



DIGITAL SELF - DETERMINATION

Everyone has a right to exercise self-determination in the use of digital technologies.



The right to self-determination refers to our ability to fully exercise our agency in choosing our own destiny, including through freely determining our political status and pursuing our economic, social, and cultural development.

Digital technologies can be used not just to monitor and categorize, but also to influence. Vast amounts of digital data are used to train models that contain the same biases that exist in the real world, including those based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status. With predictive technologies increasingly supporting the creation of government policies about how public services and resources are accessed and allocated, such biases can interfere with people's freedom of choice and affect their ability to make their own decisions.

While historical data can be useful, for example, in facilitating the identification and understanding of trends on emerging social issues and in real-time crises, it is not neutral. Data represents society as it is, including its layers of social inequality and discrimination. If it is used uncritically and with no controls, it perpetuates existing oppression and leaves people – particularly women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people – less able to choose, challenge, or change their own destiny. Artificial intelligence and machine learning can also exaggerate existing biases, resulting in further discrimination and harms.

THE DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

- Everyone has the right not to be treated unfairly or be discriminated against – or disproportionately denied their rights – because of automated decisions made about them based solely on data collected or inferred from their digital footprint.
- Everyone, including women, girls, and other discriminated-against groups and marginalized people, should be able to exercise self-determination in the digital age.
- Everyone has a right to the complete and up-to-date representation of their identity on the internet.
- Preventative measures and safeguards should be implemented to prevent unfair, biased, and arbitrary decisions being made about a person, and there should be meaningful transparency around the criteria used for decision-making.
- A presumption of algorithmic bias should be considered, to better balance the burden of proof, and to encourage the adoption of bias mitigation tools and controls.
- There should be no judicial or administrative order or decision that could significantly impact an individual based solely on the automated processing of personal and other data which has been collected to establish the profile or personality of that person.
- Equality by design principles, including human rights and gender rights impact assessments, should be incorporated into the development of any algorithmic decision-making systems or digital technologies prior to going to market, to prevent discrimination and harmful biases being amplified and/or perpetuated.
- Inferences generated by big data should be limited to safeguard people's autonomy of choice and freedom. Sensitive information should not be used to the detriment of the person, or to infer personal information, including their religion or sexual orientation.