



2024 AI Report

# The power of perspectives in Canada





# Contents

Artificial intelligence: Hopes, fears and opportunities in Canada	3	The results: Hopes, fears and experiences of AI in Canada	6
What is Responsible AI?	4	Conclusion and recommendations	14
Engaging customers and communities in our approach to Responsible AI	5	References	16



# Artificial intelligence: Hopes, fears and opportunities in Canada

Artificial intelligence (AI) will impact all of us. In an era of rapid technological innovation, AI is one advancement with the potential to benefit our communities and make the world a better place for generations to come.

We believe that the known risks and challenges of this new technology can be overcome through collaboration and dialogue. However, dialogue – and the perspective gained by it – has been lacking in the development of AI to date. Discussions around AI regulations, norms and best practices have been missing the much-needed perspective that conversations with the wider community can provide.

As a global-leading technology company driven by social purpose, TELUS recognized in early 2023

that there was an opportunity to start this dialogue with everyday Canadians. Ethics, transparency, consent and a commitment to keeping humanity in the loop are the basis for sustainable technological innovation and advancement. By sharing the results of these discussions and amplifying diverse voices, we hope that AI development and application can be rooted in trust and better reflect the needs and values of more people.

This report summarizes the results of TELUS' efforts to ensure different backgrounds, communities and perspectives on AI are heard. It highlights the thoughts of roughly 5,000 Canadians – their concerns, optimism and opinions on where this powerful technology should be headed.

**Let's make the future friendly, together.**

*This work was completed from June to December 2023. It was led by the Data Ethics team of the TELUS Data & Trust Office in collaboration with the TELUS Research & Insights Centre of Excellence and Angus Reid for TELUS.*

## Understanding the data

The quantitative statistics presented in this report are from a research study of 4,909 Canadians who are members of the Angus Reid Forum (in field October 20-27, 2023), with boosts in key demographic groups. This number includes a sample of the population of Canada that matches the census in terms of age, gender, and region, as well as boosted samples of key equity deserving groups and Indigenous Peoples. We use the term “respondents” when referring to the results reflecting the population of Canada as a whole, and otherwise indicate the specific group where applicable. Additional context was collected through qualitative research including interviews, focus groups and discussion events.

Learn more at [telus.com/ResponsibleAI](https://telus.com/ResponsibleAI)

*Please note: Quotes in this report are from research respondents, who are kept anonymous. Some of these quotes have been edited for length and clarity.*

# What is Responsible AI?

AI is a technology designed to mimic human tasks through machine learning and automation. By training machines to find meaningful patterns in information, AI can perform these tasks on a much larger scale than is possible by humans alone.

When used responsibly, AI has the potential to deliver incredible social benefits. This technology can be used to increase community wellbeing, generate revenue and inclusive growth, and improve health outcomes across the globe. According to the Responsible AI Institute, Responsible AI allows organizations to build, operate and scale AI systems that earn trust and empower people and businesses.

These outcomes are possible when fairness, transparency, explainability, security, privacy and reliability are addressed using a human-centred approach. Truly Responsible AI is collaborative. By working together, organizations, experts and governments can build AI literacy, standards and best practices that will help us unlock the full potential of the technology for the benefit of all.





# Engaging customers and communities in our approach to Responsible AI

TELUS has been committed to the practice of Responsible AI since 2019, using a human-centred approach guided by research with Canadians. You can learn more about this commitment at [telus.com/trust](https://telus.com/trust).

As AI technology impacts everyone in different ways, it's important to engage in dialogue with all Canadians – particularly those in equity-deserving groups. Active listening and engagement are essential to build trust.

Multiple initiatives in 2023 supported dialogue with our customers and communities, including the following.



Participating in key forums for responsible innovation like [Collision](#), [Elevate](#) and [Indigenomics Bay Street](#)



Hosting an academic salon in December 2023



Adopting an inside-out approach to our research process by opening our dialogue within TELUS, starting with our diverse [team member-led resource groups](#)



Conducting a quantitative research study of representative samples of 4,909 Canadians who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#)

## Amplifying Indigenous and equity-deserving perspectives

Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our work on data ethics is an ongoing commitment made in our [Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan](#). The need for listening and co-development with Indigenous Peoples is also identified by the [Public Awareness Working Group of Canada's Advisory Council on Artificial Intelligence](#).

To give voice to a wide set of interests, this research also explores the viewpoints of equity-deserving groups, including racialized groups, Black women, older Canadians, new Canadians, youth, people with physical disabilities, and the LGBTQ2S+ community.

