

## Translation



The following document, issued by a state AI governance committee, lays out ethical norms for the use of AI in China. The norms cover areas such as the use and protection of personal information, human control over and responsibility for AI, and the avoidance of AI-related monopolies. The document does not specify how these norms are to be enforced; nor does it mention any punishments for those who violate the norms.

### Title

*Ethical Norms for New Generation Artificial Intelligence* Released  
《新一代人工智能伦理规范》发布

### Author

The National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Governance Specialist Committee (国家新一代人工智能治理专业委员会). The Specialist Committee is under the National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan Promotion Office (国家新一代人工智能发展规划推进办公室), which in turn is subordinate to the State Leading Group for Science and Technology Structural Reform and Innovation System Construction (国家科技体制改革和创新体系建设领导小组).

### Source

PRC Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST; 科学技术部; 科技部) website. The *Ethical Norms* are dated September 25, 2021 and were uploaded to the website on September 26, 2021.

The Chinese source text is available online at:

[http://www.most.gov.cn/kjbgz/202109/t20210926\\_177063.html](http://www.most.gov.cn/kjbgz/202109/t20210926_177063.html)

An archived version of the Chinese source text is available online at: <https://perma.cc/RC4V-Q2FX>  
U.S. \$1 ≈ 6.5 Chinese Yuan Renminbi (RMB), as of October 12, 2021.

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October 12, 2021

### Translator

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### Editor

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On September 25, the National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Governance Specialist Committee published *Ethical Norms for New Generation Artificial Intelligence (Ethical Norms)*, whose purpose is to incorporate ethics into the entire artificial intelligence (AI) life cycle and to provide ethical guidance to natural persons, legal persons, and other related institutions engaged in AI-related activities.

As the *Ethical Norms* passed through stages such as special investigation, focused drafting, and solicitation of opinions, full consideration was given to the ethical concerns of all sectors of today's society about privacy, bias, discrimination, fairness, and so on. Their concerns extended to content such as general rules, ethical norms for specific activities, and organization and implementation. *Ethical Norms* puts forward six basic ethical requirements, namely: the advancement of human welfare, the promotion of fairness and justice, the protection of privacy and security, the assurance of controllability and trustworthiness, the strengthening of accountability, and improvements to the cultivation of ethics. It also puts forward 18 specific ethical

requirements concerning AI management, research and development (R&D), supply, use, and other specific activities. The full text of the *Ethical Norms* is as follows:

*Ethical Norms for New Generation Artificial Intelligence* thoroughly implements the *New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Action Plan*<sup>1</sup> and implements in a detailed manner *Governance Principles for a New Generation of Artificial Intelligence*.<sup>2</sup> These norms are established in order to heighten society's ethical awareness and behavioral consciousness of AI, actively guide responsible AI R&D and application activities, and promote healthy AI development.

## Section I General Provisions

**Article 1** These norms aim to incorporate ethics into the entire AI life cycle and to promote fairness, justice, harmony, and security while avoiding such problems as bias, discrimination, and privacy and information leaks.

**Article 2** These norms apply to natural persons, legal persons, and other institutions engaged in AI management, R&D, supply, use, and other relevant activities. (I) "Management activities" mainly refer to AI-related strategic planning, the formulation and implementation of policies, regulations, and technical standards, the allocation of resources, and supervision and examination. (II) "R&D activities" mainly refer to AI-related scientific research, technological development, and product development. (III) "Supply activities" mainly refer to AI product and service-related production, operations, and sales. (IV) "Use activities" mainly refer to AI product and service-related purchasing, consumption, and operation.

