

A top-down view of several children sitting around a large sheet of paper, drawing various objects and numbers. The drawings include a microscope, a lightbulb, a ruler, a backpack, a computer monitor, a globe, a pair of scissors, a paint palette, a book, a clock, a pencil, a pencil sharpener, a pair of glasses, a stack of books, a calculator, a magnifying glass, a person, and a grid of numbers. The children are using various colored pencils and markers. The background is a dark, textured surface.

AI Ethics and Engagement with Children and Young People

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Overview

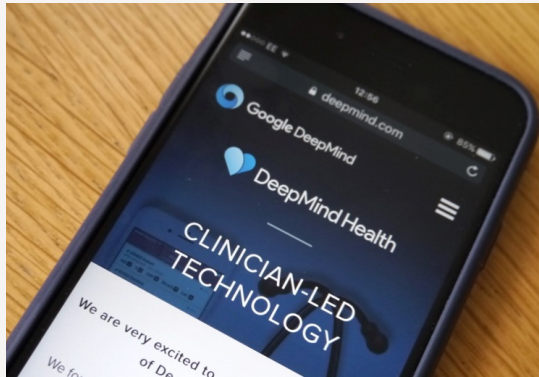


- Why AI ethics?
- What is AI ethics?
- Key ethical principles and how they apply to AI
- Why does this matter for children and young people?
- Engaging children with AI ethics
- Discussion



Why AI Ethics?

AI is increasingly playing important roles in all areas of our lives and impacting all areas of society.



Why AI ethics?

Increasing interest in AI ethics is in part a result of high profile public controversies.

Why AI Ethics?

Such factors have resulted in increasing recognition of the need to ensure that data and AI are used in ways which are appropriate, legitimate and publicly acceptable.

It is widely recognised that AI can bring significant social and economic impacts (positive and negative) and that addressing ethical considerations is crucial.

A row of ten lightbulbs hanging from above. The first nine are white outlines, and the tenth is a glowing yellow lightbulb with radiating lines, positioned behind the text. The entire scene is framed by a large white circle on a dark background.

What is AI Ethics?

- AI Ethics requires going beyond legal compliance;
- Ethics considers not what we can do but rather what we *should* do – and what we *should not* do;
- There are no simple solutions to ethical challenges, rather ethical approaches require continual negotiation and judgement.
- Getting it right is not just about avoiding negative impacts, but also about maximising the value of digital innovation.

