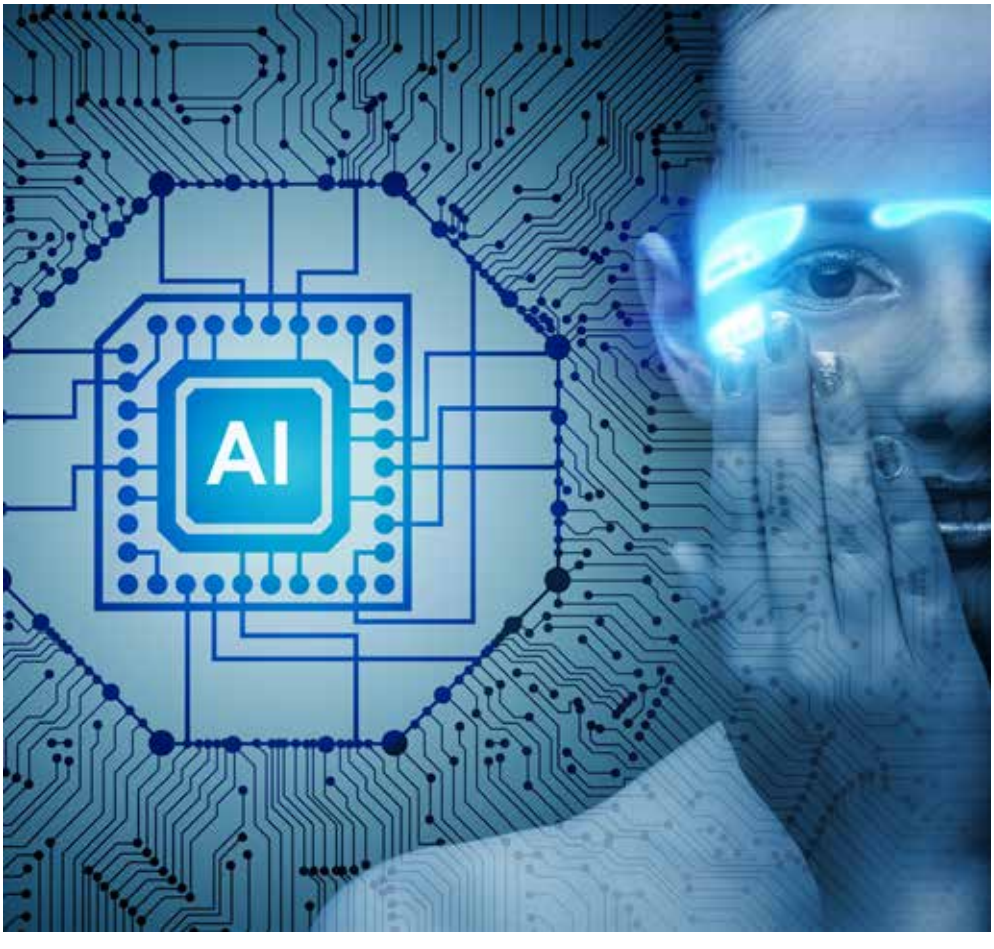


What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

How can you use AI ethically in your course of studies?

This guide from the German Network „Ethical Use of AI“ (EthiKI) is intended to provide information to you as university students and consists of basic statements on the use of AI tools in your studies (and everyday life). You will also find a list of FAQs with practical recommendations (pages 4-7). The ethical use of AI means reflecting on your responsibility, considering the possible consequences in advance, and thus avoiding harm to yourself, others, or the environment.

10 Statements on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

1. Artificial intelligence (AI) is a collective term for various technologies. Specialised AI systems exist for text and image generation, translation, information retrieval, and text correction. Thus, AI is a buzzword.

2. Current AI systems are not truly intelligent in the sense that humans are. They function based on the statistical analyses of large amounts of data and are based on algorithms and models developed and trained by humans. Even systems that claim to be empathetic feel nothing at all. AI sytsms are often backed by corporations that try to squeeze competitors out of the market and gain monopolies.