**Article 3** All types of AI activities shall comply with the basic ethical norms below. (I) Advancement of Human Welfare. Persist in being people-centered (以人为本), abide by shared human values, respect human rights and appeals to fundamental human interests, and comply with national or regional ethics. Persist in giving priority to the public interest, promote human-computer harmony and friendliness, improve the people's livelihoods, enhance the sense of gain and the sense of well-being, advance economic, social, and ecological sustainable development, and jointly build a community of common destiny for humanity (人类命运共同体). (II) Promotion of Fairness and Justice. Uphold inclusivity and tolerance, truly protect the lawful rights and interests of each relevant entity, promote fair sharing of AI benefits by all of society, and advance social fairness and justice and equality of opportunity. When providing AI products and services, fully respect and help vulnerable groups and special groups, and provide appropriate alternatives as necessary. (III) Protection of Privacy and Security. Fully respect everyone's right to know the extent of the use of, and to consent to the use of, their personal information. Handle personal information

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<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: For an English translation of the *New Generation AI Development Plan*, see: <https://www.newamerica.org/cybersecurity-initiative/digichina/blog/full-translation-chinas-new-generation-artificial-intelligence-development-plan-2017/>

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: For an English translation of the *Governance Principles for New Generation AI*, see: <https://www.newamerica.org/cybersecurity-initiative/digichina/blog/translation-chinese-expert-group-offers-governance-principles-responsible-ai/>

according to the principles of legality, propriety, necessity, and good faith, and guarantee personal privacy and data security. Do not harm individuals' legal data rights and interests; do not steal, tamper, leak, or otherwise illegally collect or use personal information; and do not infringe upon personal privacy rights. (IV) Assurance of Controllability and Trustworthiness. Ensure that humans have fully autonomous decision-making rights and that they have the right to accept or reject AI-provided services, the right to withdraw from AI interactions at any time, and the right to terminate AI system operations at any time. Ensure that AI is always under human control. (V) Strengthening of Accountability. Insist that humans are the ultimately responsible entities. Clearly define the responsibilities of interested parties, comprehensively heighten awareness of responsibility, and exercise self-reflection and self-discipline at every link throughout the AI life cycle. Establish AI accountability mechanisms, do not avoid investigations into responsibility, and do not evade one's own responsibilities. (VI) Improvements to the Cultivation of Ethics. Actively learn and popularize knowledge about AI ethics. Objectively understand ethical issues, and do not underestimate or exaggerate ethical risks. Actively launch or participate in discussions of AI ethical issues. Thoroughly promote the practice of AI ethical governance, and improve coping capabilities.

**Article 4** The ethical norms that specific AI activities should follow include: management norms, R&D norms, supply norms, and use norms.

## **Section II    Management Norms**

**Article 5** Promote Agile Governance. Respect the laws of AI development, fully understand AI's potential and limitations, and continually optimize governance mechanisms and approaches. In the processes of strategic decision-making, institution building, and resource allocation, do not deviate from reality, and do not be eager for quick success and short-term benefits. Promote the healthy and sustainable development of AI in an orderly manner.

**Article 6** Actively Practice Demonstrations. Comply with AI-related regulations, policies, and standards, and actively incorporate AI ethics throughout the management process. Lead those who practice and promote AI ethical governance, promptly summarize and disseminate AI governance experience, and actively respond to society's ethical concerns about AI.

**Article 7** Correctly Exercise Authority. Clearly define the official duties and authority boundaries of AI-related management activities; normalize conditions and procedures for the exercise of authority. Fully respect and assure the privacy, freedom, dignity, security, and rights and other lawful interests of relevant entities. Prohibit infringement of the lawful rights and interests of natural persons, legal persons, and other organizations by the improper exercise of authority.

**Article 8** Strengthen Risk Prevention. Strengthen the bottom-line mindset (底线思维) and risk awareness, strengthen research on and assessment of potential risks in AI development, and promptly launch system risk monitoring and assessment.

Establish an effective early warning mechanism for risks, and improve AI ethical risk control and handling capabilities.

**Article 9** Promote Tolerance and Openness. Fully value the rights, interests, and claims of every AI stakeholder. Encourage the application of diverse AI technologies to solve the actual problems of economic and social development. Encourage exchanges and cooperation across academic disciplines, areas of research, regions, and international boundaries. Promote the formation of AI governance frameworks and standards that have a far-reaching consensus.

### **Section III R&D Norms**

**Article 10** Strengthen Self-Discipline Consciousness. Strengthen self-restraint in AI R&D-related activities. Actively incorporate AI ethics into each link of technological R&D. Consciously conduct self-examinations, strengthen self-management, and do not engage in unethical or immoral AI R&D.

