RESPONSIBLE ADOPTION OF AI: A CLOUD-CENTRIC APPROACH





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INTRODUCTION

With the exponential growth in the use of algorithms there is an acute need to ensure that such systems are governed appropriately. Indeed, precipitated by high-profile cases of harm, such as bias in Al-driven uses in recruitment and criminal justice contexts, there is an active legislative debate^{[1][13]} concerning the regulation and risks of Al. In this paper, we provide an overview of the move towards Responsible AI, with a particular focus on the adoption of cloud technology. We begin by outlining the general risks endemic to algorithmic systems, outlining the potential financial and reputational costs that algorithmic systems can cause to commercial enterprises, particularly as the importance and scope of algorithmic systems increase (section 2.1). We then turn to cloud-based AI in particular, to provide a more specific analysis of the risks and benefits of the field (section 2.2). Accordingly, this paper introduces the need for Responsible AI, which we use to denote the field of development towards regulated and safe algorithmic systems. To this end, we envision a new field: algorithmic auditing. As we set out in this paper, the purpose of algorithmic auditing is to perform ex ante assessments of the levels and types of risks in particular algorithmic systems, as well as to provide recommendations of risk mitigation and prevention strategies (section 2.3). Following our outline of the field, we survey the key technical risks and mitigation strategies (section 3): bias and discrimination (section 3.1); performance and robustness (section 3.2); interpretability

and explainability (section 3.3); and privacy (section 3.4). Thereafter, we offer three case studies to illustrate these risks, as well as strategies for risk-assessment and monitoring for each (section 4): video analytics (section 4.1); document digitisation (section 4.2); and trading signals across energy and bond markets (section 4.3).

Our main takeaways are the following: (a) the use of algorithmic systems-particularly in the context of cloud computing-occasions financial, reputational, and ethical risks; (b) a system of algorithmic auditing can provide effective assurance of the robustness, transparency, fairness, and privacy of an algorithmic system; (c) we envision the emergence of a new industry of algorithmic auditing and assurance at the centre of an ecosystem of trust in Al.

BACKGROUND

In this section, we provide a precis of the field of Responsible AI, by mapping the risks of algorithmic systems. We begin with a general assessment of algorithmic systems, before introducing a more specific assessment of cloud-based algorithmic systems. Thereafter, this section provides an overview of algorithmic auditing – a new field of risk-assessment and management for algorithmic systems.

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RESPONSIBLE AI

Business reliance on algorithmic systems is set to become ubiquitous. Al is estimated to contribute approximately \$16 trillion to global GDP by 2030^[14]. The commercial value of algorithmic decision and evaluation systems can be summarised as follows:



Volume: An increase in technical knowledge of and resources invested in algorithmic systems will cause an exponential proliferation of algorithms into the billions in commercial application.



Velocity: Algorithms make decisions at unobservable speeds, including decisions about financial allocation, often with no human intervention.



Variety: Algorithms are wide-ranging in commercial application (employment, finance, resource management, etc.) and will become ubiquitous in almost every part of an enterprise.

Veracity: The reliability, accuracy, and compliance of algorithms is increasingly becoming key to the management of commercial enterprises.



Value: The proliferation of algorithmic systems will create new services, sources of revenue, new sources of profit and cost-saving, and industries^[7].

Algorithms will be ubiquitous, making billions of decisions with minimal or no human intervention, including decisions with important financial, legal and political implications^[7]. Despite the transformative potential of algorithmic systems, the reach of their effects – combined with the paucity of supervision – carries with it the risk of major financial and reputational damage^[15]. Vokswagen's Dieselgate scandal^{(16]} (with fines of \$34.69B) and Knight Capital's bankruptcy (with ramifications exceeding \$400M) are two high-profile examples of the potential costs of adopting unsafe algorithmic systems^[17].

In light of the various activities and high-profile cases of harm and public interest^[18], a community and literature has emerged that can broadly be encompassed by the phrase 'Responsible Al' (synonyms of which can be referred to as 'Al Ethics', 'Trustworthy Al', 'Al Safety' etc). Stakeholders in this debate include government, industry and academia. Indeed we read the space as having gone through three stages of evolution, namely: a principles phrase, where the impetus was to articulate and publish statements of principles to ensure responsible use of AI^{[1][19][20]}; a processes phrase, where the impetus was to build processes whereby 'ethical by design' could be achieved (in situ)^[21]; and, finally, an audit and assurance phrase^[22], where systems should be assessed and reported upon with respect to their performance and in accordance with developing public standards (such as legislation or authoritative policy recommendations).