3. Based on current knowledge, the idea of a ‘strong AI’ which learns independently and develops a consciousness remains in the realm of science fiction. AI systems will not take over the world in the near future. AI systems give the people who develop and are responsible for the algorithms of these systems enormous influence over the thinking and behaviour of other people.

4. AI systems are not objective because they are based on data and classifications written and selected by humans. The selection of data that forms the basis of this ‘artificial’ intelligence often reflects existing prejudices and discrimination, so that prejudices and bias are in turn continuously reproduced or reinforced (up to and including so-called automation bias – AI is believed more than humans).

5. AI systems can make your studies easier and more complicated at the same time. Therefore, it is important to use AI tools consciously and judiclously. You should find out about the guidelines and policies of your university and department(s) regarding the use of AI in exams, assignments, and projects. Whenever you are in doubt, ask your teachers.

6. The responsibility for the use of AI always lies with humans, i.e. with you personally. As a consequence, you must critically reflect on how and for what purpose you use AI systems.

7. AI is not a neutral tool. Its use has ethical, legal, and social implications. Hence, when using AI tools in your studies, you should always critically question the specific purpose for using a particular tool and the possible consequences for yourself, others, and the environment. This also includes the possible (re-)use of your input for training and profiling you or third parties by the providers of AI systems (despite anonymisation).

8. AI permeates all areas of life and is also used in education. It is important to familiarise yourself with this technology to make informed decisions.

9. Transparency is important when using AI systems. This applies not only to the providers of AI systems and app programmers who install AI tools with their updates on your device, but also to you! You have a duty to be transparent about whether, when, and how you used AI support.

10. Despite the assistance that AI tools offer, learning and critical reflection only take place in your head. You still have to do this mental work yourself and be able to demonstrate it to others.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) with practical recommendations

on key aspects of the ethical use of AI in your studies:

• How do AI systems actually work (generally speaking)?

Answer: Large amounts of data have been analysed and evaluated using algorithms. Some of the data has been selected and evaluated by humans as training data for the AI system.

Remember, when it comes to data: Your data belongs to you! In the digital world, nothing is as valuable as data. Therefore, think carefully about who you want to trust it with because not only do your direct input recipients receive information from you and about you, but the technology that transmits the data also likes to 'read' and learn about you.

• What types of AI systems are out there?

Answer: Among the many AI systems, two general types can be distinguished: analysing (and, where applicable, decision-making) AI systems and producing (so-called generative) AI systems, such as ChatGPT and Midjourney.

Remember, when it comes to types of AI: Why do you want to use AI in the first place? Which type of AI is best suited for the intended use? Where can you find information on selection criteria and differences between AI systems that are important to you?

• How can AI systems make assessments and decisions?

Answer: AI systems make assessments and decisions using algorithms. Generative AI systems analyse texts and produce new texts, sometimes with the help of random generators, without understanding anything in the process. Others use their existing data to generate decisions, such as recommendations or feedback.

Remember the keywords assessment and decision: What evaluation criteria would you use for your decisions? Can you and do you want to justify your decisions at any time? Are your decision criteria suitable for treating all those affected equally? If you do not want to be left in the dark when others make decisions about you and your performance, then demand transparency about the evaluation.

- **What should you, as a student, know to use AI systems in a way that complies with the law?**

Answer: As a student, you must inform yourself about the legal requirements and comply with them. When using AI systems, the law must be observed (copyright, data protection, EU AI Act, and personal rights).

Remember the keyword legal compliance: Take the time to read the terms of use of the AI company, e.g. OpenAI, and consider what it might ultimately mean for you if you 'chat' too freely. How can you assert your rights? Are you familiar with the responsibilities within our legal system if you want to enforce your right to data protection?

- **What specific responsibilities do teachers and university administrations have?**

Answer: Teachers and administration(s) must provide information on the use of AI systems in your studies and, of course, be transparent themselves when they use AI, for example, in the form of AI bots or when analysing any collected data. Likewise, if the use of AI is mandatory in your studies, the university must provide you with an AI tool that complies with the data protection regulations.

