Ada Lovelace Institute

Our Strategy

2019–2020

The Ada Lovelace Institute is a research institute and deliberative body dedicated to ensuring that data and AI work for people and society.

Our core belief is that the benefits of data and AI must be justly and equitably distributed, and must enhance individual and social wellbeing.

Ada Lovelace Institute Strategy and 2020 work plan

Public understanding, ethical guidance and legal frameworks have not kept up with the development of data-driven and AI technologies.

Data and AI are changing societies around the globe, and we are ill-equipped to understand, ameliorate or shape those changes.

Data and AI have huge potential to generate positive outcomes for people and societies. But unless these new technologies are designed, deployed and governed in ways that reflect considerations of social justice, they will continue to create significant power imbalances, and further exacerbate inequality.

The core belief of the Ada Lovelace Insitute is that the benefits of data and AI must be justly and equitably distributed, and must enhance individual and social wellbeing. In order to achieve this, we need to better inform industry approaches, policy, regulation and technical standards on data and AI, so that they can be put to the service of humanity, and not the other way around.

There is currently a lack of evidence about how to do this. We need research, guidance and practical tools to ensure that data and AI work for people and society. This is the gap the Ada Lovelace Institute aims to fill – independently of the interests of industry and government, but hand in hand with partners across all sectors.

Ada Lovelace Institute is:

Evidence led

People centred

Policy and practice facing

1. Evidence led

We conduct, support and amplify rigorous independent interdisciplinary research into the ethical and societal impacts of data and AI on people and society.

2. People centred

We enable informed and complex public dialogue about technology, policy and values, and represent the voice of the public in debates around data and AI.

3. Policy and practice facing

We translate our research and others' into workable solutions, practices and recommendations for companies, policy-makers, regulators and the public.

What does a world where data and AI work for people and society look like?

We believe that a world where data and AI work for people and society is one in which advancements in data and AI are consistent with four core values that underpin wellbeing and social justice:

Agency

Individuals should have the right, ability and power to make autonomous decisions about their lives, their bodies, their families and the things that affect them, without unwanted interference from data-driven technologies.

Solidarity

Data and AI should enhance societies, strengthen communities, and ameliorate the lives of vulnerable groups.

Equity

The benefits of data and AI should be distributed to all, not concentrated in the hands of a powerful few. All people should share in the social, intellectual, commercial and financial benefits of data and AI.

Diversity

Data and AI should account for difference of identities, enable intercultural, pluralistic discourse and debate, and empower individuals to have a say in the institutions – political, social, commercial and technological – that govern their lives.

Diversity

Equity

Solidarity

Agency

Data and AI

that works for people and society

Our mission

The mission of the Ada Lovelace Institute is to ensure that data and AI work for people and society. We believe that a world where data and AI work for people and society is a world in which the opportunities, benefits and privileges generated by data and AI are justly and equitably distributed and experienced.

We recognise the power asymmetries that exist in ethical and legal debates around the development of data-driven technologies, and will represent people in those conversations. We focus not on the types of technologies we want to build, but on the types of societies we want to build.

Through research, policy and practice, we aim to ensure that the transformative power of data and AI is used and harnessed in ways that maximise social wellbeing and put technology at the service of humanity.

How change happens

We believe that a fundamental change is needed in the systems and approaches that govern data and AI.

That change can come from:
- researchers and scientists setting the research agenda for AI

- industry choices with respect to business models and fair partnerships

- tech workers and consumers through collective action and product choice

- regulatory intervention and incentives set by government and policymakers at the local, national and supranational levels.

Our theory of change reflects a need to engage and influence these different audiences in different ways.

Developing a positive vision for a world in which data and AI work for people and society is an immense task, and it is not one we can achieve alone. We hope to catalyse conversations on the 'should' questions, to ensure that data and AI preserve, rather than undermine, social values. But those conversations must include stakeholders from across industry, government, civil society and our communities.

The Ada Lovelace Institute hopes to work in partnership with organisations from across those stakeholder networks. We are open to collaboration and would invite anyone to get in touch: email us at hello@adalovelaceinstitute.org.

Our theory of change

The Ada Lovelace Institute is committed to delivering and measuring real impact through its work. We don't want to be a talking shop – we want to change the world for the better.

Our work will impact the advancement of data-driven technologies and AI, ensuring they lead to greater wellbeing and social justice. This is how we intend to achieve that:

We will work towards three objectives:
1. To establish the legal, technical, ethical, economic and social conditions that enable data and AI to work for people and society.

2. To highlight, address and remedy particular cases or applications of data and AI that challenge, undermine or conflict with the core values we have articulated.

