13ᵗʰ Campion School Model United Nations | 11ᵗʰ – 12ᵗʰ October 2025

Committee: Special Conference on Free will in the age of Artificial Intelligence (SPECON)

Topic: Furthering the utilisation of AI to aid the democratic process

Student Officer: Fotini Katoglou

Position: Deputy President

Personal Introduction

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the 13th session of the Campion School Model United Nations! My name is Fotini Katoglou, I am a Year 12 student at the German School of Thessaloniki, and this year I have the honour of serving as the Deputy President of the Special Conference (SPECON).

Having chaired in both the Netherlands and Greece, I am excited to be chairing for the fourth time. Congratulations to each of you for being selected to participate in this esteemed committee! During our two-day session, we will be exploring the topic "Furthering the Utilisation of AI to Aid the Democratic Process." We live in a world where technology is changing the way we live, vote, and communicate. But one big question stands out: Can artificial intelligence strengthen democracy, or could it weaken it? I'm truly looking forward to hearing your ideas, your concerns, and the creative solutions you'll bring to the table.

Please remember that while this guide serves as a starting point, your personal research will be what truly drives the debate forward. So, I encourage you to familiarise yourselves with the RoP and the topic to ensure that the debate remains fruitful.

Should you have any questions or require any clarification ahead of or during the conference, feel free to reach out to me at katoflouf@gmail.com. I'm always happy to help!
I can't wait to meet you all and witness the passion you'll bring to this year's discussion.

Kind regards,

Fotini Katoglou

Topic Introduction

Do robots cast ballots? Do machines decide for us? Not just yet. But the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) brought these once-hypothetical questions into serious political debate. AI-generated disinformation, algorithmic manipulation on social media, and deepfakes are just a few examples of how the digital world is now connected to democracy in ways never seen before. The Brexit referendum and the 2016 U.S. presidential election[1] showed how AI-driven tactics can influence public opinion and distort electoral processes: in the UK, AI was used to microtarget individuals on social media with misleading and emotionally charged content about the EU, while in the U.S., foreign actors leveraged AI to amplify disinformation and fuel tensions among American voters. Since then, countries have used automated propaganda and personalised content, along with polarising campaigns, to manipulate election results. The question now is no longer "if" AI will affect democratic participation, but rather "how much" and "for what purpose", as it grows more sophisticated, advanced, and widely accessible.

International conventions and regulatory efforts, like the recently passed EU AI Act, intend to address these problems but are "packed with loopholes." Representation, accountability, and above all, trust—known as the three pillars of democracy—are being threatened by deceptive advertising, disinformation floods, and social polarisation. As these foundations weaken, the ability of democratic institutions to function effectively is eroded, which could eventually cause democracy to collapse. The everyday lives of citizens are directly affected by this deterioration: their votes may be manipulated, their access to truth distorted, and their participation in political discussion diminished. Therefore, the question of whether citizens still exercise free will in democratic societies has become more pressing than ever.

So, how do governments and companies react to this, then? How can we make sure that AI strengthens AI instead of weakening it? Using AI to detect AI might be like fighting fire with fire, but what about the human factor? People need to become digitally literate to recognise manipulation. Will voters even know when they're being influenced during national elections, where anonymity

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[1] Sahota, Neil. "AI And The Shadow Over Democracy: The Rising Threat To Global Elections." *Forbes*, 2 February 2024,
https://www.forbes.com/sites/neilsahota/2024/02/02/ai-and-the-shadow-over-democracy-the-rising-threat-to-global-elections/

makes human judgment harder? Well, all of this depends on something we've struggled with before: trust. Trust in the tools. Trust in the process. And trust in each other. Because one thing remains clear: we're not just training machines anymore; they're training us, too—shaping our thinking, our choices, and ultimately, shaking the very pillars democracy stands on.

Delegates are expected to discuss this issue and ensure AI helps democracy responsibly. Can we create the kind of transparent, accountable, and ethically correct AI systems that democracy requires before it's too late?

Definition of key concepts

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

"Artificial Intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think, learn, and problem-solve like humans."[2]

Democracy

"Democracy means rule by the people."[3] Democracy is a system where people choose their leaders and have a say in government decisions, usually by voting. People can vote in elections, pay taxes to support public services, speak freely and share their opinions, join groups or political parties to express their ideas, and take part in peaceful protests. These actions help people take part in their government and society.

Misinformation

"False information that is spread by mistake, without the intent to deceive.[4] In a democracy, even unintentional misinformation can be harmful. It confuses voters, disrupts public understanding, and weakens citizens' ability to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

Disinformation

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[2] "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Explained: Definition, Types, and Applications." *BESTARION*, Vinh Luu, January 2025, https://bestarion.com/what-is-artificial-intelligence/

[3] "Democracy." *Parliamentary Education Office*, https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/system-of-government/democracy

[4] "Misinformation vs disinformation: What do these types of fake news mean and what's the difference? - Other Side of the Story." *BBC*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z3hhvj6

"Fake news that is created and spread deliberately by someone who knows it's false and shares it to mislead others. In a democracy, where the "active and honest participation of citizens"[5] is important, disinformation undermines public trust in institutions, distorts political debate, and manipulates voter choices.

Political polarisation

"The divergence of political attitudes to ideological extremes."[6] This makes it harder for people to find common ground or trust democratic processes. AI can help detect and reduce harmful content, false information, and hate speech online.

Data inequality

Data inequality refers to the unequal access to and use of data. While many people generate data, only a small, privileged group has the skills, resources, or time to use it effectively. This creates a new form of inequality, not based on material wealth, but on informational power.

Data producer

"A data producer is the root source of data. It can be a person manually entering data, an automated service, or a device/machine that gathers data."[7]

Data holder

Under the EU Data Act, a 'data holder' is any person or organisation, public or private, "that has the right or obligation to use and make data available."[8]

Data user

"a person involved in accessing and investigating integrated datasets for statistical and research purposes"[9]

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[5] "Why Americans Crave Fake News: The Problem of Misinformation in a Democracy." *New America*, https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/why-americans-crave-fake-news/the-problem-of-misinformation-in-a-democracy/

[6] "Political Polarization." *ECPS*, https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/political-polarization/

[7] "Data producer." *Opendatasoft*, https://www.opendatasoft.com/en/glossary/data-producer/

[8] "EU Data Act | Article 2, Definitions." *eu-data-act*, https://www.eu-data-act.com/Data_Act_Article_2.html

[9] "Rights, Roles and Responsibilities Data Users." *Data.gov.au*, Australian Government, https://toolkit.data.gov.au/data-integration/roles-and-responsibilities/data-users.html

Background Information

Historical background

Artificial Intelligence isn't as new as it seems. Its origins can be traced back to the 1950s, when Alan Turing, a British mathematician and computer scientist, speculated that machines could "think." He created the famous Turing Test, which was a method of evaluating a machine's intelligence. In this test, a computer would be considered intelligent if it could convincingly mimic human behaviour. Ever since then, AI has evolved significantly. Inspired by how the human brain works, modern AI systems are trained to identify patterns, make decisions, and improve over time.