In particular, the current phrase (audit and assurance) is maturing insofar as frameworks of assessment and reporting are being proposed and contested. In this paper we structure our discussion on our readings of the best-in-class governance approaches - however, we recognise that there remains significant outstanding debate (See ^{[23], [24], [25], [26]}).

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INDUSTRY USE-CASES

In this section, we present some AI use-cases as seen in industry. In particular, we highlight some of the risks associated with deploying AI for those use-cases, for which a Responsible AI approach would be appropriate to measure, mitigate and control those risks.

> FINANCIAL SERVICES

The financial services industry has witnessed widespread adoption of AI, with the Bank of England and the UK's Financial Conduct Authority jointly released publication "Machine learning in UK financial services" identifying that two thirds of UK financial services respondents had already deployed machine learning in their businesses as of 2019. As noted in the same year, "AI has the potential to supercharge financial services and transform the way services are delivered to customers" which we see as particular attractive to an industry that faces both competitive and regulatory pressures.

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Al use-cases



Algorithmic trading:

Al can be deployed across a range of market facing functions within the trading operations of financial markets participants, including investment banks, asset managers and inter-dealer brokers. Broadly, such Al comprises algorithms that either seek to

- » Execute human-specified market orders in the most efficient way possible where the desire might be to minimise market price impact or to target a specific price reference (for example, the Volume-Weighted Average Price, or VWAP, over a given time period), or
- » Identify asset price discrepancies, driven by analysis of the prices of related assets, news feeds or economic measures, amongst other sources. The identification of such opportunities can lead to the automated execution of trades that seek to benefit from the discrepancies.



Fraud detection:

The use of AI for fraud detection is widespread across the financial services industry, with retail banks relying on AI to identify unexpected behaviour across customers' current accounts and credit cards, investment banks using AI to spot changes in client and counterparty behaviour together with their Anti-Money Laundering teams, and insurers using AI to fight against fraudulent insurance claims. In all cases, AI allows the financial services firms to act at a scale and speed which not only was previously unavailable but also could match the increasing sophistication of those looking to commit fraud.



Credit scoring:

Al is being increasingly used to determine financial services customers' access to credit whether delivered as loans, mortgages, or credit cards. Although such Al use is often only an evolutionary step beyond the statistical methods previously used, Al's deployment can nevertheless yield models that make better predictions and can avail of more diverse data sources. Notably, Al can surface latent features that can be used to determine creditworthiness, from datasets that were hitherto unavailable to firms' credit teams.

>Risks

Financial services' Al use-cases collectively raise concerns with respect to a number of risks. Given the highly regulated nature of the industry certain technical risks are more prevalent than others, notably Privacy (given the sensitive nature of the data underpinning the Al, whether data pertaining to individuals or Undisclosed Price Sensitive Information), and Explainability and Robustness (both given the high stakes nature of several financial services' use cases), together with Financial and Regulation risks. With regards to the use-cases described above, particular risk concerns are:

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Algorithmic trading

- » Robustness It is important that the algorithm maintains target performance levels under a wide set of circumstances and is adaptable to changes in market paradigm (for example, moving through different parts of the market cycle, withstanding shocks such as war, disaster, pandemics)
- Financial With the large amounts of capital that can be deployed directly or indirectly by the algorithm, underperformance or unexpected behaviour can lead to outsized financial impacts for the financial services firm and other market participants;





Fraud detection

- » Efficacy The AI system's performance is key. Manifest failure to identify fraudulent transactions leads to direct financial costs for the financial services firm, whilst high levels of incorrect identification of transactions as being fraudulent can lead to a poor customer experience
- Privacy The AI system necessarily needs to consume a significant amount of financial data for each customer which can be a target for bad actors for purposes including identity theft;



Credit scoring

- » Bias Ensuring that the system demonstrates credit decisions which do not unfairly discriminate based upon protected characteristics, whether ethnicity, gender, age or otherwise, is key, especially given the impact on an individual's life chances that such decisions might have
- » Regulation With such a system being "high-risk" under the EU's proposed AI Act, it is anticipated that the system will be subject to increased levels of regulatory scrutiny.



