

**Opening Remarks of International Telecommunications Society (ITS) Chair, Stephen Schmidt, for the 5 June 2023 ITS webinar, *Ethical AI Governance: Are Companies and Governments Ready for the AI Revolution?***

Welcome!

Thank you for being with us today!

We are joined today by members of the ITS family spanning Africa, MENA, Europe, the Americas and Asia.

We are grateful to everyone that has chosen to invest their time and attention with us today.

An extra shout out to those joining us from Asia, where it is quite late right now.

The *International Telecommunications Society* (ITS) is a neutral forum and meeting place where scholars, policy practitioners, and members of industry come together to discuss and explore the most timely and pressing issues in communications and digital policy, *in a spirit of friendship and intellectual inquiry*.

Today we are exploring the exciting – and controversial – topic of AI regulation.

**Today's webinar:**

We find ourselves on the cusp of a new era, one marked by a sharp rise in the prominence of AI.

History has shown us that every major technological shift - *from the birth of the printing press, to the advent of the railways, from telegraphy to the Internet* - has introduced a transformation in the scale, pace and pattern of societies – changing where and how we live, work, learn, worship, relate, and more.

Legal systems had to evolve, in turn, in response to the printing press, railways, computers and the Internet.

And now, as we witness the rise of generative AI - a shift of profound proportions - we are confronted with vital questions, including:

- How can we leverage history and precedent, from other stages of the computer and Internet revolution, to chart a path forward?
- Can our existing regulatory tools keep pace with this revolution?
  - Are they sufficiently apt and adaptable enough to address the novelty, the speed, and the complexity of this transformative technology?
  - Are new approaches needed?

- How do we balance the benefits of technological innovation against other important social, economic and legal objectives?
- In an era where artificial intelligence can create, learn, and adapt, what does it truly mean to be human?

### **Today's speakers:**

We have an outstanding group of speakers today who are uniquely situated to speak to these issues:

#### **Dr. Richard Benjamins:**

- Chief AI & Data Strategist at **Telefonica**, a thought leader in data-driven business and in promoting responsible AI practices.

#### **Prof. Rachel Dunscombe:**

- a chief industry advisor at the Dedalus Group, with extensive experience in the digital aspects of healthcare.

#### **Cameron Schuler:**

- Chief Commercialization Officer & VP of Industry Innovation at the Vector Institute, with diverse experiences in AI adoption across industries.

#### **Dr. Paul Timmers:**

- a research associate at the University of Oxford's Oxford Internet Institute, focusing on the role of governments and public policies in shaping AI's future.

### **For organizing this webinar, I would like to thank:**

- **Our academic host**, Ivey Business School, Western University and webinar co-organizer, **Dr. Erik Bohlin**
- **Our corporate host**, TELUS Communications, our ITS corporate members whose support make these important conversations possible, and in particular **Dr. Georg Serenstchy** who co-organized the webinar and will run the Q&A session.
- **And all of you who have joined today from across the world!** We look forward to your questions, comments and insights and we will leave a generous amount of time for your questions.

Kind Regards,

Stephen Schmidt  
ITS Chair