

Ethical Principles and Practices for Inclusive AI

SUMMARY OF
“MAKING AI INCLUSIVE:
4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES
FOR ETHICAL
ENGAGEMENT”



PARTNERSHIP ON AI

Inclusive AI/ML development can have both business advantages and help signal a commitment to equitable practices. “Making AI Inclusive,” a new white paper from the Partnership on AI, illuminates important challenges and opportunities for engaging people who are not on AI/ML development teams, providing four guiding principles and three recommendations for ethical engagement.



READ THE
WHITE PAPER

Guiding Principles for Ethical Participatory Engagement

To make changes needed for a more inclusive AI, the field must first agree on some foundational premises regarding inclusion. Below are four guiding principles that practitioners should adopt as their operating assumptions to align their approach to engagement with ethical best practices.

1. All participation is a form of labor that should be recognized.
2. Stakeholder engagement must address inherent power asymmetries.
3. Inclusion and participation can be integrated across all stages of the development lifecycle.
4. Inclusion and participation must be integrated to the application of other responsible AI principles.

Recommendations for Ethical Engagement in Practice

In line with the principles offered above, the following three recommendations speak to the challenges facing individual practitioners. These challenges include the need for organizational support throughout the development lifecycle, grappling with histories of stakeholder exclusion, and siloed understandings of inclusion as a part of responsible AI development.

1

Allocate time and resources to promote inclusive development.

Inclusive development requires a different set of skills from what is necessary for developing algorithmic models – as well as additional time and resources. Stated commitments to responsible and inclusive AI/ML development are only impactful when girded by material institutional support.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Build teams with explicit roles to support community-based relationships and focus on inclusive development, as well as other responsible AI practices.
- Draw from expertises outside of computer science or machine learning, such as anthropology, community organizing, disability studies, ethnic studies, gender studies, humanities, and sociology.
- Plan for sprint cycles that permit time for the collection of insights from users and/or impacted communities, as well as the synthesis of those findings for incorporation.

2

Adopt inclusive development strategies before development begins.

Inclusive participation strategies should not be created after much of the AI/ML development lifecycle has passed. Having early discussions about inclusive development and participation goals for the project provides an opportunity to initiate important conversations that more broadly relate to the responsible development of AI.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Identify marginalized stakeholders. *Who are the people who may use or be impacted by the use of the AI/ML product or service, but are not typically consulted?*
- Understand dynamics of power. *What are the power dynamics between the organization and members of the public, both individually and structurally?*
- Identify resources needed. *What is needed to build and sustain relationships with key (marginalized) stakeholders throughout the AI/ML development lifecycle?*
- Identify integration points. *At what stage(s) of development should key stakeholders be engaged? Can stakeholders change these integration points?*
- Recognize contributions of participants. *What is the compensation or attribution policy for stakeholders who participate in the development of the AI/ML product or service? How are passive participants compensated? How will they be credited? Are there opportunities to redistribute future success with participants? Can participants withdraw their contributions or support?*
- Build accountability mechanisms. *What processes or mechanisms exist for participants or future users/members of the public to hold the organization or company accountable for any harm experienced due to use of the algorithmic model?*

3

Train towards an integrated understanding of ethics.

The relevance and value of incorporating inclusive practices into AI/ML development may not be readily apparent to some practitioners. Creating a body of practitioners who are conversant on both equity and responsible AI issues will significantly help shift principles into practice.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Develop and implement trainings and regular workshops on responsible AI principles and best practices, including inclusive practices for all staff members, that cover:
 - How “inclusion” works with and alongside other principles of responsible AI
 - The aims and implications of various participatory frameworks and approaches to understand that participation is not a “one size fits all” or singular concept.