> CONSUMER PACKAGED GOODS

Certain leading Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) companies have already deployed AI successfully which, together with advanced analytics deployment, have led to revenue, productivity, and marketing expenditure improvements^[64]. Meanwhile, 83% of retailers and CPG firms formerly surveyed declared that AI would become a "mainstream technology" for them in 2021, with the same survey reporting that current benefits for those already deploying AI include improved customer experience, enhanced employee upskilling, improved decision-making, and risk reduction. AI provides CPG firms with benefits including accurate forecasting, improved supply chain management and enhanced targeting of scarce resources.

Al use-cases



Supply chain management:

Al can be used at all stages of a CPG firm's product life cycle, from the identification of market opportunities and expected demand, to the core supply chain function of raw material sourcing, product manufacture and push to vendors, followed by success criteria analytics. Deploying Al in the supply chain allows CPG firms to better anticipate potential disruptions to the front-to-back process of taking goods to market and take preventative actions. The improved decision-making capability that Al delivers increases efficiency and reduces wastage by helping to deliver the correct products to the correct outlets at the correct time.



Product recommendation:

The use of Al for the recommendation of CPGs is already widespread, whether that comprises online basket completion (to suggest products typically purchased at the same time by other customers), beauty product recommendation that uses computer vision to analyse customers' skin characteristics, or food recipe suggestions in response to customer questionnaire completion, amongst others. In all cases, Al enables consumers to benefit from insights achieved from analysing the CPG firms' interaction with their wide customer base. Moreover, Al allows fastchanging consumer trends to be quickly and efficiently factored into the relevant algorithms ensuring that recommendations remain relevant.



Automated order fulfilment:

With the high turnover of CPGs, and especially the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) subset, product reordering on the part of outlets is a typically human capitalintensive process for which AI solutions are well suited. Where previous automated solutions may have solely relied on data generated at the electronic point of sale terminal (EPOS), AI not only allows for smarter re-ordering that considers product trends and seasonality, but allows for additional data insights using, for example, computer vision technologies that track customer journeys through outlets, positioning of goods in-store and on-shelf stock levels. The automated generation of stock orders facilitates more timely and more accurate outlet orders of CPGs.

> Risks

Consumer Packaged Goods firms' use of Al gives rise to a range of risks. For those use-cases that are most missioncritical for the firms, notably those use-cases concerned with the supply chain, the ability of the Al system to maintain the desired level of performance across a broad set of circumstances, including shocks, (Robustness) is the key concern. Moreover, given the use of such systems for decision support, it is imperative that the systems' users can both interpret and identify issues with the system's outputs (Explainability). With regards to the use-cases described above, particular risk concerns are:

» Supply chain management

- Robustness As above, ensuring that the system meets its key performance indicators (KPIs) across a wide set of feature inputs is paramount. Moreover, maintaining performance as circumstances change (for example, due to geopolitical impacts to raw material supply or changes in consumer behaviour) is a key concern
- Regulation With the system relying on business sensitive data, input data, output data and model leakage can all result in the release of price sensitive information for the CPG firm, which can result in censure from financial regulators;

» Product recommendation

- Privacy To generate recommendations, the Al system might rely upon customers' personal data or even sensitive personal data. Moreover, even where sensitive personal data does not form part of the system's inputs, the system might nonetheless be able to infer it
- Bias It is important that recommendation systems show similar levels of performance for all groups of users, with customers expecting recommendations to be relevant irrespective of the customers' personal characteristics;

» Automated order fulfilment

- Financial It is important that the AI system both orders the goods that are needed by outlets and does not order goods which would fail to sell, especially where goods are either perishable or otherwise have only a restricted shelf-life. In both cases, retail space is used inefficiently leading to either forgone revenue opportunity or outright financial loss
- Explainability Where outlet staff use the AI system for decision support, it is important that the system's outputs are readily understandable to those staff and that the staff can identify and challenge any system outputs that are incorrect.



