

The Role of Information and Communication Sciences in the Governance of Artificial Intelligence

A Position Statement Issued by
The International Association for Media and Communication Research
(IAMCR)

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Researchers and professionals in the field of Information and Communication sciences note the rapid developments of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) in higher education. These technological advances open promising new opportunities for research and practice in the digital humanities, arts and social sciences and for applications in the mass media, social media and synthetic media, education, and creative industries domains. GAI also poses risks including the spread of misinformation, privacy and copyright concerns, ethical issues (identity theft and digital manipulations) and security threats as well as the risk of enlarging digital divides, with their accompanying fundamental impacts on learning, training and civic participation. Addressing these challenges requires technical safeguards, ethical guidelines, education, and regulation to ensure responsible and safe use of the technology.

IAMCR, the leading international association of communication scholars and researchers with members in over 90 countries, participated in the World Summit on the Information Society and is active in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). As an NGO with observer status, we are contributing to the discussions at UNESCO on the [Guidelines for Regulating Digital Platforms](#) to safeguard freedom of expression and access to information, following the 2023 [Internet for Trust](#) conference. IAMCR also supports the [UNESCO Recommendation](#) on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. We are committed to engaging in the ongoing global conversation on AI which touches education and research institutions in the information, media and communication field.

IAMCR believes that AI systems should be people-centered, for all, and for good. As issues of GAI proliferation, control and oversight become part of the public debate, people are in acute need of acquiring the competencies to participate in debates about GAI use as it affects their working, leisure and domestic lives. This is a *sine qua non* condition for building their capacity to influence these developments and to argue for safety standards and responsible research and development. IAMCR urges higher education institutions to mobilize by concentrating their critical thinking and committing their resources to address the opportunities and challenges GAI poses for research, education and individual and collective empowerment for participation in society.

From its unique perspective, IAMCR presents this statement proposing an actionable framework for a vigilant focus on the following areas of inquiry and advocacy:

- 1. Equitable Access and Freedom of Expression:** Ensure equitable access to information, freedom of expression, source reliability and information quality in materials used to generate AI systems and to produce AI content.
- 2. Reduce Digital Divides:** Ensuring that AI systems with their major infrastructural needs do not widen digital divides.
- 3. AI Literacy:** Promote AI literacy within educational institutions and public media, with interdisciplinary programs, combining insights from the sciences and humanities and foregrounding questions of control, responsibility and ethics.
- 4. AI Explainability:** Support the incorporation of guidelines for AI explainability in public policies and the education and media sectors to ensure citizens can understand and question the motivations for funding AI, the validity of AI outputs, and ensure they are lawful, unbiased and safe for their decision-making.
- 5. Open Source AI:** Advocate for the development and use of truly open source AI systems and the construction of an AI information commons.
- 6. Intellectual Property:** Develop **appropriate AI protocols** regarding **intellectual property** rights for the creative outputs of teachers, students, researchers, librarians, journalists and other professionals.
- 7. Research and Evaluation:** Monitor the rise of **synthetic media**, and their implications for mass and social media, paying particular attention to AI systems employed to disseminate misinformation, disinformation and pseudoscience.
- 8. Environmental Impact:** Minimize and monitor the multiple environmental harms of AI systems on our planet including the impact of: rare metals mining for device manufacturing; e-waste management on land, water, air and human health; accelerated energy demand and water consumption; and an unsustainable carbon footprint.