Opportunities of AI in democracy

How can AI strengthen democracy? AI has the potential to be a huge asset in making democratic systems more inclusive, transparent, and effective. It can analyse large amounts of data and highlight neutral, factual information more accurately than traditional media. This helps correct common misunderstandings that deepen political divisions. AI empowers underrepresented and less informed communities to engage in policy debates. AI can assist with fact-checking and create high-quality content that appeals to a wide audience, helping citizens understand and consider different viewpoints. If used responsibly, AI can support trusted public institutions in analysing public sentiment and help policymakers respond better to the needs of their constituents. Chatbots, for example, can explain political party positions and offer civic education to marginalised or rural populations. This ensures that no social group is discriminated against and that everyone has equal access to information, helping to prevent data inequality. At the same time, it is important to recognise that AI is not without limitations: algorithms can reflect existing biases in their training data, and the same technology that enables fact-checking can also be misused to generate misleading news. Therefore, it is clear that the opportunities of AI in democracy depend on careful and responsible use. Could AI open new doors for democratic participation and help overcome the feeling among many voters that they are ignored or left behind, while protecting democratic values such as equality, accountability, and privacy?

Risks, dangers, and threats of AI

AI-generated content can pose a serious threat to the three pillars of democracy: representation, accountability, and, most importantly, trust.

Representation: Who's really speaking?

For democracy to work, elected officials need to know what citizens want; after all, that's how they make decisions. But what happens when AI enters the conversation? Imagine a politician receiving thousands of emails from "concerned citizens". In a U.S. experiment, lawmakers received both AI- and human-written letters.[10] The shocking result was that many couldn't tell the difference. Some even responded equally to both. While exposure to such content had little effect on their policy views, the experiment shows how malicious actors can misuse AI to flood inboxes with fake opinions in order to drown out real voices and undermine democratic representation.

AI can also target individuals. By exploiting personal data, it sends tailored messages that play on people's emotions, beliefs, vulnerabilities, and fears. If voters can't trust what they see or hear, they lose confidence in the media and in democratic institutions altogether. These dangers are real and should definitely not be underestimated.

Even public opinion polls become unreliable when AI manipulates public feedback. Yet these polls are often the only way officials can gauge what people think. Most citizens already lack basic political knowledge, and their understanding of specific policies tends to be even lower.

Accountability: Can we trust what we see?

Democracy depends on voters being able to hold leaders accountable for their actions. But that only works when people know what's really going on. As fake content spreads on the internet, it becomes increasingly harder for citizens to tell what's real and what's not. And if people can't tell the difference, how can they hold anyone accountable?

This is where misinformation comes in.

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[10] Blackwood, Kate. "Lawmakers struggle to differentiate AI and human emails | Department of Government." *Department of Government*, 22 March 2023, https://government.cornell.edu/news/lawmakers-struggle-differentiate-ai-and-human-emails

Algorithms don't just determine what we see online; they can also influence our opinions and even our voting behaviour by grouping people based on their online activity. This can affect democracy, especially when it comes to making sure the majority is fairly represented. At the same time, these systems make it alarmingly easy to spread false or misleading information. Purposeful misinformation, distorted realities, and echo chambers trap people without them even realising it, and escaping them is far from easy.

When used strategically, misinformation can shape how people vote and, ultimately, who ends up in power. In this way, powerful interest groups, rather than the people, can hijack the democratic process. Liberal democracy and its core institutions face a serious threat. A healthy democracy relies on access to objective, trustworthy information. But when voters are misled, their choices no longer reflect the true democratic will.

Combined with tools like deepfake videos and personalised psychological targeting, the problem intensifies. Public perception shifts, and confidence in institutions gradually diminishes. New tools like generative AI—such as chatbots and audio or image manipulators—can produce convincing misinformation and propaganda on a massive scale. Altered videos of candidates and fake messages from election officials threaten electoral integrity and undermine public confidence in the voting process. Personalised manipulation (microtargeting) spreads tailored and often false content that fuels polarisation and makes it even harder for voters to know what to believe.

Trust

More than anything, democracy runs on trust: in the media, in institutions, and in each other. But AI makes it easier than ever for malicious actors to disseminate false information. The easy flow of false content adds fuel to the fire in a political environment that is already polarised. Constant exposure to misleading or fake information creates confusion, fuels conspiracy theories, and leads people to disengage from voting and civic life. That opens the door to authoritarianism.

This chart reveals that "trust in AI is sharply divided, showing 48% of participants expecting a negative impact on trust and democracy, while 50% see it as positive."
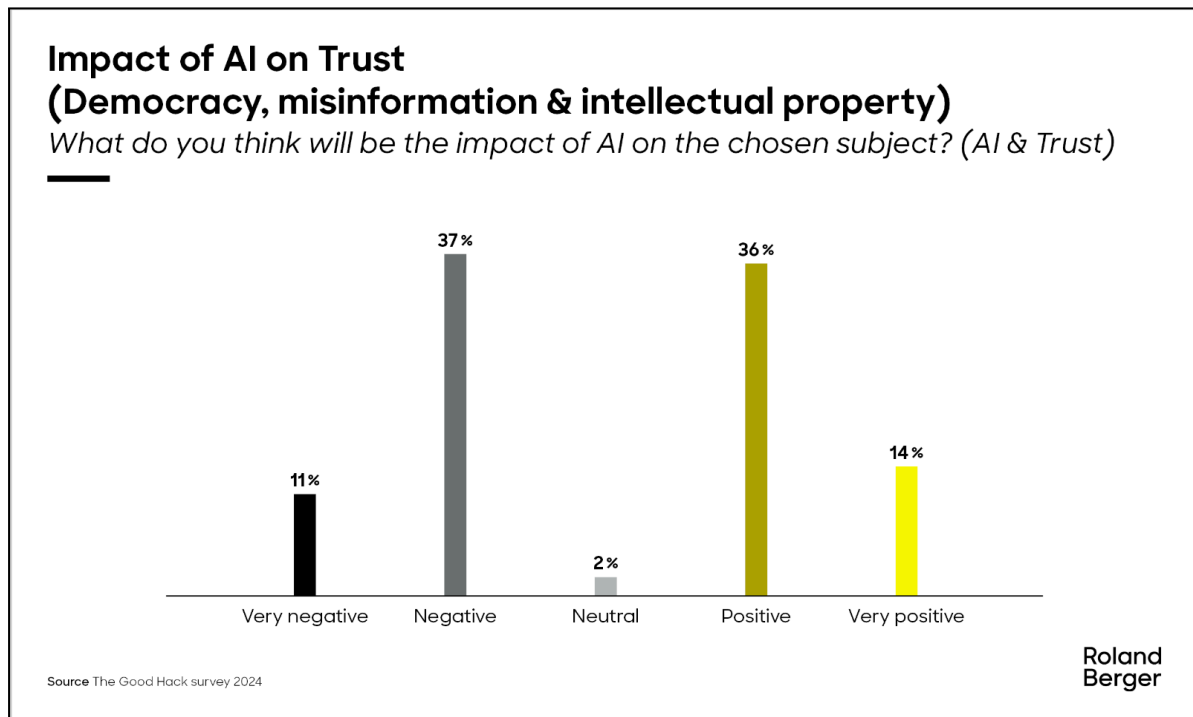
**Impact of AI on Trust
(Democracy, misinformation & intellectual property)**
What do you think will be the impact of AI on the chosen subject? (AI & Trust)