CLOUD-BASED AI: BENEFITS AND RISKS

Cloud-based AI brings together two technologies that have witnessed widespread growth and adoption during the past decade. By way of example, total AI startup funding worldwide has grown from 670 million U.S. dollars in 2011 to 36 billion U.S. dollars in 2020, and 38 billion U.S. dollars in the first half of 2021 alone (see^[27]), whilst infrastructure-asa-service's (laaS) industry value is predicted to exceed 623 billion U.S. dollars by 2025, from a level of around 12 billion U.S. dollars in 2010.

Whilst the benefits and risks of both of these technologies have separately received attention (see^[7] for a survey of risks pertaining to AI, and^[28] for a discussion of benefits and risk pertaining to cloud computing), the bringing together of the two technologies, through the implementation of machine learning operations (MLOps) via a cloud provider's laaS offering, highlight certain aspects for particular attention. In the following, the benefits and risks of implementing AI in the cloud versus implementation on-premises are discussed in turn. It should be noted that only those aspects particularly exacerbated by the confluence of AI and cloud are set out, and that a wider reading is required (for example, how data science, in the absence of AI, and cloud come together) to gather a more complete understanding of the benefits and risks of implementing AI in the cloud. This section ends with a short discussion that considers the balance of the benefits and risks.



> **BENEFITS**

We see the benefits of implementing AI in the cloud as falling into four broad categories:



Cost

- » Efficient use of computing capacity: on-premises data centres typically only use 12-18%^[29] of their server capacity whilst the largest cloud providers can realise higher utilisation rates (40-70%)^[29], in part due to load sharing across time zones and smart resource allocation. Such efficiency massively reduces the amount of hardware needed to support machine learning operations.
- » Energy efficiency: training machine learning (ML) models can be especially energy-intensive. For example, it is estimated that training OpenAI's GPT-3 natural language model consumed approximately 190,000 kWh^[30] of electricity. Large cloud providers maximise building design and location (for climate, water supply for cooling and renewable energy generation co-location) to minimise non-renewable energy demand.



Operations

- » Pushing ML operations to the cloud removes an outsized on-premises operations overhead, reducing machine learning package and dependency installations, hardware and software conflicts, and ML-specific vulnerability updates.
- » With AI in the cloud typically provided as ML as-aservice, the on-premises ML engineering requirement is reduced and can be re-deployed.



Robustness

 Cloud-based AI utilises robust model backup protocols by design, ensuring business continuity in the event of failure and protecting against high model re-training costs.



Privacy

- » Moving ML operations to the cloud allows the user to benefit from best-in-class enterprise data protection and privacy infrastructure, noting that the creation of inference data, particular to Al, can contain sensitive personal data which did not form part of the input data to the Al model.
- » Machine learning implementations have an outsized number of software dependencies which create vulnerabilities to privacy and data attacks. The AI cloud offering abstracts away the intensive software monitoring and update requirement^[31] for the user which is a key mitigation against such attacks.

> Risks

We see the risks of implementing AI in the cloud as presenting across five broad categories:



Efficacy

» Cloud-based AI offerings suffer from increased latency^[32] at model inference time when compared to on-premises implementation. With machine learning models, and in particular large, deep learning models, already suffering from a certain increased amount of latency as compared to simpler data retrieval tasks, the AI use-case can be sensitive to any further increase. For example, this would be a particular issue for fast market trading operations within the financial services industry, for whom latency is a key competitive differentiator (cf. stock exchange co-location)^[33].



Robustness

- » Cloud-based AI does not provide certainty of computing capacity. This can be particularly acute when external shocks (e.g. pandemic, geopolitical action) require multiple AI cloud users to simultaneously and reactively re-train their ML models, and can result in sizeable financial losses for those users unable to re-train in a timely manner.
- » The cloud-based AI business continuity process might fail in the event of the cloud provider entering into forced liquidation or being subject to lawful restriction.



Privacy

- » Cloud-based AI necessitates data and information transfer between the user and the cloud provider generating a new point of data protection vulnerability, especially as compared to a fully internal on-premises implementation.
- » ML models can contain training set data, either by design (e.g. Support Vector Machine, k-Nearest Neighbours) or through overfitting. Moreover, ML models' outputs (predictions or inference results) can contain sensitive personal data even where the data input to the models contained none. In addition to standard security protocols around the data input to the model (both during training and inference), cloud-based Al needs to protect against these further Al-specific data risks.
- » Cloud-based AI must have query-monitoring capabilities in place to protect against model and functionality extraction, both of which might form the user's competitive advantage.



