has become one of the main tools to shape and arbitrate information online. If implemented responsibly, AI can benefit society. However, as is the case with most emerging technologies, there is a genuine risk that commercial, political or state use has a detrimental impact on human rights.

Through this project, the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media aims to develop policy recommendations on most effective ways to safeguard freedom of expression and media freedom when using advanced machine-learning technologies within four main thematic areas of concern: (a) **security** (b) **hate speech** (c) **media pluralism** and (d) **surveillance**.

Security

Algorithmic decision-making, machine-learning and semantic technologies are increasingly utilised to help cope with the huge number of removal decisions that need to be taken on a daily basis in an attempt to tackle various legitimate security concerns of the digital era (terrorism, violent extremism, cybercrime, disinformation, so-called “fake news”, online harassment, etc.). However, these have vast, often unintentional, discriminatory side-effects.

Hate Speech

While legal views on the matter vary, hate speech, various forms of racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia are spreading increasingly through social networks, and machine-learning based techniques are increasingly utilised to tackle these issues. Yet there remains a need to explore the opportunities and the risks of using machine-learning techniques to fight hate speech and to consider what rules should be adopted to effectively counter hate speech while protecting fundamental rights.

Media Pluralism

The technological curation of our information space by AI fundamentally affects the way we encounter ideas and information online. So-called “filter bubbles” or “echo chambers” risk to impede information pluralism, and insulate us from any sort of cognitive dissonance by limiting what we see.

Surveillance

Applications of AI technology heavily rely on the generation, collection, processing, and sharing of large amounts of data, both about individual and collective behaviour. This data can be used to profile individuals and predict future behaviour. Some of these uses can have serious repercussions and pose a threat to the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression and information.

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