

Artificial Intelligence and the Field of Psychology

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The mission of the American Psychological Association (APA) is to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives. This Policy seeks to recognize the current and future transformative impacts present in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, including technologies such as robotics and chatbots, data collection and analysis, machine learning algorithms, and automated decision making. This Policy seeks to recognize the critical role of psychological science and knowledge in guiding the many forms, applications, and analyses of AI, and the real and potential impacts of AI on psychological research and the training, practice, and application of psychology. APA affirms the vital role of the discipline of psychology in addressing societal challenges, the challenges and opportunities related to health and wellbeing, and the ethical and privacy implications of AI. APA is resolutely committed to identifying, mitigating, and eliminating harmful impacts of AI while ensuring that everyone in society can benefit from AI technologies to the greatest extent possible.

Psychology's impact on AI

AI technologies are being increasingly integrated into people's everyday lives at home, at work, in healthcare, at school, and beyond (e.g., Matheny et al., 2020; Bankins et al., 2023; Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2020). Given psychology's deep scientific understanding of human cognition, behavior, and emotions, the field should play a pivotal role in shaping safe and effective AI systems—including people's use of and interaction with these systems—and studying the impact of these systems and their use on society. Psychological science should inform how to improve human-technology engagement, and promote the fair, ethical, and equitable use of AI, thereby strengthening the impact of the field through the betterment of society at large (see Landers & Behrend, 2023).

Impact of AI on psychology

AI technologies will impact present and future education, training, practice, and research in psychological science and its diverse subfields (e.g., Götz et al., 2023; Fan et al., 2023). Given these impacts, APA affirms the continued need to research, analyze, critique, and improve the application of AI technologies within the field of psychology.

The unique role of the APA and psychology in relation to AI can be categorized as falling within three interrelated domains:

1. **Shaping AI's Societal Impact:** AI technologies impact multiple facets of society, including but not limited to healthcare, work and the workforce, education, the criminal legal system, and transportation. Psychological science offers valuable insights and expertise into how AI is shaping—and will shape—societal patterns and trends. This includes the creation, perpetuation, and mitigation of misinformation and bias (e.g., Garimella & Chauchard, 2024); the creation, implementation, and improvement of effective digital literacy tools (e.g., Tiernan et al., 2023); and the effects of AI on the behavior and wellbeing of children, adults, and society at large (e.g., Odekerken-Schröder et al., 2020; Tang et al., 2023).
2. **Using AI to Promote Health and Wellbeing:** Working hand in hand with psychology experts, AI technologies can usefully advance population health, increase access to care, reduce inequities in health outcomes, increase early intervention, mitigate health risks, tailor prevention strategies, and broadly promote personal wellbeing (e.g., Matheny et al., 2020; Ophir et al., 2022; Pierson et al., 2021). This potential will only be realized through the inclusion of psychology in the research, development, deployment, and analysis of the impact of these tools.
3. **Addressing and Upholding Ethics and Privacy Related to AI:** The efficiency, accuracy, and problem-solving capabilities of AI must be considered in the context of the ethical and privacy implications of using—and misusing—these technologies. Psychology has long stood at the forefront of identifying and mitigating ethical violations, and privacy violations have long been addressed with the help of psychological science. New policies and procedures being created in the context of AI technologies should integrate this expertise in psychology (e.g., Tay et al., 2022).

The APA seeks to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that the work of the association and the field across the three domains above are **informed by the following processes**:

- Center ethics and human rights to ensure that the people and the psychological science underlying human behavior and experiences remain central to the ethical development, application, and evaluation of technologies and systems involving AI.

- Promote equity, identify and reduce bias to ensure safety and effectiveness of AI, minimizing unknown, unintended, and inequitable impacts. Center diversity throughout the development, dissemination, monitoring, and refining of AI technologies, algorithms, and data on which AI is built.
- Foster the creation, discussion, and dissemination of relevant psychological science seeking to further understand and assess the development and application of AI technologies to ensure they are benefiting children, adults, and society.
- Ensure that policymakers understand the expertise and critical role of psychology and psychological science in informing AI tools and systems, incorporating the expertise of psychology in the regulatory, legislative, and judicial efforts seeking to govern AI.
- Teach the public developmentally appropriate best practices of media literacy so they can implement psychological principles that allow all to best distinguish between AI and reality, understand the implications of AI, and seek to benefit from AI where possible.
- Provide guidance and feedback to those seeking to use AI technologies in the creation and teaching of psychological science, and/or practice of psychology.
- Provide guidance and feedback to those seeking to develop AI technologies to ensure they are doing so in a way that is informed by psychological science and that upholds ethical principles.

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