Explainability

 The cloud-based Al's user does not have direct access to the model, data and time-stamped snapshots of both.
 This can inhibit the provision of acceptable explanations (pertaining to model predictions) on a post-hoc basis.
 Moreover, this adds to regulation risk when such explanations are in response to regulatory requests.



Regulation

» The generation of personal sensitive data by ML models can lead to regulatory scope that is beyond the Al cloud provider's standard regulatory overhead, generating regulation risk for the user.

> Commentary

Although the risks section above apparently outweighs the benefits section, it should be noted that a number of the risks are anticipated to dissolve as cloud-based AI matures. In particular, the concerns around privacy, explainability and regulation should be well addressed in the coming years as the specific risks pertinent to AI come into focus. The efficacy and robustness risks are by design and less straightforward to mitigate. Such limitations will inevitably lead to certain AI use-cases proving non-viable via a cloud platform. Conversely, the benefits of implementing AI in the cloud are already well-understood and the reduction in cost and operational overhead, combined with outsourcing much of the risk mitigation surrounding AI to scale providers, outweighs the associated concerns for the majority of usecases.



AI AUDITING AND ASSURANCE

Towards the end of achieving Responsible AI, we envision a new field: algorithmic auditing and assurance. The development of this field will operationalise and professionalise current theoretical research in Responsible AI, AI Ethics, and Data Ethics^[7]. The purpose of AI auditing and assurance is to provide standards, practical codes, and regulations to assure users of the safety and legality of their algorithmic systems.





Algorithmic auditing is composed of four stages of activity:



Development: An audit will have to account for the process of development and documentation of an algorithmic system.



Assessment: An audit will have to evaluate an algorithmic system's behaviours and capacities.



Mitigation: An audit will have to recommend service and improvement processes for addressing particular high-risk features of algorithmic systems.



Assurance: An audit will be aimed at providing a formal declaration that an algorithmic system conforms to a defined set of standards, codes of practice, or regulations. The purpose of this process is to produce an ecosystem of Trustworthy and Responsible AI, in which algorithmic systems have been been properly appraised (as per stages 1 and 2), all plausible measures for reducing or eliminating risk have been undertaken (as per stage 3), and users, providers, and third-parties (including governments) have been assured of the systems' safety (as per stage 4).

In section 3, we survey the risks and mitigation strategies that will provide the content of the above stages of activity to constitute an algorithmic audit.

KEYTECHNICAL RISKS AND MITIGATION

In this section, we cover the stages of model development and how they interact with the key risk levers. Thereafter, the section deep-dives into each of the risk levers while mapping technical criteria and solutions to each of them.

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Regardless of the algorithm, broadly speaking, there are five stages of Model Development:

- 1. **Data and Task Setup:** Collecting, storing, extracting, normalising, transforming, and loading data. Ensuring that the data pipelines are well-structured, and the task (regression, classification, etc.) has been well-specified and designed. Ensuring that data and software artefacts are well documented and preserved.
- 2. **Feature Pre-Processing:** Selecting, enriching, transforming, and engineering a feature space.
- 3. **Model Selection:** Running model cross-validation, optimization, and comparison.
- 4. **Post-Processing and Reporting:** Adding thresholds, auxiliary tools and feedback mechanisms to improve interpretability, presenting the results to key stakeholders, evaluating the impact of the algorithmic system on the business.
- Productionising and Deploying: Passing through several review processes, from IT to Business, and putting in place monitoring and delivery interfaces. Maintaining an appropriate record of in-field results and feedback.

Although these stages appear static and self-contained, in practice they interact in a dynamic fashion, not following a linear progression but a series of loops, particularly in between Pre/Post-processing. In the table below we also list how each stage interacts with four key risk levers:

- » Privacy: Quality of a system to mitigate personal or critical data leakage.
- » **Fairness:** Quality of a system to avoid unfair treatment of individuals or organisations.
- » Explainability: Quality of a system to provide decisions or suggestions that can be understood by their users and developers.
- » Robustness: Quality of a system to be safe, not vulnerable to tampering.



