

## When does an AI serve the public interest? New platform shows global projects and criteria

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*With the [publicinterest.ai Interface](#), the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society (HIIG) is taking a pioneering step towards creating a community for artificial intelligence (AI) in the public interest. The website provides insights into the global design and implementation of such AI technologies, serving as a growing contact point for science and society on this topic. All interested parties can find out which conditions should determine whether an AI system is in the service of the common good in a society. The publicly accessible data of the website is derived from the research group Public Interest AI led by Dr. Theresa Züger, with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Germany.*

In recent years, many projects have emerged across the globe that are labelled as “AI for the social good”, “AI for the common good” or “AI in the public interest”. To help foster research on these initiatives, the [publicinterest.ai Interface](#) features an interactive global map with detailed descriptions of their objectives, methods and frameworks. Furthermore, a stakeholder index gathers and displays information about organisations in research, politics, industry as well as civil society involved in the discourse on public interest AI (abbreviated to PIAI). Such involvement may take various forms – from funding for individual initiatives to NGO activities.

For Dr. Theresa Züger, the [publicinterest.ai Interface](#) is a constantly growing project. Because “defining public interest AI is as difficult as it is crucial for our society and it requires a long-term collective contribution from all parties to sharpen the edges of our explanation”, says the research group lead. “Our goal with the [publicinterest.ai Interface](#) is therefore to stimulate a participatory and critical exchange with politics, science and civil society in order to jointly push the potential of AI technologies for the common good”, stresses Prof. Dr. Jeanette Hofmann, founding director of HIIG. The global map and the stakeholder index are open for submission and all actors are welcome to browse, connect, and contribute to the shaping of the discourse on PIAI.

### **A Working Definition of Public Interest AI**

To shed light on what “public interest” means with respect to AI projects, the [publicinterest.ai Interface](#) offers a working definition. It identifies six conditions that are crucial for the process of developing and implementing systems that serve the common good. These conditions are: justification, equity, participatory design / deliberation, technical standard / safeguards, open for validation and sustainability.

This working definition functions as a starting and reference point for further research and can be used by decision makers as a guide to test whether and how public-interest-oriented an AI system indeed is. All texts are also available in simplified language and accessible to the broader public.

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### About the Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society

The [Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society \(HIIG\)](#) researches the development of the internet from a societal perspective. The aim is to better understand the digitalisation of all spheres of life. As the first research institute in Germany to focus on internet and society, HIIG has established an understanding that emphasises the embeddedness of digital innovations in societal processes. As a node in the [Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet & Society Research Centers](#), an initiative of scientific institutions worldwide in the field of interdisciplinary research on internet and society, the institute is trying to develop a European perspective on digital transformation.

HIIG was founded in 2011 by the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the University of the Arts Berlin and the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, in alliance with the Hans-Bredow Institute for Media Research in Hamburg as an integrated co-operation partner. The research directors of the institute are Prof. Dr. Jeanette Hofmann, Prof. Dr. Björn Scheuermann, Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Schildhauer and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schulz.

### About the AI & Society Lab

The [AI & Society Lab](#) is an inter- and transdisciplinary research laboratory at the interface between research, industry and civil society. It explores the societal changes and challenges that arise from the introduction of artificial intelligence in political, social and cultural processes. The Lab aims to initiate new connections and productive exchanges between stakeholders and to enrich the discourse around AI with contributions that enable conscious and informed policy-making processes, for example through academic publications, multi-stakeholder workshops, public events or media productions.