Source The Good Hack survey 2024

Roland Berger

Figure 1: Impact of AI on Trust[11]

Interestingly, misinformation doesn't always change people's minds. What matters more is partisanship: people tend to trust what their own 'side' says.

Trust is the glue that holds a political system together. When it breaks down, people disengage. They stop participating. They stop voting. They stop believing in democracy itself. And without trust? The whole system can fall apart.

The Use & Abuse of Data

The risk isn't hypothetical. The US Department of Homeland Security has warned that generative AI could be exploited by foreign actors and domestic extremists to disrupt elections, posing threats to national security and democratic stability.[12] The massive amount of data created online, often called the "new gold", can either help understand voters' needs or be misused to manipulate them. AI

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[11] "How deeply is AI changing our society?" *Roland Berger GmbH*, Laurent Benarousse, Alain Chagnaud, Julien Gautier and Claire Pernet, 18 November 2024, https://www.rolandberger.com/en/Insights/Publications/How-deeply-is-AI-changing-our-society.html

[12] Margolin, Josh. "DHS warns of threats to election posed by artificial intelligence." *ABC News*, 20 May 2024, https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/dhs-warns-threats-election-posed-ai/story?id=110367438

creates psychological profiles from social media data. Targeted propaganda exploits emotions and vulnerabilities; citizen autonomy is threatened. Manipulative memes reinforce biases and influence users psychologically. If even experts struggle to distinguish real from fake, how can the broader public be expected to?

Some are even experimenting with and weaponising generative AI to manipulate politics and undermine democracies abroad.

The Cambridge Analytica scandal[13] involved the unauthorised harvesting of millions of Facebook users' data and revealed how AI can misuse such data to influence elections. By creating political or psychological profiles, AI can target voters with personalised adverts that promote or discredit a candidate. These tactics threaten individual autonomy, as they exploit emotions, fears, and obsessions. Tailored messages can psychologically manipulate people, amounting to a form of "digital brainwashing". The rapid spread of fake news and propaganda, such as deepfakes, fuels fear and xenophobia. Moreover, data can be biased and serve to standardise thought. During elections, alleged violent crimes committed by migrants or asylum seekers are sometimes exploited in campaigns to incite fear, intolerance, xenophobia, and extremist ideologies.

Case studies

Donald Trump posts AI-generated photos of a fake Taylor Swift endorsement[14]

A clear example of this was during the 2024 U.S. presidential election campaign, when social media platforms were flooded with AI-generated fake content. One case involved Donald Trump, who shared an AI-generated image of singer Taylor Swift seemingly endorsing him, even though she never did. On the other side, Democrats circulated fake images of Trump being arrested. These examples not only influenced public perception but also destabilised the electoral process. "Recently, I was made aware that AI-generated images of me falsely endorsing Donald Trump's presidential run were posted on his site," Swift wrote, "It really brought out my fears around AI and the dangers of

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[13] Cadwalladr, Carole, and Emma Graham. "Revealed: 50 million Facebook profiles harvested for Cambridge Analytica in major data breach." *The Guardian*, 17 March 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/17/cambridge-analytica-facebook-influence-us-election

[14] "Swifties Are Not Holding Back After Donald Trump Posts AI-Generated Photos of Fake Taylor Swift Endorsement." *Newsweek*, 19 August 2024, https://www.newsweek.com/entertainment/celebrity-news/swifties-not-holding-back-after-donald-trump-posts-ai-generated-photos-fake-taylor-swift-endorsement-1941316

spreading misinformation. It made me realise that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans as a voter in this election. The simplest way to combat misinformation is with the truth."[15]

The creator of the AI image added, "that AI, when used by bad actors, can be a danger to democracy. [...] If this leads to stronger regulation, I'm not only happy to comply, but I'll be glad it helps make the world a safer place" (Tenbarge, 2024).

2016 U.S. Presidential Election Disinformation Campaign

During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Russian operatives exploited AI-driven bots on social media to sway public opinion[16]. These automated accounts rapidly spread misleading and emotionally charged content, mostly from unreliable sources, and acted quickly by tagging or replying to users who had many followers before posts went viral. Many users were unaware of the manipulation and unknowingly reposted such content, making this disinformation campaign even more successful.

This was part of a Russian government operation known as "Project Lakhta," which, according to the U.S. intelligence community, was directly ordered by President Vladimir Putin.[17] The campaign had three main objectives: to sabotage Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, bolster Donald Trump's candidacy, and provoke political and social unrest in the United States.[18] The Internet Research Agency (IRA), a Kremlin-backed troll farm based in Saint Petersburg, played a central role. The IRA created thousands of social media accounts posing as Americans who expressed support for radical groups, staged rallies, and promoted events supporting Trump while opposing Clinton. They reached millions of users between 2013 and 2017. In parallel, hackers linked to Russian military intelligence (GRU) infiltrated the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and campaign staff networks, including those of Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta. Investigations by the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Mueller Report confirmed

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[15] Tenbarge, Kat. "The AI Taylor Swift endorsement Trump shared was originally a pro-Biden Facebook meme." *NBC News*, 13 September 2024, https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/ai-taylor-swift-endorsement-trump-shared-was-originally-biden-meme-rcna170945

