

Scotland's AI Strategy – what about children?

(Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment – child-friendly summary)

August 2021

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What is this about?

- What Artificial Intelligence (AI) is
- What it means for children (“their/them/they/me/my/I”)
- What the Scottish Government (“we/you”) will do to make sure that children benefit from AI and their rights are protected.

This is a short version of what we call a “Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment”, which we made when we developed Scotland’s AI Strategy in 2020-21.

What is AI and why should I care?

AI is computers doing “smart” things that up until now only people could do. For example, chatting with someone, driving a car, or finding out if someone is ill.

AI has grown a lot in recent years, and many people already use AI without knowing it. For example, when typing on a phone, searching online or speaking with a voice assistant.

We and many other people think AI is going to make a huge difference in everyone’s lives, particularly children’s lives.

Children are going to live in a world where AI is everywhere – at home, at school, at work.

AI is and will be used to influence their choices throughout their lives. It will affect them even before they are born, because it also impacts the lives of their parents.

So children should care about AI – to ensure that AI helps them be in control of their lives, not the other way around, and that AI respects their rights.

We and many other people have a duty of care and a responsibility to make sure that AI works for children.

How will we make sure that AI benefits children in Scotland?

We are working with UNICEF, a United Nations agency that helps children worldwide, to use AI to improve children’s lives in Scotland and around the world.

But we need to do more.

First, we will continue to do more to make sure your rights are protected. We believe that making the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) the law in Scotland is the best way to do that. The UNCRC is an international law that recognises that children and young people have rights – learn more about it at

www.gov.scot/publications/un-convention-rights-child-guide-children-young-people-2/.

Second, we will put children at the centre of our plans for the future of AI in Scotland –

Scotland's AI Strategy will explain how we will work together so that AI benefits everyone in Scotland, including children.

To do this, we will follow guidance produced by UNICEF, who asked children what they want from AI:

1. Let AI help me develop to my full potential.
2. Include me and those around me.
3. AI must be for all children.
4. Ensure my privacy in an AI world.
5. I need to be safe in the AI world.
6. I need to know how AI impacts me. You need to be accountable for that.
7. You must know what my rights are and uphold them.
8. If I am well prepared now, I can contribute to responsible AI for the future.
9. Make it possible for all to contribute to child-centred AI.

How can children contribute?

To make sure that we follow this guidance on making AI child-centred, we need children to have a real say in how Scotland's AI Strategy is delivered over the next five years.

They can do this by joining the Scottish AI Alliance. To get involved, and help make sure that AI benefits all children in Scotland, please go to www.scotlandaistrategy.com.