# The results: Hopes, fears and experiences of AI in Canada

When everyday Canadians were asked to share their thoughts on AI, we heard excitement about its potential to increase productivity and support important medical discoveries. We also heard fears and concerns, some based on lived experiences and the use of new AI tools and technologies. But notably, despite a steady stream of media coverage, only 1% of respondents identified AI as the single biggest challenge for Canada, ranking housing, the economy and climate change higher on the list. We were encouraged by the willingness of respondents to be open with their opinions, and intrigued by the varying perspectives they provided.

“ I fear that AI will create less need for people to think on their own. ”

“ I think AI has the potential to be highly beneficial for society if used appropriately. ”



## Trust is crucial

In our conversations about AI, many expressed that because AI is developed and controlled by humans, they believe it will be trustworthy. In our quantitative research, respondents said that they consider human oversight essential to maintain this trust into the future:



More than 90% strongly agree that the development of AI must be guided by ethical principles



Almost half believe that AI governance should include community consultation to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered and bias is minimized



78% agree that AI should be regulated in Canada, with the majority expecting strict regulations around its development and usage



There is concern about the governance of data and the output of AI, including how it will be used by social media platforms



“

AI is only as good as the people designing it and using it. Representation while creating AI technology is the only way to ensure that it is empowering.

## Keeping the public informed and involved

Throughout our conversations, Canadians indicated that they expect AI to be part of their everyday life, if it isn't already. Those currently using generative AI applications report finding them helpful to support tasks such as brainstorming, writing communications and validating software code.

Information is key in the further adoption of AI: respondents hope to learn how the technology works, how data is used, and to understand its potential impacts. Based on their current understanding of AI, many are cautiously optimistic about its development, highlighting issues of privacy, copyright, cultural appropriation and a need for regulation.

“ Education is important. With new technology, we need to know what it can do so we don't dismiss risks as implausible if they are already reality. ”

## Fears around the impacts of AI

Respondents expressed some concern that AI could become too powerful and control our lives in a negative way:

- Many are afraid that AI could negatively impact the economy and lead to job loss
- Those working in creative fields are concerned about their work being stolen or their jobs becoming obsolete because of AI
- There are also concerns about deep fakes, biases in data, copyright infringement, privacy invasion and misuse of the technology

“ Taking jobs from people is what worries me the most about the rise of AI. ”

## Concerns of discrimination

On the topic of AI and discrimination, our research uncovered that:

- 1 in 5 have personal experience of discrimination from AI technology, including misrepresentation, stereotyping, and reduced access to resources and opportunities
- 61% of respondents identifying as LGBTQ2S+ fear that AI may be used against certain people and communities
- There is hope within the community that responsibly designed AI tools could actually mitigate bias and support diversity and inclusion efforts

“ This could be a life changing tool for marginalized communities, especially people who have experienced strong biases in the healthcare fields. ”



## Governance and regulation of AI development

There is a consensus that the development of AI should be regulated to reduce potential bias and discrimination. The majority of respondents believe that this regulation should be government-led, with 2 in 3 suggesting that input is needed from professionals in data ethics, legal and academia; while fewer think it's important to include those from impacted communities.

## How organizations use AI

Canadians are uncertain about which major companies are currently using AI, or how they should be using it. While most feel that technology-focused companies use AI, 1 in 3 admit they don't know which ones.

Respondents feel the use of AI is more acceptable in fields like education and research (52%), internet applications (54%) and online shopping (51%), and less acceptable in banking (32%) and social media (30%).

## The importance of human oversight

To provide context for our respondents, various examples of current and potential uses of AI were provided. When given an example of a healthcare provider using AI to detect potentially cancerous cells, more than 75% of respondents agreed that human oversight would be necessary. Similar results were seen across examples of other high-stakes use cases in healthcare, as well as crime identification and identity theft.

However, respondents didn't think that human oversight was important in all industries, with retail use cases like grocery stores and shopping malls being ranked the least important. When given an example of a grocery store using AI to analyze shopping habits and offer customized coupons to customers based on reward card data, only 26% of respondents saw human oversight as necessary.

The percentage of respondents who feel the use of AI is acceptable, based on the field.



**75%**  
High-stakes healthcare



**54%**  
Internet applications



**52%**  
Education and research



**51%**  
Online shopping



**32%**  
Personal banking



**30%**  
Social media

## Voices of underrepresented and equity-deserving groups

To support the inclusive development of AI, we sought out self-identified members of various underrepresented groups<sup>1</sup> to share their thoughts on AI. These snapshots provide valuable insights and highlight what is important to consider in the responsible development of AI.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Government of Canada's mandate on research design: "Underrepresentation refers generally to groups or individuals from groups who, due to both formal and legal restrictions and to systemic barriers, have lacked access to full participation in a given organization, community or discipline..."