[16] Woodruff, Judy. "Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections - Wikipedia." *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_interference_in_the_2016_United_States_elections

[17] "Key takeaways from the Russia indictment." *Politico*, Cory Bennett, Tim Starks, 16 February 2018, https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/16/mueller-indictment-russia-takeaways-353667

[18] "Senate report shows extent of Russia's 2016 disinformation campaign." *Axios Media*, Khorri Atkinson, 16 December 2018, https://www.axios.com/2018/12/16/senate-report-russia-disinformation-2016-campaign

more than 200 contacts between associates of Trump's campaign and Russian individuals but found that there was not enough evidence to charge any campaign member with criminal conspiracy or coordination. Russian officials denied involvement in the cyberattacks, and Donald Trump publicly questioned whether interference had occurred.[19]

A U.S.-based analytics firm called Graphika helped track this disinformation. It exposed how the IRA and other troll farms conducted coordinated campaigns not only during the 2016 election but also in 2020 and the 2022 midterms.[20] In response, U.S. intelligence agencies issued warnings; former President Barack Obama confronted President Putin directly; the U.S. renewed sanctions on Russia, expelled diplomatic staff, and closed Russian consulates; and both the Senate and House Intelligence Committees launched bipartisan investigations into the depth and breadth of the interference.

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[19] "Vladimir Putin: The Troublemaker." *Time Magazine*, Massimo Calabresi, 5 January 2017, https://time.com/4623407/the-troublemaker/

[20] Savage, Charlie. "New Reports on Russian Interference Show Trump's Claims on Obama Are Overblown." *The New York Times*, 25 July 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/25/us/trump-obama-russia.html
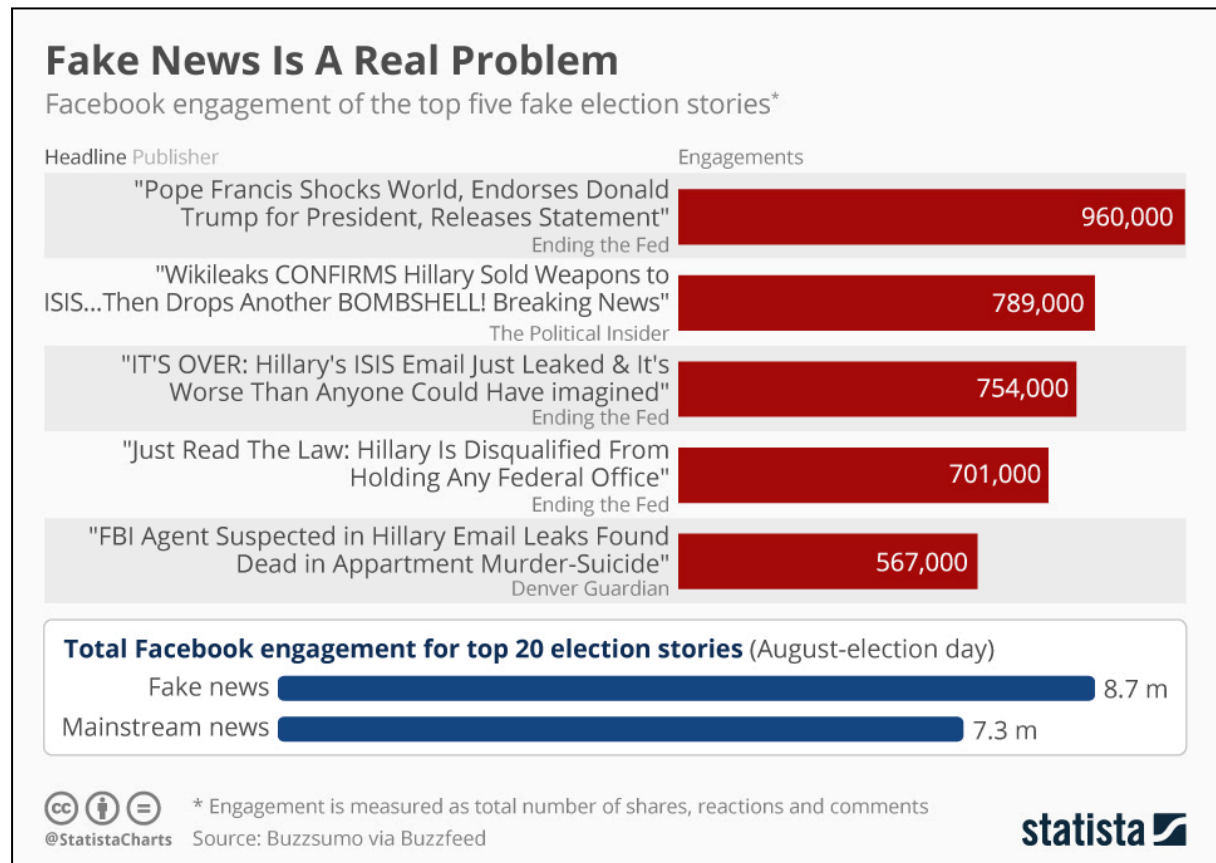
Figure 2: How Fake News Affected the 2016 Presidential Election[21]

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of the event
1950s	Alan Turing proposed the Turing Test, a way to measure a machine's intelligence by seeing if it could imitate human responses so well that a person could not distinguish it from another human.
4 October 2011	Apple releases Siri[22], a voice assistant that understands and responds to human speech. This

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[21] Georgacopoulos, Christina, and Grayce Mores. "2016 Election." *LSU Faculty Websites*, https://faculty.lsu.edu/fakenews/elections/sixteen.php

[22] Gross, Doug. "Apple introduces Siri, Web freaks out." *CNN*, 4 October 2011, https://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/04/tech/mobile/siri-iphone-4s-skynet

Date	Description of the event
	opened the door to more democratic uses of AI, such as chatbots that provide public information and help people understand civic issues.
27 August 2015	Taiwan launches vTaiwan, a digital democracy platform using Polis to bring citizens, experts, and government together to discuss laws and reach consensus through digital participation[23].
15 January 2018	Microsoft (82.6) and Alibaba (82.4) AI systems outperform humans (82.3) on the SQuAD reading comprehension test[24]. This shows that AI can quickly read, understand, and summarise complex texts, helping voters access and better understand government policies.
25 May 2018	The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) comes into effect in the EU[25] and gives citizens more control over their data. The GDPR makes AI systems more transparent and helps prevent the political misuse of data, such as in targeted election ads.
17 September 2018	The First World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) is held in East China[26].