3. To identify and understand the future consequences of data and AI.
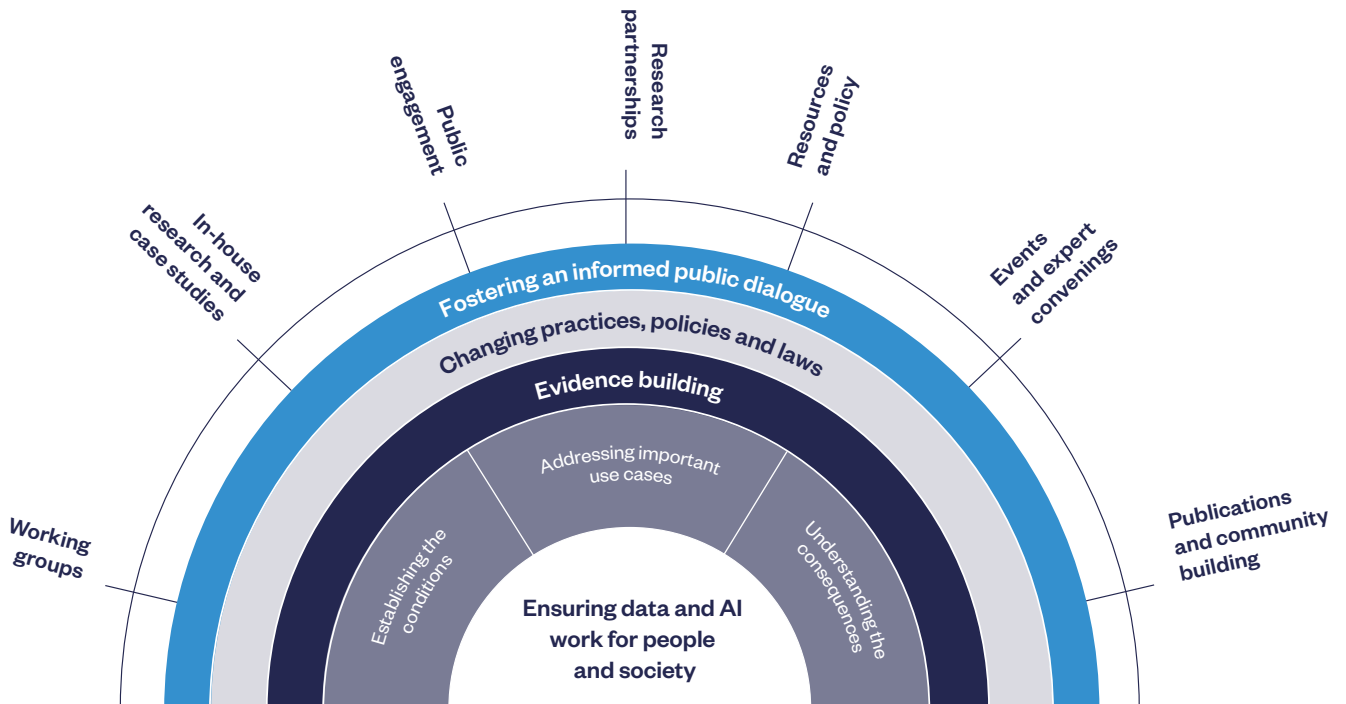
In delivering these objectives, we aim to achieve the following three outcomes:

Evidence building

We will build evidence, based on interdisciplinary research and informed by public engagement, on the legal, technical, economic and social conditions that are necessary to ensure that data and AI are consistent with social values.

The outcome of our work will be that:

- experts engage across disciplines and forge new collaborations to increase understanding of the challenges posed by new technologies to rights and values

- short- and long- term technical, legal and policy solutions to the problems posed by new technologies are conceptualised, trialled, evaluated and iterated.

Changing practices, policies and laws

Working with stakeholders and consistent with the evidence, we will seek changes in practices, policies and laws that improve the social value of data-driven technologies.

The outcome of our work will be that:

- technology creators seek out and adopt better practices by engaging with the Ada Lovelace Institute and using our toolkits and guidance

- policymakers are influenced to change, adapt or develop existing or novel policies and laws

- policymakers are influenced to enforce existing regulation in new ways or create new regulation.

Fostering an informed public dialogue

We will foster an informed public dialogue involving a diverse array of academic experts, policymakers, civil society and the general public about what kinds of societies we want to build as data and AI advance.

The outcome of our work will be that:

- a wide range of people engage in this debate, their level of understanding and confidence increases, and they feel informed to demand change through political or consumer choices

- civil society organisations are empowered with new knowledge, and advocate for change on behalf of people and society.

A fundamental change is needed in the systems and approaches that govern data and AI.

Our 2020 work plan

The Ada Lovelace Institute is an organisation in its infancy, seeking to tackle some immense problems. Our 2020 work plan reflects the need to be both pragmatic and ambitious about what we can achieve.

