Tools and frameworks for evaluating ethical data practices

Course Overview

Summary

Data ethics evaluation tools are guided frameworks designed to assess and ensure ethical considerations across the stages of the data lifecycle, including collection, storage, analysis, modelling, and deployment, as well as the design of continuous monitoring practices. These tools help organisations and individuals make informed, ethical decisions about data practices.

This module explores the tools and frameworks to evaluate data practices from an ethical perspective and provides the basis for you to apply impact assessments.

As you'll learn, there are many ways to evaluate ethical outcomes. A popular method for structuring these evaluations is to design and conduct an Ethical Impact Assessment (EIA). These assessments provide the opportunity to examine projects and practices to help identify positive and negative outcomes. Ethical Impact Assessments can be applied to data projects, as well as to the design and implementation of technologies such as AI.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this module you will be able to:

- Explain the iterative process of EIAs, including stakeholder involvement, ethical framework establishment, risk analysis, mitigation planning, and the importance of documentation.
- Apply the SAD+AM model for sustainable ethical decision-making, emphasising stakeholder involvement throughout the ethical evaluation process.

- Distinguish between Ethical Impact Assessments and Data Ethics Tools, explaining how they are complementary processes in ensuring ethical practices, particularly in AI contexts.
- Apply Consequence Scanning to real-world examples, and utilise the Consequence and Risk Evaluation (CARE) tool to categorise consequences, prioritise actions, and demonstrate proficiency in AI-supported ethical assessments.

Learning Experience

Number of modules	4 (+ reflective workbook)
Modality	Asynchronous / Self-directed / Online
Notional learning hours	2 hours (total)
Assessment	Formative
Certificate	Certificate of completion

Module Summary

Module Name	Description
Evaluating ethical data practices	In this module, we will explore the purpose behind evaluating ethical data practices and specifically start to introduce the tools available from different organisations and across different sectors that enable individuals, teams and organisations as a whole to evaluate their practice, as well as the products and services they are creating. In this module, you will: • Develop your understanding of the role of Ethical Impact Assessments • Understand the difference between Ethical Impact Assessments and Data Ethics Tools • Examine the considerations for data ethics and AI across the data lifecycle • Apply consequence scanning to real-world case studies
Data ethics checklists and evaluation criteria	In its simplest form, a data ethics checklist is a structured set of questions designed to assess data practices. They can be broad, or they can be quite direct. How they are written and how they are measured will ultimately depend on the data you are using and the technology being designed, as well as the industry in which you work. Depending on all of these factors, there are many different considerations you could make. In this module you will: • Develop a comprehensive understanding of the purpose and structure of Data Ethics Checklists, and their role in promoting and documenting responsible data practices • Define and evaluate data practices against relevant criteria (e.g. fairness, compliance, transparency)

	• Create evaluation metrics for assessing, monitoring, and improving practices in data and AI, and develop appropriate evaluation criteria to determine performance • Explore practical examples and case studies across real-world domains to develop your understanding of the complexity of defining "success" and the nuanced nature of evaluating practices and outputs from data and AI
Applying data ethics using ODI tools	Data is ubiquitous and integral to technological advancements. Recent studies reveal a growing concern among workers about the societal and personal impacts of technology decisions. This underpins the need for practical tools to support ethical decision-making in the collection, sharing and use of data. The proliferation of data ethics tools and frameworks reflects a collective effort to provide such support, but their diversity and specificity can be overwhelming. In this module we outline the tools and guidance that has been created and is stewarded by the ODI.
The ecosystem of data ethics tools	The ecosystem of data ethics is vast, and finding the right tool is a difficult task. To help you in identifying the most appropriate tool we've started a data ethics tool registry. This registry is not intended to be exhaustive, but instead be added to and developed over time to support the application of data ethics. We provide guidance, and an opportunity to contribute to the registry.