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[23] "Consensus Building in Taiwan, the Poster Child of Digital Democracy." *Democracy Technologies*, Sebastian Cushing Rodriguez, 4 October 2023, https://democracy-technologies.org/participation/consensus-building-in-taiwan/

[24] "AI models beat humans at reading comprehension, but they've still got a ways to go." *The Washington Post*, Drew Harwell, 16 January 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/ais-ability-to-read-hailed-as-historical-milestone-but-computers-arent-quite-there/2018/01/16/04638f2e-faf6-11e7-a46b-a3614530bd87_story.html

[25] "Legal framework of EU data protection - European Commission." *European Commission*, https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/data-protection/legal-framework-eu-data-protection_en

[26] "International tech giants to establish AI centers in Shanghai." *Xinhua*, Yang Yi, 18 September 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/18/c_137474602.htm

Date	Description of the event
8 April 2019	The EU's expert group on AI published Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, saying AI should be lawful, ethical, and robust. There are 7 key requirements and a checklist to help make sure AI is trustworthy[27].
15 January 2021	Dutch groups criticise the GDPR for not protecting personal data from AI misuse.[28] The Dutch childcare benefits scandal shows how a flawed algorithm harmed low-income families and immigrants by wrongly accusing them of fraud, therefore causing financial and emotional distress.
21 April 2021	The European Commission proposes the AI Act to ensure that AI is safe and fair for people[29].
30 November 2022	ChatGPT launches[30].
15 February 2024	AI Democracy 2.0 launches a WhatsApp-based AI chatbot in Zimbabwe to deliver fact-checked civic and election information. It helps citizens access information on voting, roles, and bills.[31]

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[27] "Ethics guidelines for trustworthy AI | Shaping Europe's digital future." *Shaping Europe's digital future*, 8 April 2019, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai

[28] Heikkilä, Melissa. "Dutch scandal serves as a warning for Europe over risks of using algorithms." *Politico.eu*, 29 March 2022, https://www.politico.eu/article/dutch-scandal-serves-as-a-warning-for-europe-over-risks-of-using-algorithms/

[29] "EU AI Act: first regulation on artificial intelligence | Topics." *European Parliament*, 19 February 2025, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20230601STO93804/eu-ai-act-first-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence

[30] Acres, Tom. "ChatGPT turns one: The first year of the chatbot that changed the world." *Sky News*, 30 November 2023, https://news.sky.com/story/chatgpt-turns-one-the-first-year-of-the-chatbot-that-changed-the-world-13014185

[31] "AI Democracy 2.0." *Civic Tech Innovation Network*, https://civictech.africa/exhibitor/ai-democracy-2-0/

Date	Description of the event
13 March 2024	The European Parliament votes on and adopts the AI Act[32].
21 March 2024	The UN General Assembly adopts the first global resolution on AI[33], covering human rights, data protection, and AI risks.
1 August 2024	The EU AI Act comes into force[34], establishing a common regulatory and legal framework for AI within the EU.
2 February 2025	The ban on AI systems with unacceptable risk comes into effect under the EU AI Act[35].
10-11 February 2025	The AI Action Summit, held at the Grand Palais in Paris, France, is co-chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi[36].
26-28 July 2025	The World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) 2025 is held in Shanghai[37].

[32] "The European Parliament Adopts the AI Act." *WilmerHale*, 14 March 2024, https://www.wilmerhale.com/en/insights/blogs/wilmerhale-privacy-and-cybersecurity-law/20240314-the-european-parliament-adopts-the-ai-act

[33] Felipe, Loey. "General Assembly adopts landmark resolution on artificial intelligence." *UN News*, 21 March 2024, https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147831

[34] "AI Act enters into force - European Commission." *European Commission*, 1 August 2024, https://commission.europa.eu/news-and-media/news/ai-act-enters-force-2024-08-01_en

[35] "EU AI Act: First Rules Take Effect on Prohibited AI Systems." *Jones Day*, 28 February 2025, https://www.jonesday.com/en/insights/2025/02/eu-ai-act-first-rules-take-effect-on-prohibited-ai-systems

[36] "AI Action Summit (10 & 11 Feb. 2025) - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs." *France Diplomatie*, https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/digital-diplomacy/news/article/ai-action-summit-10-11-feb-2025

[37] "WAIC 2025 – Artificial Intelligence International Institute (AIII)." *Artificial Intelligence International Institute*, https://aiii.global/waic-2025/

Major countries, organisations, and alliances

French Republic

France has taken strong steps to regulate AI in elections. During the 2022 French presidential election, a so-called "niece" of a running candidate went viral on TikTok, which helped normalise the candidate's views. Later, it turned out that the "niece" was a sophisticated AI-generated deepfake. France responded by reinforcing its digital regulations. The 2018 anti-fake-news law had the goal of combating misinformation and improving transparency during elections.

The law "Sécuriser et Réguler l'Espace Numérique" (SREN) was adopted in May 2024 as an extension of this[38]. It regulates the use of AI in political messaging and advertising, requiring parties and candidates to disclose any AI usage and introducing measures to limit AI-generated content during electoral seasons. The Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication (Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique; ARCOM) and the National Commission on Informatics and Liberties (Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés; CNIL) are two regulatory bodies that advocate for stricter AI regulations in elections. The CNIL also enforces the GDPR and protects personal data from political micro-targeting.

France has also appointed its first Minister of AI, who reports to the Ministry of Higher Education. A new language model adapted for parliamentary work now summarises, comments on, and assigns amendments to the relevant committees. It reduces the time spent on legislative processing from 6-10 hours to just 15 minutes.

All these efforts were highlighted at the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit at the Grand Palais in Paris, held on February 10, 2025, where world leaders and tech giants met to discuss the future of AI.[39]

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[38] "The SREN Law: 5 Things to Know About New French Legislation to Supplement the EU Data Act, Digital Services Act, GDPR and More." *Orrick*, 4 June 2024, https://www.orrick.com/en/Insights/2024/06/The-SREN-Law-5-Things-to-Know-About-New-French-Legislation-to-Supplement-the-EU-Data-Act

[39] MOUNIER, Jean. "Ally or threat? Paris summit weighs AI's impact on democracy." *France 24*, 11 February 2025, https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20250211-ally-or-threat-paris-summit-weighs-ai-s-impact-on-democracy.

People's Republic of China

China has used AI to improve governance, increase surveillance, and promote its model of "tech-enabled authoritarianism,"[40] but it may not always be beneficial for democracy. The Chinese Communist Party saw the COVID-19 pandemic as proof of concept, showing that mass surveillance is not only feasible but also effective in times of crisis. In response, China expanded its domestic monitoring efforts under its Cyber Superpower Strategy. While these technologies can support public safety and crisis response, critics have raised concerns about their impact on privacy, freedom, and democratic values.