Remember the keyword responsibility: The guarantee that your personal data is protected and belongs only to you is a valuable asset in our society.

- **Which ethical aspects must students consider?**

Answer: You must consider ethical aspects when using AI systems and evaluating their results. These include human rights, sustainability, democratic principles, the rule of law, and equal opportunities.

Remember the keyword ethics: Do you know whether these ethical aspects were or are fundamental to the training data used to teach your AI system, or is the data used already 'biased', i.e. full of hidden stereotypes and bias? All ethical aspects that teachers must comply with also apply to you.

• **What should you always remember when using AI?**

Answer: You are responsible for both the use of AI systems (input) and the use of their results (output), and you must disclose all usages transparently.

Remember the keyword taking responsibility: Do you only use texts and media that you have created yourself or have been authorised to use when prompting, translating, or summarising? If not, ask the authors for their consent! Make sure that you do not consider the intellectual property of others as your own and use it as such. Always clearly label your use of AI and the AI output. Many universities now have guidelines and rules on what should be labelled and what is and is not permitted - if necessary, ask the lecturers in your courses about it.

• **What opportunities do AI systems offer in your studies?**

Answer: They offer numerous opportunities. For example, you can use generative AI systems to gather initial ideas and topics, to get feedback on your (anonymised) self-written texts and media (content, structure, expression), to assist you in your search for literature, or to generate visualisations.

Remember the keyword self-efficacy: It is up to you to decide when, where, and how an AI tool can support you. What do you need to study successfully? How would you like to have the context and connections explained? Use AI to support your learning process, time management, and understanding of content! But you still have to learn it yourself!

• **What are the risks of using AI systems in your studies?**

Answer: AI systems are associated with numerous risks. The results of generative AI systems (such as ChatGPT or Midjourney) are often not ‘objective’ owing to the data used in training and therefore reproduce stereotypes or biases or fabricate false statements that sound correct, to name a few examples.

Remember the keyword critical thinking: Be aware that the results of AI systems are not reliable but are influenced by stereotypes. Always view AI-generated output critically and revise it thoroughly to make it your own.

• **How can AI systems be abused to create fake news and disinformation?**

Answer: Generative AI systems in particular can generate deceptively ‘real’ texts, images, voices, and videos.

Remember the keyword fake news: Consider (also with teachers and other students) whether and how AI-generated media and texts can be recognised. Also, ask for clear rules for the use and labelling of results (output) from AI systems.

• **What are the first steps you can take to use AI systems in your course of studies?**

Answer: This depends greatly on your goals, knowledge, and circumstances of your studies. Put pressure on your university by asking about additional training programmes and (peer) exchange formats.

Remember the keyword support: An open, transparent approach to AI systems also includes your stated intention to use them ethically and meaningfully. Your university is the institution that ought to support you and show you the way forward.

• **What consequences will the use of AI systems have for your studies?**

Answer: AI systems will significantly change both your studies and society, and you can and should play a constructive role in shaping this change.

Remember the keyword participation: The unreflective but skilful use of AI tools does not make you smarter or those who do not use them dumber. Respecting the attitudes and decisions of others is fundamental to living with dignity as a human being in society. AI will never learn to understand this! It is in your hands!

For further information, examples and recommendations on literature by the German Network „Ethical Use of AI“ (EthiKi) see:
https://ethischeki.ecompetence.eu

More English information, examples and literature recommendations by the European Network „Ethical Use of AI“:
https://ethicalai.ecompetence.eu

More about this Guideline and our German Network „Ethical Use of AI“ (EthiKI):

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About our German Network „Ethical Use of AI“ (EthiKI):
The German Network „Ethical Use of AI“ (EthiKI) met for the first time on 11 May 2023. Since then, we have been meeting once a month, and anyone interested is welcome to join us! https://ethischeki.ecompetence.eu - Contact: Christian M. Stracke: < stracke@uni-bonn.de >

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