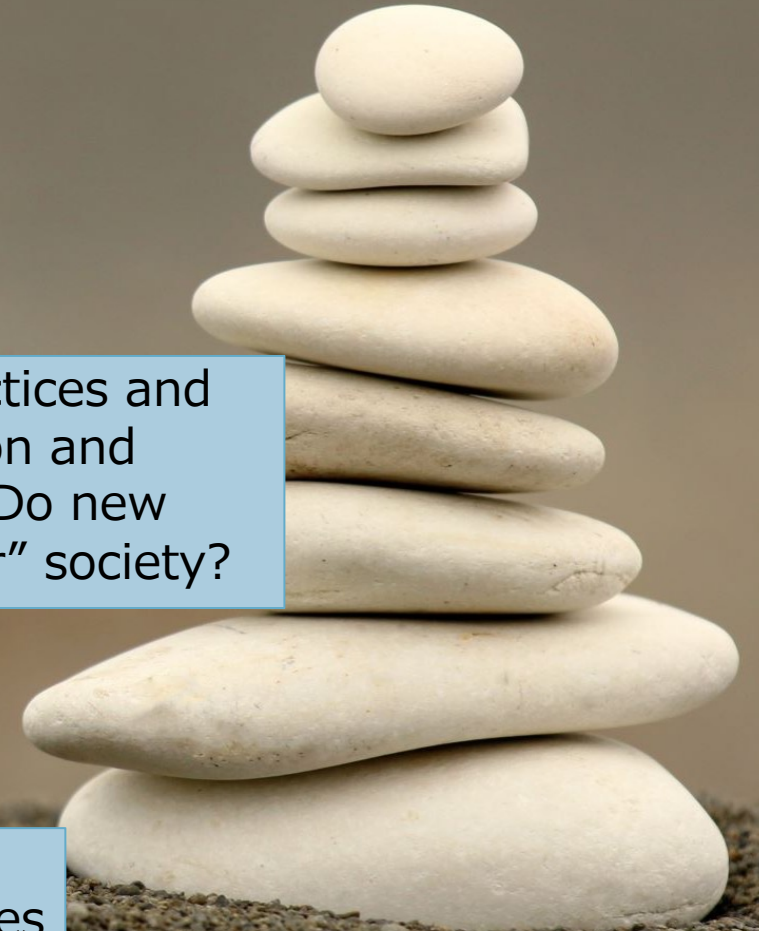
Ethical Principles

Beneficence: How do we ensure that the benefits of new technologies are experienced equitably across society?

Nonmaleficence: Do AI systems lead to discriminatory practices and outcomes? Do new forms of data collection and monitoring threaten individuals' privacy? Do new forms of monitoring lead to a "big brother" society?

Autonomy: To what extent are individuals in control of the ways they interact with AI technologies or how they impact their lives?

Justice: How can we protect against unjust outcomes, ensuring these do not exacerbate existing inequalities or reinforce prejudices? How do we ensure diverse perspectives and interests are reflected in design, development and deployment of AI systems?



Epistemic and Normative Concerns

- Epistemic concerns relate to the data and algorithms used (i.e. Are there biases in the data? Is the data used accurate and up to date? Is it possible to scrutinise the data or decision-making process?)
- Normative concerns relate to outcomes and impacts on society.

Example:

Predictive policing algorithms are controversial partly because the data used are often biased due to historic prejudices shaping their collection (an epistemic concern) but also because of value-laden decisions about the particular contexts and purposes for which these algorithms are used (e.g. street crime, but not white collar crime), with important social implications (a normative concern).





**Watch Out for
Kangaroos!**

**Why does this
matter for
children and
young people?**





Engaging Children with AI Ethics

UNICEF's Requirements for Child-Centred AI

- Support children's development and well-being
- Ensure inclusion of and for children
- Prioritize fairness and non-discrimination for children
- Protect children's data and privacy
- Ensure safety for children
- Provide transparency, explainability, and accountability for children
- Empower governments and businesses with knowledge of AI and children's rights
- Prepare children for present and future developments in AI
- Create an enabling environment for child-centred AI
- Engage in digital cooperation

Source: UNICEF policy guidance on AI for children



Rationales for Engagement

Normative: It's the right thing to do

Instrumental: As a means to a particular goal

Substantive: To improve projects and their outcomes, leading to benefits for participants and wider society

Wilsdon, J. and Willis, R., 2004. *See-through science: Why public engagement needs to move upstream*. Demos.

