

Opening Remarks

Opening Remarks of International Telecommunications Society (ITS) Chair, Stephen Schmidt, for ITS webinar, *Achieving Equitable AI Governance: Balancing Innovation and Responsibility*, 23 October 2023.

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 rigour*.

Today we are exploring the timely and consequential topic of equitable AI governance.

Today's webinar:

In the rapidly evolving world of AI, generative systems present a complex regulatory and governance challenge.

As the frontiers of the possible expand in real time, governments, corporations, and research institutions face the task of crafting laws and practices that harmonize innovation with ethical responsibility.

Achieving equitable AI governance transcends narrow legal considerations:

It is a moral imperative requiring alignment between uncharted possibilities and the safeguarding of important human values.

Our speakers today will explore the characteristics of a balanced regulatory approach that takes in to account:

- the swift development of AI technology;
- the economic and commercial interests involved;

- broader public interest considerations;
- all set against the backdrop of the international competition for AI leadership.

Our speakers will address critical question, including:

- What are the defining features of a balanced regulatory approach?
- Does the European Union (EU) AI Act strike the right equilibrium?
- What are the challenges and opportunities that arise in the intermediate period before legislation in jurisdictions like the EU, the US, and Canada takes effect?
- How can global governance align different approaches, and what lessons can be drawn, setting where complex risks are managed on a trans-national basis – including finance, aviation, medicine.

Today's speakers:

We have an impressive group of experts with us today who will discuss these questions (and more) with us:

Jesslyn Dymond is the Director of Data Ethics at TELUS. She leads their responsible data-driven innovation efforts, including the Responsible AI portfolio and the Privacy by Design certified Data for Good Program. Jesslyn has a Master of Information from the University of Toronto and is a certified information privacy professional. She is recognized for her expertise in privacy and data governance.

Var Shankar is the Director of Policy at the Responsible AI Institute. He is an attorney with a passion for developing AI standards and regulations based on human values. Var is a member of the AI Certification Working Group convened by the World Economic Forum and has experience in the Clinton Global Initiative and law practice at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP. He holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School and a B.A. from Duke University.

Irina Gueorguiev is the AI Market Researcher at Successif. She has a background in law, specializing in personal data protection and corporate law. Irina has conducted research on international AI governance and has worked with OpenAI's Governance Team. She holds a Master's in international law and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Montreal.

Derk Oldenburg is a consultant focused on EU digital policy. He has a background in leadership roles in the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After a diplomatic career, he transitioned to corporate public policy in

telecommunications. He now trains young diplomats and lectures at the University of Maastricht and the Hertie School of Government.

Dr. Georg Serentschy is a consultant in the digital sector, advising C-level executives and experts on strategy, regulation, competition, spectrum policies, cybersecurity policies, and innovation. He has over 40 years of experience in nuclear physics, industrial research and development, and regulatory leadership. Dr. Serentschy specializes in advising digital sector leaders on various areas, including strategy, AI, regulation, spectrum policy, cybersecurity policy, and innovation.

Georg will be moderating today's session.

For organizing this webinar, I would like to thank:

- **Our academic host**, Ivey Business School at Western University and my ITS colleague Dr. Erik Bohlin.
- **Our corporate host**, TELUS Communications, our ITS corporate members whose support make these important conversations possible.
- **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