THE DATA EFFECT

CANADA'S AI FUTURE

NOVEMBER 2, 2023 | OTTAWA, ONTARIO

presented by

Google Cloud   COMMUNITECH®

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OCI   SFU BIG DATA   TELUS   The Logic
Where Next Happens

CityAge

INTRODUCTION

The Data Effect Ottawa: Canada's AI Future assembled an influential audience, uniting cross-sector senior leaders from both the private and public spheres. The event brought together some of the most prominent voices in the field of artificial intelligence in Canada, for some robust discussions on how AI can propel Canada toward a brighter future.

Presented by Google Cloud and Communitech, with support from Industry Partners, Simon Fraser University, TELUS and the Ontario Centre of Innovation, The Data Effect Ottawa examined the partnerships that are driving progress not only in Ottawa but across the nation. The insights and priorities unveiled during this event are poised to play a pivotal role in guiding Canada towards a more innovative and AI-driven future, fostering human development, economic growth, and societal well-being.

ATTENDEES

SOME ORGANIZATIONS IN ATTENDANCE
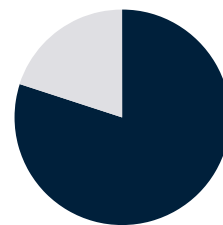
80%
Senior Level Professionals
(*mid-level and above)

40%
of attendees work in government

26%
of attendees work in technology

EVENT THEMES:

Best practices to implement responsible AI: How can Canada's innovation community, government agencies and businesses implement AI ethically and sustainably – from inception – to improve industries, solve society's problems and help governments and organizations serve Canadians better?

Building trust in AI: How can government, industry, and academia collaboratively shape AI policy to address risks, ensure accountability, and foster innovation?

AI Innovation in Canada: What are the major AI advancements in Canada? What are the priorities and challenges faced by leading organizations in AI?

Collaboration in the AI ecosystem: How can collaboration and better data infrastructure improve efficiency for the government and Canadian organizations?

AI diplomacy: How can Canada position itself as a leader in international collaboration efforts to set the ground for efficient regulations and tackle major challenges with the use of AI.

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED:

STEPHEN BURT
Chief Data Officer of Canada

SENATOR COLIN DEACON
Independent Senator for Nova Scotia, Senate of Canada

CRAIG HANEY
Head of Ventures, AltaML

KEITH JANSA
Chief Executive Office, Digital Governance Council

SHINGAI MANJENGWA
Head of AI Education, ChainML

MAI MAVINKURVE
Managing Partner, Prosperity Global Services

JOELLE PINEAU
Vice President, AI research, Meta

DAVID REEVELY
Ottawa Correspondent, The Logic

STEVE RENNIE
Director, Data-Driven Technologies, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

MARK SCHAAN
Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

KEVIN TUER
Chief Technology Officer, Communitech

CHRIS DAOUST
Head of Customer Engineering - Public Sector, Healthcare and Higher Education (Canada), Google for Government

MC: CHARELLE EVELYN
Managing Editor, The Hill Times

ANNA JAHN
Director, Public Policy and Learning, AI4Humanity, Mila

CLAUDIA KRYWIAK
President & CEO, Ontario Centre of Innovation

FLORIAN MARTIN-BARITEAU
Associate Professor of Law and University Chair in Technology and Society, University of Ottawa

IMA OKONNY
Chief Data Officer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employment and Social Development Canada

FRED POPOWICH
Scientific Director, Big Data Hub, Simon Fraser University

ERICA REN
Chief Data Officer, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

JONATHAN ROSENBLUTH
Director of Product, Cohere

ELAHEH SHABANI
AI Governance Specialist, NuEnergy.ai

JOSEPHINE YAM
CEO & Co-Founder, Skills4Good AI

BREAKOUT SESSION: KEY FINDINGS

CityAge went beyond traditional presentations and panels by hosting engaging breakout sessions, led by Communitech and conducted under the Chatham House Rule, to foster non-attributed in-depth conversations and generate a comprehensive list of priorities specifically tailored to the AI ecosystem in Canada.

These sessions were skillfully guided by our breakout session leaders, Josephine Yam, CEO & Co-Founder of Skills4Good AI, and Craig Haney, Head of Ventures at AltaML. The breakout sessions presented attendees with four thought-provoking questions, ensuring that every participant had the opportunity to share their perspectives and actively contribute to a collaborative discussion. These questions, spanning the realms of data, regulation, ethics, and Canada's competitive advantage in the AI landscape, ignited a dialogue among attendees. Here are the biggest takeaways from each session:

BREAKOUT SESSION LEADERS

JOSEPHINE YAM
CEO & Co-Founder, Skills4Good AI

CRAIG HANEY
Head of Ventures, AltaML

1. EVERYTHING DATA

What role can the government play through open data initiatives, and how can companies balance innovation with ethical data practices in a world of increasing data sensitivity and privacy regulations, including the implementation of data policies for storage and architecture, to ensure wide use of public datasets?

Data Policies for Wide Use: Data policies are essential for ensuring the broad utilization of public datasets, particularly in the context of increasing data sensitivity and privacy regulations.

Balancing Innovation and Ethics: Companies must strike a balance between fostering innovation and maintaining ethical data practices, especially concerning privacy and regulatory concerns.

Government's Role in Ethical AI: The government should enable ethical practices in the industry, particularly in AI applications, including mitigating risks and managing reputation.

Data Collection, Usage, and Governance: Clear principles and governance are essential for data collection and usage, aiming to mitigate risks and ensure data is representative and diverse.