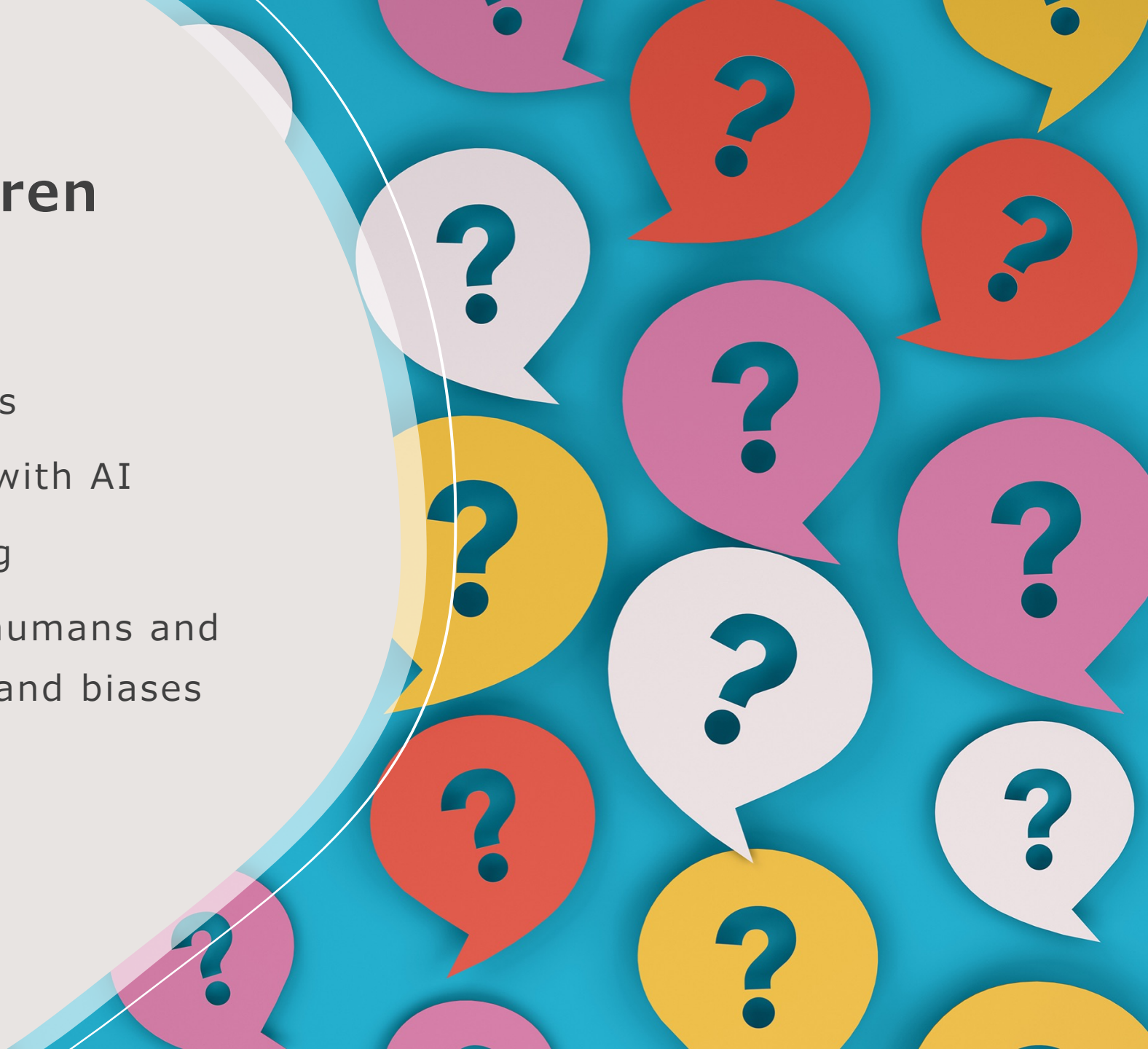
Why should children be taught about AI ethics?

- To equip them to understand how AI is impacting their lives
- To equip them to make informed choices about the ways they interact with AI services
- To equip them to develop better AI products and services in the future (realizing the benefits of AI)
- To engage them in discussions around the ways that AI is used (now and in the future)- informing ethical practices



What should children know about AI?

- How AI impacts their lives
- How decisions are made with AI
- That AI gets things wrong
- That AI is developed by humans and reflects human interests and biases



**But most importantly
they should know:**

**what they want to
know!**





Current Research

Current research in the Ethics Theme of the Public Policy Programme at the Alan Turing Institute is seeking to explore children's awareness, interests and concerns relating to AI.

This research is developing approaches to engage children to inform future ethical practices relating to AI in the public sector.



Discussion

- What do you think are the main challenges of engaging children in discussions of AI ethics?
- How can/should ethical considerations be incorporated within or alongside existing STEM education?

Thank you,

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