### Respondents who identify as physically disabled

- 19% have used a device with AI technology that helped them overcome a barrier caused by their disability
- 15% have experienced a time when they were unable to use an AI-powered device due to their disability. Common issues cited include inaccurate predictive text, limited customization and inability to recognize speech patterns.
- 65% want to be consulted in the development of AI and related policies

“

While trying to interact with an AI phone service, I get disconnected when I can't answer fast enough because of my disability. I have to get a friend or family member to assist me.

### Youth aged 12-17 (engaged with parental consent)

- 54% have used AI to help with assignments or homework
- 53% believe that their teacher will notice if AI is used for schoolwork
- 45% have experienced an increase in in-class assignments
- 37% are allowed to use AI for classes, assignments and homework
- 71% are excited about what the future of AI might look like
- 80% expect their generation will have to fix problems left behind by the current usage of AI
- 82% are worried about deep fakes

“

When I use AI, I wonder about how it works - if it is this good at giving answers now, what is it going to look like in 10 years?

### Respondents aged 65+

- 33% don't consider AI biased against them, but most are in favour of regulation to avoid bias
- 76% believe they're going to be left behind as AI technology evolves

“

It would be great if AI could be used to catch scammers who tend to prey on seniors.

### Respondents who identify as LGBTQ2S+

- 79% feel aware and informed of AI
- 81% believe that AI should be regulated
- Many believe that AI brings risks of misinformation, a lack of transparency and job replacement

“

AI assumes that the average user is a heterosexual male or female of European or American descent. Right from the start, this perpetuates bias in all responses.

### Respondents who identify as a member of a racialized group

- 47% use AI at least once a week
- 42% feel that AI is biased against themselves and their peers
- Many identified a need for voice and image recognition technologies to reflect all identities in support of representation and inclusivity
- This community shows a strong belief that AI brings risks of mass surveillance

“

AI cannot understand my accent.

### Respondents who identify as Black women

- 54% feel that AI is discriminatory toward themselves and their peers
- 77% believe that biases in AI will perpetuate social injustices if not developed responsibly

“

AI chat generators sometimes use racist or misogynistic terminology.

### Respondents with a low annual household income (less than \$25K)

Many believe that AI brings the risk of worsening existing inequalities like access to benefits, but may actually improve equality in healthcare and education.

“

AI could provide a better and easier life, but only once other social needs are met. AI managing my grocery store trips makes no sense if I can't afford groceries.

### New Canadians (less than 5 years in Canada)

- 58% use AI at least once a week and believe it has a positive impact on their life
- 34% feel they have experienced discrimination from AI when applying for jobs
- 69% are excited for the future of AI development

“

AI biases could become an obstacle to new immigrants trying to find a home, get a job and settle in Canada without contacts and resources.” AI chat generators sometimes use racist or misogynistic terminology.

## Respondents who identify as Indigenous Peoples

As part of our Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan, TELUS has committed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into our AI and data ethics strategy, and we continue to push for innovation and creativity by listening to the needs of Indigenous Peoples.

To begin to understand these needs when it comes to AI, we engaged Indigenous Peoples through a number of forums including the TELUS Indigenous Advisory Council and Indigenomics Bay Street. Our initial conversations revealed that:

- 35% feel that AI is biased against them
- Many are optimistic that AI presents economic opportunities, but emphasize the importance of data sovereignty
- Community members feel that Elders and Knowledge Keepers should be consulted to ensure Indigenous perspectives and certain traditions are integrated into the AI ecosystem
- There are general feelings of mistrust around AI, with concern that it will be used as a tool of colonialism, making existing inequities and marginalization worse
- Members of this community are less likely to feel that AI developers will include them in conversations or take the needs of their specific communities into account
- There is concern around cultural appropriation and exclusion

These conversations have highlighted the importance of engaging the public in the development of the AI ecosystem, and we look forward to continuing public consultations in 2024.



Photography: Meziadin Lake Provincial Park, B.C. | Credit: Ryan Dickie, Fort Nelson First Nation  
Artwork: syó:qwem | The Sun kwexta'lsp | Ovila Mailhot, nłaka'pamux And stó:lō Nation.

# Conclusion and recommendations

Before beginning this work, we knew how important it was to bring Canadians from all walks of life into our conversations around AI.

While it's probably no surprise that the different voices in this research shared similar hopes and fears, the most important feature of this work has been ensuring that Canadians recognize the importance of efforts to create meaningful dialogue in the development of new technology. This learning can be applied in the processes of organizations of any size. In this way, we can all work toward a sustainable, friendly future leveraging new and exciting technology, all while building trust in our digital world.