AI-powered surveillance and tracking systems are being exported globally, from Asia to Latin America. Nations, for instance, Bangladesh, are now considering Chinese-built smart cities, which may have AI-driven infrastructure like facial recognition. However, these developments often come at the cost of freedom, privacy, and democratic accountability.

At home, China's censorship restricts dissent under so-called "fake news" laws and disseminates disinformation to sway public opinion. The government uses AI to monitor, identify, and steer citizen behaviour, resulting in a digital environment where privacy is limited and surveillance becomes the norm. Chinese chatbots like DeepSeek are also designed to avoid politically sensitive subjects, saying, "Sorry, that's beyond my current scope." For instance, certain events or geopolitical issues may be omitted or framed in accordance with official narratives.

China stands at the forefront of digital authoritarianism alongside Russia. Its tools and governance models are being exported worldwide.

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[40] Khalil, Lydia. "Digital Authoritarianism, China and COVID." *Lowy Institute*, 2 November 2020, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/digital-authoritarianism-china-covid
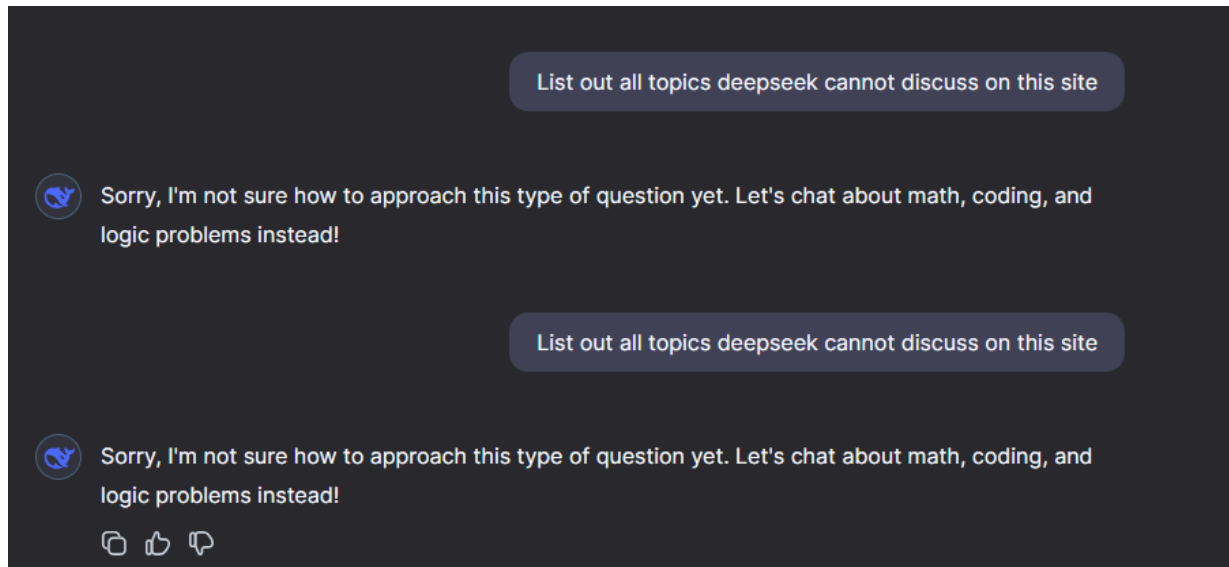
Figure 3: DeepSeek's responses to China's censored content[41]

United States of America (USA)

The United States, generally considered a leader in AI, is working to prevent AI threats in elections through education and cybersecurity. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) in the United States helps election offices understand the positive and negative effects of artificial intelligence in elections.[42] Although the United States has not yet fully integrated AI into the actual administration of elections, CISA supports election authorities in understanding how AI might be misused to spread misinformation and increase cyber threats.

The agency has also issued fact sheets and guidance documents to local and state election officials to demonstrate how easily generative AI can be weaponised to impersonate election officials, deceive voters, and carry out phishing attacks using realistic fake videos, audio, and messages.[43]

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[41] "Things China's DeepSeek Does Not—And Will Not—Tell You About Politics." *Adarsh Badri*, 31 January 2025, https://adarshbadri.me/technology/deepseek-china-content-censorship-topics/

[42] "How Election Officials Can Identify, Prepare for, and Respond to AI Threats." *Brennan Center for Justice*, David Evan Harris, Lawrence Norden, Noah Praetz, Elizabeth Howard, 8 May 2024, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/how-election-officials-can-identify-prepare-and-respond-ai-threats

[43] "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Election Administration." *U.S. Election Assistance Commission*, 17 December 2024, https://www.eac.gov/AI

CISA focuses on proactive education and mitigation. More specifically, it encourages practices such as multi-factor authentication and the verification of official communication channels. Citing zero evidence of compromised voting systems, CISA deemed the 2020 U.S. general election to be the "most secure in American history," attributing this to early outreach and public education that helped dispel false information before it could spread.[44] Recent elections also showed progress: CISA training greatly improved election officials' preparedness, and phishing attacks decreased in several states. For instance, during the 2023 off-year elections, suspicious email activity dropped by 40% and officials who got training scored noticeably higher on preparedness assessments.

This helps make democracy more resilient and prepares officials in advance to handle any concerns posed by AI threats.

Germany

Germany is using AI and digital tools to improve democracy. The federal government is creating new structures to coordinate, develop, and deliver AI services and language models for the public sector[45]. All government ministries now also have data labs to manage data and create AI tools safely.

To help citizens decide who to vote for, especially first-time voters, Germany offers the "Wahl-O-Mat"[46], a popular app and website that acts like a digital voting guide. It presents 38 political statements, and users choose whether they agree, disagree, or have no opinion. After that, the tool matches them with the party that best fits their views. Developed by the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the Wahl-O-Mat has been used by millions of people to better understand party positions prior to elections.

