

AI: a UK public consultation

Discussion at The Park

Wednesday 20 September 2017 7:30pm at *The Park Tavern, Macclesfield*

An Introduction:

The family of pub discussion groups in Staffordshire and Cheshire have, in recent times, addressed the subjects of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI). In our own discussion (AI: humans need not apply? 2 March 2016 <http://www.raymondwilliamsfoundation.org.uk/DC/15%20maccnotes.html>) we barely made time to discuss the implications for society of the changes that AI has brought about, or is poised to bring about. A recently concluded public consultation by the UK's House of Lords has been gathering views on these societal changes.

"The *Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence* was appointed by the House of Lords on 29 June 2017 ... to consider the economic, ethical and social implications of advances in artificial intelligence (AI) ... and has to report by 31 March 2018 ... We are looking for pragmatic solutions to the issues presented by AI, so please provide practical examples where possible. Finally, we would be interested to know how you have defined AI in your response."

Just as the House of Lords did not expect everyone to address all the questions they asked, our discussion circle might start by selecting the questions they wish to discuss, from the House of Lords complete list, printed below.

Questions:

The pace of technological change

1. What is the current state of AI and what factors have contributed to this? How is it likely to develop over the next 5, 10 and 20 years? What factors, technical or societal, will accelerate or hinder this development?
2. Is the current level of excitement which surrounds AI warranted?

Impact on society

3. How can the general public best be prepared for more widespread use of AI?

In this question, you may wish to address issues such as the impact on everyday life, jobs, education and retraining needs, which skills will be most in demand, and the potential need for more significant social policy changes. You may also wish to address issues such as the impact on democracy, cyber security, privacy, and data ownership.

4. Who in society is gaining the most from the development and use of AI and data? Who is gaining the least? How can potential disparities be mitigated?

Public perception

5. Should efforts be made to improve the public's understanding of, and engagement with, AI? If so, how?

Industry

6. What are the key sectors that stand to benefit from the development and use of artificial intelligence? Which sectors do not?

In this question, you may also wish to address why some sectors stand to benefit over others, and what barriers there are for any sector looking to use artificial intelligence.

7. How can the data-based monopolies of some large corporations, and the 'winner-takes-all' economies associated with them, be addressed? How can data be managed and safeguarded to ensure it contributes to the public good and a well-functioning economy?

Ethics

8. What are the ethical implications of the development and use of AI? How can any negative implications be resolved?

In this question, you may wish to address issues such as privacy, consent, safety, diversity and the impact on democracy.

9. In what situations is a relative lack of transparency in AI systems (so-called 'black boxing') acceptable? When should it not be permissible?

The role of the Government

10. What role should the Government take in the development and use of AI in the United Kingdom? Should AI be regulated? If so, how?

Learning from others

11. What lessons can be learnt from other countries or international organisations (e.g. the European Union, the World Economic Forum) in their policy approach to AI?

Some Background:

- (a) The Select Committee's website is here <http://www.parliament.uk/ai-committee>.
- (b) The unabridged consultation questionnaire is here <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/Artificial-Intelligence/Artificial-Intelligence-call-for-evidence.pdf>.
- (c) Although the formal deadline for responses to the Select Committee has passed, this is still a subject of interest in its own right. You can follow the progress of the inquiry at <http://www.parliament.uk/ai-committee> or on Twitter [@LordsAICom](https://twitter.com/LordsAICom).