Despite the prominence of AI in national news, Canadians expressed a lack of education on the topic, and the majority of respondents didn't perceive it as an immediate concern (although they

shared some strong opinions). The new capabilities and ultimate value of AI depend on improved education and access, which, if continued, will create conditions for better understanding and equity around the technology.

As a technology company, TELUS is deeply aware of the ethical challenges that come with AI. However, being aware of bias and discrimination isn't a substitute for experiencing it firsthand, so hearing about the lived experiences of those who have encountered it in their interactions with AI was, and is, essential. We are encouraged by the desire of many Canadians to continue participating in the conversation around AI, indicating that this dialogue should continue.

Throughout this report, we have presented snapshots from a diverse set of voices to share differing perspectives and views on AI. These

conversations attempted to mitigate the risk of projecting assumptions about individual experiences, which can lead to unethical outcomes. It's essential that AI doesn't become a tool for amplifying historical inequities or further polarizing diverse groups. Together, we can collaboratively design and implement an ethical and accessible AI ecosystem that prioritizes human values.

“ It's essential that AI doesn't become a tool for amplifying historical inequities or further polarizing diverse groups. ”

Our efforts over the course of this year are a starting point. We suggest the following considerations and practices to continue this work of bringing diverse voices and communities into AI initiatives.

01

### **Bridge educational gaps for inclusive participation**

When having conversations about Responsible AI practices, it's important to address and reduce barriers to encourage meaningful participation. Discussions with diverse communities about AI development and initiatives reveal opportunities for education and AI literacy within those groups. Bridging these gaps will lead to greater understanding and participation in AI development and use. The CIFAR Destination AI course and TELUS Wise Responsible AI Workshop for teens are useful for those interested in learning more about AI. You can find these resources at [telus.com/ResponsibleAI](https://telus.com/ResponsibleAI)

02

### **Harness the power of lived experiences**

The development and implementation of AI involves not just the technology that powers it, but the lived experiences of the people who design, use and interact with it. The positive impact that AI can have on society will be maximized if we listen to those who have had negative experiences of bias and discrimination, and work alongside them to create AI that is more inclusive of everyone it affects.

03

### **Build expertise together**

AI has the potential to impact all areas of life; social, cultural, political and economic. There is an opportunity to serve the greatest good if we can bring together multiple points of view and expertise to determine how and where AI is implemented and managed. Engaging with multi-disciplinary experts can strengthen insights and inform the responsible development and use of AI.

04

### **Cultivate lasting connections**

Including diverse community perspectives in AI development doesn't have a timeline or end date, and as we advance the technology forward, we must continue to create space to listen and learn from the people impacted by it. As people's experiences with and understanding of AI technology evolve, so too will the impact of their perspectives on the development and evolution of the technology. To ensure the responsible development and adoption of AI, it's important that we continue to create long-term relationships and work with all communities affected by this ultimately promising, nascent technology.



# References

Angus Reid Forum. (2023). Artificial Intelligence: A deep dive into hopes, fears, and opportunities in Canada. A quantitative research study of representative samples of 4,909 Canadians who are members of the Angus Reid Forum, including boosted samples of equity deserving groups and Indigenous Peoples. [Survey data set].

CIFAR Destination AI  
<https://cifar.ca/ai/destinationai/>

Collision Conference 2023, Toronto, ON, Canada.  
<https://collisionconf.com/>

Elevate Conference 2023, Toronto, ON, Canada.  
<https://elevate.ca/>

Government of Canada. (2023, February 10). Advisory Council on Artificial Intelligence, Public Awareness Working Group, Government of Canada.  
<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/advisory-council-artificial-intelligence/en/public-awareness-working-group>

Government of Canada. (2023, July 7). Best practices in equity, diversity and inclusion in research practice and design, Appendix A, Definitions.  
<https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/nfrf-fnfr/edi-eng.aspx?wbdisable=true#6>

Indigenomics Bay Street Conference 2023, Toronto, ON, Canada.  
<https://indigenomicsinstitute.com/events/bay-street/>

TELUS (2023). 2023 Indigenous Reconciliation & Connectivity Report.  
<https://www.telus.com/en/social-impact/connecting-canada/indigenous-reconciliation>

TELUS. (n.d.). Team member-led resource groups.  
<https://www.telus.com/en/about/diversity-and-inclusion/team-member-resource-groups>

Young, M., Magassa, L., & Friedman, B. (2019). Toward inclusive tech policy design: A method for underrepresented voices to strengthen tech policy documents. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 21, 89-103.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-019-09497-z>

The TELUS team acknowledges that our work spans many Territories and Treaty areas and we are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are with us today, those who have gone before us and the youth who inspire us. We recognize the land and the benefits it provides all of us, as an act of Reconciliation, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on, work on or are visiting.