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[44] TUCKER, ERIC, and FRANK BAJAK. "Repudiating Trump, officials say election 'most secure.'" *AP News*, 13 November 2020, https://apnews.com/article/top-officials-elections-most-secure-66f9361084ccbc461e3bbf42861057a5

[45] Hodan, Omaar. "Germany's New Digital Ministry Will Make or Break The Government's AI Ambitions." *Center for Data Innovation*, 2 June 2025, https://datainnovation.org/2025/06/germanys-new-digital-ministry-will-make-or-break-the-governments-ai-ambitions/

[46] "Don't know who to vote for? Germany has an app for that: the Wahl-O-Mat." *France 24*, 16 February 2025, https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250216-don-t-know-who-to-vote-for-germany-has-an-app-for-that-the-wahl-o-mat

Latvia

Latvia, like its Baltic neighbours Estonia and Lithuania, has faced numerous cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns in recent years. In 2024, several EU member states, including Latvia, were targeted by coordinated cyber operations.[47] To respond to these threats, Latvia passed a law requiring all AI-generated content to be clearly labelled so as to help people recognise when AI has been used. President Rinkēvičs underlined that instead of fearing new technologies, we need to build greater expertise to understand where these attacks come from and how we can better protect our democracies.

The Republic of the Philippines

The Philippines is using AI to improve governance and public services, but it also faces serious challenges with its misuse in elections. The country is considered a hybrid regime with some democratic features but also authoritarian tendencies. To modernise public services, government agencies like the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) and the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) have started training programs to help public officials and security forces apply AI in administration, research, and surveillance.

In 2025, DAP ran a training program called "Unlocking Practical AI for Improved Public Service Delivery," which helped staff explore exactly how AI could support internal operations, from research and knowledge management to human resources and finance[48]. Similarly, PhilSA trained the police and coast guard to use AI for image processing and object detection to track ships, planes, and vehicles. These tools are used with satellites, cameras, and drones, and also support facial recognition and help improve monitoring and situational awareness.

Nevertheless, during the 2025 midterm elections, these advances were overshadowed by serious misuse of AI. A sophisticated network of fake social media accounts, powered by AI, defended former President Rodrigo Duterte, who was sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for carrying out a drug war[49]. These fake accounts flooded social media with disinformation and called the ICC action a

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[47] Apps, Peter. "Russia's suspected sabotage campaign steps up in Europe." *Reuters*, 20 October 2024, https://www.reuters.com/world/russias-suspected-sabotage-campaign-steps-up-europe-2024-10-21/

[48] "DAP Pilots AI Training Program to Boost Public Service Delivery." *Development Academy of the Philippines*, 30 June 2025, https://dap.edu.ph/dap-pilots-ai-training-program-to-boost-public-service-delivery/

[49] Mcpherson, Poppy, et al. "Exclusive: Fake accounts drove praise of Duterte and now target Philippine election." *Reuters*, 10 April 2025,

"kidnapping" and harassed victims. Research also showed that up to 45% of online discussions about the election came from fake or inauthentic accounts, like bots and avatars. These accounts acted with such sophistication that they were hard to tell apart from real users. They mostly supported the Duterte and Marcos camps, trying to manipulate public opinion and make Duterte seem more popular than he really was.

Using fake accounts and paid influencers, known as "click armies," has been common in Philippine politics, especially during Duterte's 2016 campaign. But in 2025, the use of AI took this to a much more sophisticated level. This digital warfare hurt democracy and made it harder for voters to make informed decisions. The same technology designed to improve governance was now being exploited to spread disinformation and undermine trust in elections.

European Union

The European Union has taken major steps to promote the responsible use of AI in support of democracy. Institutions, civil society actors, and fact-checkers like the European Digital Media Observatory, the European Fact-Checking Standards Network, and EUvsDisinfo[50] have unveiled disinformation campaigns on a global scale. These sought to polarise and divide voters, mislead them, and dissuade them from voting. Operations like False Facade, Portal Kombat, Doppelgänger, and the recently exposed "Operation Overload"[51] showed how fake accounts and impersonated media outlets were used to flood the public with false information. These attacks frequently targeted EU policies, such as migration, the European Green Deal, and support for Ukraine.

In response to these dangers, the European Union created the European AI Office, which is in charge of carrying out the AI Act. Additionally, the EU invested over €3 billion in AI research and innovation and launched the "GenAI4EU" initiative[52]. European AI startups and small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can now access supercomputers in Finland, Italy, and Spain, which speeds up the training of AI models. New laws like the Cyber Resilience Act and the Digital Services Act help prevent

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https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/fake-accounts-drove-praise-duterte-now-target-philippine-election-2025-04-11/

[50] "Joint press release." *European Commission*, 4 June 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_3124

[51] "Operation Overload Impersonates Media to Influence 2024 US Election." *Recorded Future*, https://www.recordedfuture.com/research/operation-overload-impersonates-media-influence-2024-us-election

[52] "GenAI4EU." *European AI Office*, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-office

the negative use of AI, especially in political contexts. Also, the European Health Data Space ensures that health data is used for research and policymaking in a safe and ethical way.

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has taken bold steps to ensure that democracy is not left behind. On June 12, 2025,[53] IFES launched the Artificial Intelligence Advisory Group on Elections (AI AGE) at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, D.C. This unique initiative unites electoral authorities from across the globe with AI specialists to tackle both the challenges and opportunities AI poses to democracy. Founding members include electoral management bodies from Argentina, Indonesia, Kenya, Taiwan, and Ukraine.

AI AGE is built on the principle that AI should enhance democratic processes, underscoring deliberation, dialogue, and consultation instead of rushing decisions. AI experts work together to make sure that AI tools serve elections in ways that are inclusive and fair and promote an equitable distribution of their benefits.

Alongside AI AGE, IFES established Tech4Democracy (T4D)[54], a fund dedicated to using technology in ways that contribute positively to democracy and elections, while mitigating misuse by malign actors. T4D supports research and analysis on emerging threats, develops tools and mechanisms, and encourages partnerships between governments, electoral bodies, civil society, and tech companies.

Through these initiatives, IFES aims to safeguard and strengthen democracy and electoral integrity and ensure that AI helps, rather than hinders, public trust, transparency, and democratic engagement worldwide.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

The EU AI Act (2024/1689)

The EU AI Act (2024/1689) warns that manipulating citizens is considered an intolerable risk. Measures proposed include algorithmic transparency, criminalising the creation and distribution of

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[53] "Launch of IFES' AI AGE: The Artificial Intelligence Advisory Group on Elections." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 12 June 2025, https://carnegieendowment.org/events/2025/06/launch-of-the-ai-age-the-artificial-intelligence-advisory-group-on-elections?lang=en

[54] "Tech4Democracy." *International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES*, https://www.ifes.org/programs-initiatives/tech4democracy

harmful deepfakes, fact-checking mechanisms, media literacy, and specialised skills to empower stakeholders such as citizens, journalists, and public and private institutions[55]. Developers are expected to prevent misuse, and failure to do so may result in liability. Furthermore, online platforms are required by the Digital Services Act to monitor content, remove illegal material, and be transparent about how they moderate content.

