

AI AND BIG DATA IN THE UK

28 June 2019

The UK is a significant jurisdiction for artificial intelligence (AI) and "big data". Home-grown AI-driven companies include DeepMind, Benevolent AI, FiveAI and Oxbotica, and centres of academic excellence in AI and big data include the Alan Turing Institute. AI and big data are hot areas for all industries; notable sectors seeing intense investment include automotive, "FinTech" and pharma.

AI and big data are together one of the four focuses of the UK Government's current industrial strategy, which aims to "put the UK at the forefront of the artificial intelligence and data revolution".^[1] State funding has been made available for AI projects, such as three consortia developing autonomous vehicles,^[2] and £45 million is to be allocated for 200 extra PhDs in AI and related disciplines.^[3]

The Government is actively engaging with industry via the Law Commission and industry-focused departments, such as the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. The latter is producing guidance on topics including testing^[4] and cybersecurity^[5] for autonomous vehicles. Principle 1 in the guidance on cybersecurity is that "organisational security is owned, governed and promoted at board level". Some specific legislation has been passed, such as that regarding the insurance and liability regime for autonomous vehicles.^[6]

A £10 million "Regulators' Pioneer Fund" is intended to "support UK regulators to develop innovative approaches to emerging technologies", building on "sandbox" approaches

successfully used by financial and energy regulators.^[7] The Science and Technology Committee of the House of Commons (the lower chamber of the UK Parliament) has concluded an inquiry into the economic, social, ethical and legal aspects of robotics and AI.^[8] The House of Lords (the upper chamber of the UK Parliament) appointed a Select Committee on AI, which has reported on codes, legal liability, bias, autonomous weapons, criminal misuse, social impact and other aspects of AI.^[9]

The UK is currently subject to European Union (EU) legislation concerning AI and big data, including the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and potentially, in time, the new Copyright Directive approved in April 2019 by the European Parliament. Even if the UK leaves the EU (i.e. in some form of "Brexit"), the legislature may choose to remain aligned with such provisions, and companies doing business in both the UK and the EU are likely to need to comply in any case.

This text first appeared in the [UK chapter of Global Legal Insights - AI, Machine Learning & Big Data 2019](#), published by Global Legal Group, Ltd. Follow the link to the full chapter covering regulation, data protection and intellectual property.

Footnotes

[1] Her Majesty's Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future, 2017, page 10.

[2] Such as [UK Autodrive](#).

[3] Her Majesty's Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future, 2017, page 39.

[4] E.g., Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Code of Practice: Automated vehicle trialling, February 2019.

[5] Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, Guidance: The key principles of vehicle cyber security for connected and automated vehicles, 6 August 2017.

[6] See the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018.

[7] Her Majesty's Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future, 2017, page 39.

[8] See [Robotics and artificial intelligence inquiry](#).

[9] Artificial Intelligence Committee, [AI in the UK: ready, willing and able?](#) Report of Session 2017-19, published 16 April 2017 - HL Paper 100.

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