**Article 11** Improve Data Quality. In data collection, storage, use, processing, transmission, provision, disclosure, and other such stages, strictly comply with data-related laws, standards, and norms. Improve data integrity, timeliness, consistency, normative compliance, and accuracy.

**Article 12** Enhance Security and Transparency. In the algorithm design, implementation, and application stages, improve transparency, explainability, comprehensibility, reliability, and controllability; enhance AI systems' toughness, adaptiveness, and ability to resist interference. Gradually achieve verifiability, auditability, supervisability, traceability, predictability, and reliability.

**Article 13** Avoid Bias and Discrimination. In data collection and algorithm development, strengthen ethics investigations, and fully consider differentiated claims (差异化诉求). Prevent any data bias and algorithmic bias issues that may emerge, and strive to achieve AI system inclusivity, fairness, and non-discrimination.

### **Section IV Supply Norms**

**Article 14** Respect Market Rules. Strictly comply with the various rules and regulations governing market entry, competition, transactions, and other such activities. Actively uphold market order, and create a market environment that is conducive to AI development. Do not subvert orderly market competition through data or platform monopolies. Prohibit any method of intellectual property rights infringement by other entities.

**Article 15** Strengthen Quality Control. Strengthen quality monitoring and use assessment of AI products and services, and avoid harm to health, property, and user privacy caused by problems such as design and product defects. Do not operate, sell, or provide products and services that do not comply with quality standards.

**Article 16** Safeguard User Rights and Interests. Users should be clearly informed of the use of AI technology in products and services. The features and limitations of AI products and services should be indicated. Guarantee users' rights to be informed and

to consent. Provide simple and easy-to-understand solutions so that users can choose to use or exit AI modes. Do not place barriers to the equal use of AI by users.

**Article 17** Strengthen Emergency Support. Research the formulation of emergency mechanisms and loss compensation programs or measures. Engage in timely monitoring of AI systems, and promptly respond to and process user feedback. Promptly guard against systemic failures, and always be ready to assist relevant entities to intervene, in accordance with laws and regulations, in AI systems so as to reduce losses and avoid risks.

## **Section V Use Norms**

**Article 18** Promote Well-Intentioned Use. Strengthen pre-use demonstrations and assessments of AI products and services. Gain a full understanding of the benefits of AI products and services, and give full consideration to the lawful rights and interests of each stakeholder. More effectively promote economic prosperity, social progress, and sustainable development.

**Article 19** Avoid Misuse. Gain a full understanding of the scope of applications and the negative effects of AI products and services. Truly respect the rights of relevant entities not to use AI products or services. Avoid improper use and abuse of AI products and services, and avoid unintentionally caused harm to the legal rights and interests of other parties.

**Article 20** Prohibit Violations and Malicious Use. Prohibit the use of AI products and services that fail to comply with laws and regulations, ethics, standards, or norms, and prohibit the use of AI products and services to engage in illegal activities. Strictly forbid endangering national security, public safety (公共安全), and production safety, and strictly prohibit harm to the public interest.

**Article 21** Actively Provide Prompt Feedback. Actively participate in the practice of AI ethical governance. Promptly report to the relevant entities concerning such problems as technical security vulnerabilities, policy or regulatory vacuums, and regulatory lags discovered in the process of using AI products and services, and assist in solving the problems.

**Article 22** Improve Use Abilities. Actively learn AI-related knowledge, and actively master the skills required for each use stage—including operation, maintenance, and emergency response—relating to AI products and services. Ensure the safe and efficient use of AI products and services.

## **Section VI Organization and Implementation**

**Article 23** The National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Governance Specialist Committee published these norms and is responsible for interpreting them and guiding their implementation.

**Article 24** Administrative departments at all levels, enterprises, institutions of higher education, scientific research institutes, associations and academic societies, and

other relevant organizations may, in light of their actual needs and on the basis of these norms, formulate more specific ethical norms and related measures.

**Article 25** These norms take effect on the date of their promulgation and shall be amended at appropriate times in accordance with economic and social development needs and the development status of AI.

National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Governance Specialist Committee  
September 25, 2021