Government's Role in Open Data Initiatives: The government plays a crucial role in open data initiatives by promoting access, breaking down silos, sharing success stories, and enhancing data visualization.

"Industry can proactively collaborate with tech companies to inform government decision-making, addressing risks in AI advancement for privacy, ethics, and ensuring representative AI."

2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

How can Canada develop a certification framework that includes elements for global recognition, enhances the competitiveness of Canadian businesses, and incorporates incentives to encourage its widespread adoption among Canadian companies?

Stakeholder Consultation and Standardization: Collaboration among stakeholders is vital to establish a comprehensive and widely accepted standard code of practice.

Human-Centric and Ethical Framework: A certification framework should prioritize a human-centric and ethical approach to AI, emphasizing transparency and responsibility.

Incentives for Adoption: Incentives, including economic benefits and incentives for early adoption, can encourage the widespread adoption of the certification framework.

Continuous Improvement and Education: The framework should remain dynamic with regular updates, and education is crucial to raise awareness and enhance competitiveness.

Transparency and Accountability: Companies should transparently demonstrate responsible AI use with enforced accountability measures.

> In a world of increasing data sensitivity and privacy regulations we need independent third parties who not just comply but build trust."

3. ETHICAL AI PRINCIPLES & INCENTIVES

What strategies can facilitate the integration of ethical principles in AI-driven businesses and startups, identify promising markets for ethical AI implementation, and highlight the significance of partnerships, collaborations, and ecosystems in the successful launch of ethical AI solutions?

Relevance Across All Markets: Ethical AI principles are relevant across all markets, with trust playing a proportional role in their adoption.

Prioritizing Ethical Principles: Ethical principles, such as transparency, collaboration, responsibility, privacy, and trust, should be integrated into AI-driven businesses and startups.

Shared Experiences and Education: Sharing industry or government experiments and experiences is vital for the success of ethical AI initiatives, and education, training, and frameworks are pivotal for incorporating ethical AI principles.

Partnerships and Collaboration: Partnerships, collaborations, and shared experiences are crucial for the successful implementation of ethical AI solutions.

Feedback and Transparency: Feedback signals, including traceability, explainability, audibility, and transparency, are essential for improving AI performance while maintaining ethics.

> "Stop thinking about ethics as this generic box that gives a lot of people permission to just admire the problem from afar, going, 'Wow, that's a really big problem.' We need to start defining safe boxes for experimentation."

4. CANADA'S ADVANTAGE ON ETHICAL AI

How can Canada attract top AI talent and position itself as the premier destination for scaling ethical AI companies, ultimately becoming the top choice for starting, growing, and scaling ethical AI businesses?

Invest in Modern Equipment and Technologies: To attract top AI talent, businesses should ensure workplaces have up-to-date equipment and technologie**s.**

Leverage Diversity and Knowledge Centres: Canada can become a premier destination for ethical AI by showcasing our diversity, establishing knowledge centers, and fostering connections.

Improve Salaries, Immigration, and Incentives: Attracting top AI talent requires improving salary offerings, streamlining immigration processes, and providing incentives for startups.

Define Ethical Domains and Controls: Businesses should establish clear frameworks for ethical controls and domains, especially in specific sectors like medical and defense.

Focus on Customer, Revenue, and Awareness: Strategies should prioritize a customer and revenue focus, raising awareness through training and incentives for students, with funding and capital being crucial for development.

CONCLUSION: CALLS TO ACTION

In the pursuit of a brighter, data-driven future, Canada's journey begins with the unwavering commitment to open data initiatives, fostering a culture of accessibility, ethical innovation, and responsible governance.

Guided by leaders from both private and public sectors, the discussions at The Data Effect Ottawa explored key themes tailored to Ottawa's needs. From these discussions, we identified three calls to action focused on data, regulation, ethics, and Canada's competitive advantage in AI.

1. Data-Driven Transformations
To maximize the utilization of public datasets, it is essential to embrace open data initiatives. This involves emphasizing accessibility, data policies, and government leadership. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure that innovation and ethical data practices work in harmony. This can be achieved by placing a strong focus on transparency, accountability, and responsible governance to effectively navigate privacy and regulatory concerns.

2. Ethical AI Certification & Bias Risk
In pursuit of fostering ethical development and deployment of AI, it is crucial to establish a comprehensive certification framework that champions a human-centric approach. This becomes even more pressing because bias in AI systems can have far-reaching consequences.

This certification framework should actively address and mitigate bias issues to ensure fairness and equity. Transparency, accountability, and responsibility in AI applications should be at the forefront of this initiative. Furthermore, promoting collaboration among stakeholders, advocating for standardization, and ensuring regulatory compliance will be essential steps to establish a unified and widely accepted code of practice for AI technologies, thus addressing the concerns surrounding bias in AI.

3. Ecosystem Collaboration for Ethical AI Adoption
Promoting the integration of ethical principles within AI-driven businesses and startups is crucial, with a strong emphasis on values such as transparency, collaboration, responsibility, privacy, and trust. To achieve this, fostering partnerships, collaborations, and shared experiences will be instrumental in facilitating ethical AI implementation across diverse markets. Education, training, and incentives will play pivotal roles in guiding this journey toward responsible and ethical AI practices.

These three calls to action reflect a collective commitment to drive ethical AI practices, regulatory compliance, and industry collaboration in Canada. They contextualize the core discussions held during the breakout sessions at The Data Effect Ottawa and serve as a strategic roadmap for Ottawa to lead the way in responsible AI adoption for Canada.

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