This year we will focus our energies on addressing the following questions:

- **What are the constraints of the current data governance ecosystem, and what changes do we need to ensure it works for people and society?**

- **How is data and AI mediating the relationship between citizens and the state?**

- **What interventions are necessary to ensure a social licence for the development and deployment of biometric technologies?**

We will address these research and policy challenges in a cross-cutting manner, and examine them in the context of particular sectors or applications, such as justice, welfare and the economy. We will also continue to scope emerging areas of work, particular in the health and environment sectors.

Each of these programmes of work will be designed to build evidence, foster an informed public dialogue, and change practices, policies and laws.

We will also build an international comparative strand into some of our work, in order to understand how contested notions of social values change across national contexts.

We take an interconnected approach to issues such as power, social justice, distributional impact and climate change.

Justice

Just AI

Welfare

Royal Society and British Academy

Nuffield Family Justice Observatory

DataKind UK

Biometrics

The algorithmic state

Global comparative research

Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence

Rethinking data

Health data and data about health

Sustainable AI

The Ada Lovelace Institute – Our strategy

Understanding patient data

Health

Environment

Economy

Programmes

Rethinking data

The Rethinking Data programme is central to all of Ada's work, and is composed of three workstreams, each devised to understand and diagnose the constraints of the present data governance ecosystem and develop proposals for change in policy and practice. The workstreams will focus on studying and recommending changes to embedded narratives about data, current practices of data sharing and use, and existing frameworks for data regulation. The Rethinking Data working group, co-chaired by Diane Coyle and Paul Nemitz, will guide the Ada Lovelace Institute's thinking on the future of data regulation.

The algorithmic state

The information age offers new possibilities for public service delivery. We are leading a conversation about the direction of innovation, and working to articulate a positive vision for a state that harnesses the power of data appropriately, and propose evidence-based strategies to realise it. The programme of work encompasses research into and evaluation of the ways in which data and AI are increasingly mediating citizens' interactions with the state, at different levels of government, and are particularly impacting vulnerable and at-risk groups.

Biometrics

Seizing on pressing public debate, technological developments and legal challenges, we seek to grapple with public expectations and legal regulation of biometric data and related technologies, in particular in light of emerging capabilities such as facial recognition technologies. Two flagship initiatives fall within the remit of this programme: the Citizens' Biometrics Council will engage 60 members of the public in a deliberative exercise on questions of ethical and social factors related to biometric technologies, while an Independent Review of the Governance of Biometrics Data headed by Matthew Ryder QC will analyse the existing regulatory landscape applicable to biometric data and prescribe modernisations and modifications.

Health data and data about health

To ensure data and AI work for people and society, we must address issues raised by the use of health data and emerging health technologies. We are exploring two interconnected research agendas: the governance and value of data about health collected in non-clinical, everyday settings; and the potential for data-driven technologies to reduce or exacerbate health inequalities.

Sustainable AI

A future in which data and AI generate opportunities, benefits and privileges that are justly and equitably distributed and experienced must take into account the impact of data and AI on the environment, and address their carbon footprint. The tech industry, if unchecked, could exceed 14% of global emissions by 2040. We are currently consulting with experts in this space and identifying partners to champion transparency as an appropriate policy intervention to address this problem.

We bring a unique interdisciplinary lens to contested debates.

Collaborations

Understanding Patient Data

We are collaborating with Wellcome Trust's Understanding Patient Data programme, and NHS England to understand public attitudes to the sharing of NHS data. By convening citizens' juries we are exploring what is fair and appropriate when considering commercial partnerships involving NHS data.

The Royal Society and the British Academy

Our programme Rethinking Data builds on work begun in 2017 by the Royal Society and British Academy, and we continue to collaborate with both institutions in our research on the future of data governance.

DataKind UK

Joint research with DataKind UK is exploring mechanisms for auditing and inspecting algorithmic systems, measuring impact and identifying risk.

The Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (Nuffield FJO)

Our collaboration with the FJO is designed to analyse the societal impacts and opportunities of the use of algorithms in children's social care.

Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence (LCFI)

We are partnering with CFI to build out our global comparative research on the ethics of AI, with a particular focus on intercultural research in China.

Networks

Joining up Society and Technology for AI (JUST AI) Network

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Ada Lovelace Institute are partnering to establish a network of researchers and practitioners, led by Dr Alison Powell of the London School of Economics, to join up the study of AI and data-driven technologies with understandings of social and ethical values, impacts and interests. The network will begin to build an integrated research base in 'just AI' – AI that is ethical, which is effectively governed and regulated, and which can be used for the common good.

The goals of the network are to:

- deliver a humanities-led, collaborative approach to synthesising and building on existing AI-focused activity across disciplines and sectors

- provide thought leadership on AI and ethics

- generate new insights through an innovative and interdisciplinary programme of activity

- generate creative ways to influence the development of policy and practice.