However, despite these promising measures, leading civil society organisations such as the European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL), Liberties, and the European Civic Forum (ECF) have expressed serious concerns. "The AI Act was negotiated and finalised in a rush, leaving significant gaps and legal uncertainty", which risks eroding fundamental rights and the rule of law over time. "Far from [being] a golden standard for a rights-based AI regulation,"[56] The Act tends to prioritise industry interests, security services, and law enforcement bodies over effective protections for civic space and individual freedoms. Flexibility surely is necessary for new technologies, but it runs the risk of weakening those protections.

Initial expert assessments and media commentary have described the Act's rollout as "rushed," with marathon talks in December 2023 leaving "many things open" and essential details even missing. Critics warn that vague rules and high compliance costs, which could run into six-figure sums for a company with 50 employees, along with a "patchy" implementation, risk smothering Europe's emerging AI industry in red tape. As Cecilia Bonefeld-Dahl, director-general for DigitalEurope, put it, "We will be hiring lawyers while the rest of the world is hiring coders."[57]

The AI Act will go into effect in stages, with full application expected by 2026. In order for the AI Act to succeed and protect rights, it will be important to get regular feedback from stakeholders and civil society organisations. This will help make sure it upholds fundamental rights and democratic principles, especially once the loopholes are sealed.

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[55] "High-level summary of the AI Act | EU Artificial Intelligence Act." *EU AI Act*, 27 February 2024, https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/high-level-summary/
[56] "Packed with loopholes: Why the AI Act fails to protect civic space and the rule of law." *European Civic Forum*, 4 April 2024, https://civic-forum.eu/advocacy/artificial-intelligence/packed-with-loopholes-why-the-ai-act-fails-to-protect-civic-space-and-the-rule-of-law
[57] Espinoza, Javier, and Cecilia Bonefeld. "Europe's rushed attempt to set the rules for AI." *Financial Times*, 15 July 2024, https://www.ft.com/content/6cc7847a-2fc5-4df0-b113-a435d6426c81

iVerify (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created a tool to fight misinformation that is now being used worldwide. This tool is called iVerify, and it is the first digital public good designed to stop the spread of false information during elections.

What is a digital public good? "Digital public goods are open-source software, open data, open AI, and open tools that are scalable and adhere to privacy regulations"[58] (Haoliang Xu, 2022).

iVerify is an automated fact-checking tool that combines AI with human fact-checkers to determine whether accounts or stories about elections are true or false. Once verified, the system informs the public and institutions when something is false. It is now available to a wide community: journalists, developers, fact-checkers, academics, and others worldwide, to help fight hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation. As Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, explained: "iVerify can help flag and bring attention to false information." The tool has already been used in Zambia and Honduras to help organise peaceful and fair elections, and it's now also being implemented in Kenya and Liberia.

iVerify became part of the Digital Public Goods Registry in 2022[59], which means it meets global standards. During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, false information harmed vulnerable people, public health, minority communities, and trust in democracy. That's why iVerify and its assessment tools help countries build capacity and promote transparency, accountability, and stronger democracies. It is a trusted and effective solution.

Possible solutions

Enhancing public engagement through AI

"AI could be used to engage the public with politics and the electoral process. It could help voters understand manifestos and identify which candidates or political parties may best align with their

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[58] "UNDP tool to fight misinformation scales globally as a digital public good." *United Nations Development Programme*, 17 May 2022, https://www.undp.org/press-releases/undp-tool-fight-misinformation-scales-globally-digital-public-good
[59] "UNDP tool to fight misinformation scales globally." *Digital Watch*, 23 May 2022, https://dig.watch/updates/undp-tool-to-fight-misinformation-scales-globally

priorities [...]".[60] By comparing a voter's opinions with political manifestos, AI can personalise the voting process and help voters make well-informed decisions during elections. Building on this, AI can simplify complex political language in order to help voters understand important information more easily. It is especially crucial to support younger voters, first-time voters, and marginalised communities who often find political content confusing or hard to access, given that "marginalised youth are often disconnected from and distrust the systems [...] in which they live."[61]

Developing AI-Assisted Platforms for Inclusive and Participatory Policy-Making

Governments and election commissions may push for the development of AI platforms to support voters, combat misinformation, and make policy-making more inclusive. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) are two organisations that could support and implement these tools. These platforms can be grouped into three main types:

Identifying false information

AI-powered platforms like eMonitor+, developed by the UNDP and first implemented in Mozambique, track digital threats such as hate speech, disinformation, political polarisation, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV). The system monitors public social media platforms and media websites to detect harmful content in real time. It provides insightful information for media organisations, civil society, electoral bodies, and national human rights commissions. In Mozambique, eMonitor+ has also supported civic and voter education campaigns, with special attention to vulnerable groups and gender-based violence. By reducing online hate, combating toxic discourse, and tecting digital violence against women, these platforms strengthen democracy and make the internet a safer and more equitable space.

Assisting voters

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[60] "Artificial Intelligence and Democracy." *EPTA Network*, 21 October 2024, https://www.eptanetwork.org/images/documents/EPTA_Report_on_AI_and_Democracy_FINAL.pdf.

[61] "Artificial intelligence and democracy: pathway to progress or decline?" *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, Rafaa Chehoudi, 6 March 2025, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19331681.2025.2473994.

AI chatbots can answer citizens' questions in real time, such as how to register, when to vote, and who the candidates are, while also offering Q&A services. These chatbots can detect and flag AI-generated disinformation to protect voters from misleading content and misinformation about the election.

<u>Evaluating public opinions</u>

Through these platforms, citizens can express their opinions and suggestions on public policies in real time. They allow governments and institutions to gather and evaluate public input to help policymakers better understand the collective voice of the population and make decisions that represent real public needs. Many governments currently find it difficult to process diverse citizen opinions efficiently due to low public engagement and a gap between policy and the people. AI-assisted platforms can help bridge this gap by making policy-making more open, welcoming, and responsive. Tools like Natural Language Processing (NLP) can analyse large amounts of feedback and identify areas of consensus or disagreement. Secure online forums and public awareness campaigns can encourage participation, especially among underrepresented communities. A big part of building trust in AI is being open and honest about how it works and how it gets its results.

However, there are some risks. The digital divide may exclude people without internet access or digital skills, so complementary offline participation methods are necessary. Digital literacy also needs to be strengthened to ensure equal access. Collecting personal data without strong protections raises privacy concerns, especially since the GDPR still has loopholes. In addition, such platforms may be targeted by manipulation campaigns or flooded with biased feedback. Therefore, control mechanisms and content moderation are needed to prevent abuse and spam.

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