The network will begin to build an integrated research base in 'just AI' – AI that is ethical, which is effectively governed and regulated, and which can be used for the common good.

How we measure and communicate impact

We will continuously measure delivery of outputs and achievement of outcomes through our theory of change using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods and indicators to evaluate how far activities are delivering against the three organisational outcomes: evidence building; changing practices, policies and laws; and fostering an informed public dialogue.

A mixed-method approach will be used including surveys, download metrics, citations in research and policy documents, qualitative interviews and feedback, evaluation at events, and independent evaluations of interventions / pilot projects.

Where possible, we will always attempt to measure increase or decrease in x, y, z outcomes, so we can ascertain how our work is 'moving the needle' on a specific issue.

We will regularly communicate the impact of our work through a range of methods and media, including case studies, videos and an annual impact report. We are also committed to being transparent when our work has not had a measurable and / or positive impact. This is vital in fostering trust and honesty in the work we do and contributing to a wider body of knowledge.

We are future facing and focused on influencing change at a system level.

How we work

How we deliver our work is just as important as what we do. We will therefore embed specific ways of working into everything we do.

We want to be:
- outward-facing and collaborative, keen to work with others to situate our work in a global context

- at the forefront of legal, ethical and technical debates

- credible and able to provide expert, independent commentary

- bringing a unique interdisciplinary lens to contested debates

- acting independently of vested interests, and transparent about relationships and funding

- able to combine reflective deliberation and rigorous research with the need to respond to a rapidly evolving social, technological and economic context.

To enable this, we will remain:
- committed to rational scepticism and empirical curiosity

- alert to power imbalances and questions of justice

- cognisant of the complex nature of socio-technical systems

- directed towards impact and effective change

- committed to adopting a long-term field of vision, especially when others – because of capacity, politics or their bottom line – cannot or will not

- agile, responsive and prepared to use moments of crisis to advance change and progress our agenda.

What we don't do

We recognise that there is already a thriving ecosystem of organisations making significant efforts to improve established issues in the wider digital field. We will work alongside organisations in this space to ensure themes that cut across our work are interrogated and complemented.

We are a small organisation and although our aspirations are ambitious, we need to be aware that the impact we can have is tied to our resources, so we will not work on specific issues that are already covered by other actors with similar approaches or expertise.

What makes the Ada Lovelace Institute unique

We are a financially and politically independent organisation that is committed to coordinating efforts with others working in the same space.

We take a values-based approach.

We are future-facing and focused on influencing change at a system level.

We take an interconnected approach to issues such as power, social justice, distributional impact and climate change, and have a wide range of expertise in house that cuts across policy, technology, academia, industry, law and human rights.

The Ada Lovelace Institute was established by the Nuffield Foundation in early 2018, in collaboration with the Alan Turing Institute, the Royal Society, the British Academy, the Royal Statistical Society, the Wellcome Trust, Luminate, techUK and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics.

We are funded by the Nuffield Foundation, an independent charitable trust with a mission to advance social well-being. The Foundation funds research that informs social policy, primarily in education, welfare and justice. It also provides opportunities for young people to develop skills and confidence in STEM and research. In addition to the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Foundation is also the founder and co-funder of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics and the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory.

We are named after visionary computing pioneer Ada Lovelace (1815–52), who set high standards for intellectual rigour and analysis in her work and writings responding to Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine. These qualities, combined with her impressive abilities to see beyond accepted models, aggregate meanings from disparate sources and work with others to build new knowledge, are embedded in our daily work and embodied in the Institute that proudly bears her name.

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Our Board

Sir Alan Wilson, (Executive Chair until March 2020), Director of Special Projects at the Alan Turing Institute

Hetan Shah, (Vice Chair), Chief Executive of the British Academy and Visiting Professor at the Policy Institute, Kings College London

Azeem Azhar, CEO Exponential View, Senior Advisor on AI to the CITO of Accenture

Francine Bennett, Data Scientist and Co-founder of Mastodon C

Rocio Concha Galguera, Chief Economist and Head of Strategic Insight at consumer organisation Which?

Alix Dunn, social entrepreneur, advisor, and strategist specialising at the intersections of technology and impact

Helen Margetts, Professor of Society and the Internet at the Oxford Internet Institute, and Turing Fellow and Programme Director for Public Policy at the Alan Turing Institute

Huw Price, Bertrand Russell Professor of Philosophy, Academic Director of the Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, and Co-founder of the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk, University of Cambridge

John Thornhill, Innovation Editor at the Financial Times

Chris Todd, Chief Superintendent at West Midlands Police

The Board members each bring distinctive perspectives, skillsets and networks. In addition to leading the strategic development of the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Board helps to secure its long-term sustainability. Board members also identify questions or projects relating to the use of data and AI for investigation and deliberation, and guide the Institute in exploring those issues.

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