Stage	Explainability	Robustness	Fairness	Privacy
Data and Task Setup	Data collection and labelling	Data Accuracy	Population balance	DPIA
Feature pre-processing	Dictionnary of variables	Feature engineering	fair representations	Data minimisation
Model selection	Model complexity	Model validation	fairness contraints	Differential privacy
Post-processing and Reporting	Auxiliary tools	Adversarial testing	Bias metrics assessments	Model inversion
Productionizing and Deploying	Interface and documentation	Concept drift detection and continuous integration	Reai-time monitoring of bias metrics	Rate-limiting and user's queries managment

In a similar fashion to the stages, each lever appears to be self-contained, but these are also interrelated. Though the research on each vertical is mostly conducted in silos, there is a growing reckoning from the scientific and industry community of the Trade-offs and Interactions between them. Accuracy, a component of robustness, may need to be traded for lowering any existing outcome metric of bias; making the model more explainable may affect the system performance and privacy; improving privacy affects ability to assess the impact of algorithmic systems. Optimisation of these features and tradeoffs will depend on multiple factors, notably the use case domain, the regulatory jurisdiction, and the risk appetite and values of the organisation implementing the algorithm.



FAIRNESS AND BIAS

Fairness is defined as absence of any prejudice or favouritism towards an individual or a group based on their inherent or acquired characteristics. All fairness concepts fall under dimension of scope i.e., individual fairness, subgroup fairness & group fairness., or dimension of measure i.e., statistical, similarity based & causal reasoning.

Fairness as an ideal has been present in different manifestos and charters throughout history, gradually amplifying its outreach across the population, with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) being the most recent and overarching example.

Most of the legal basis was developed after multiple public demonstrations, civil rights movements, etc. and are in many situations set or upheld at constitutional levels. We can mention a few across different countries: US: Civil Rights Act (1957 and 1964), Americans with Disability Act (1990); UK: Equal Pay Act (1970), Sex Discrimination Act (1975), Race Relations Act (1976), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Equality Act (2010); and those enshrined in the constitutions of France, German, Brazil, and many other countries. Indeed, it is suffice to say that notions of fairness appeal to substantive value claims rooted in differing philosophical approaches and traditions – as such there are often ambiguous interpretations of the word 'fairness'.

Typical problems that get exacerbated due to unfair decisions are

- Unfair allocation of opportunities, resources, or information
- » Failure to provide the same quality of service
- » Reinforcing existing societal stereotypes
- » Over- or underrepresentation of groups of people

Bias is defined as an anomaly in the output of machine learning algorithms. These could be due to the prejudiced assumptions made during the algorithm development process or prejudices in the training data.

There are different types of Bias that can creep in during each stage of the AI lifecycle:

- » Representation Bias: Based on the sample taken from the population to create a dataset.
- Aggregation Bias: It arises during model construction where distinct populations are inappropriately combined.
- » Human Review: The reviewer might override a correct model prediction based on their own systemic bias.

Considering the datasets used for model training in particular, in AI and ML there are multiple sources of bias that explain how an automated decision-making process becomes unfair:

- **Tainted Examples:** Any ML system keeps the bias existing in the old data caused by human and societal biases (e.g. recruitment).
- » Skewed Sample: Future observations confirm predictions made, which create a perverse, or self-justifying, feedback loop (e.g. police record).
- » Limited Features: Features may be less informative or reliably collected for minority group(s).
- Sample Size Disparity: There is far less training data coming from the minority group than coming from the majority group.
- Proxies: Even if protected attributes are not used for training a system, there can always be other proxies of the protected attribute (e.g. neighbourhood).

To diagnose and mitigate bias in decision-making, we first need to differentiate between Individual and Group level fairness: (i) Individual: seeks for similar individuals to be treated similarly; and (ii) Group: split a population into groups defined by protected attributes and seeks for some measure to be equal across groups. There are multiple ways to translate these concepts mathematically and deciding which definition to use must be done in accordance with governance structures and on a case-by-case basis. Also, within Group fairness, it is possible to distinguish between the aim of Equality of Opportunity and the aim of Equality of Outcome.



For example, using SAT score as a feature for predicting success in college:

- Equality of Opportunity: This worldview says that the score correlates well with future success and there is a way to use the score to correctly compare the abilities of applicants. A mathematical definition that is often used is the Average Odds Difference^[36] which compares both the false positive rates and the true positive rates between the population groups, and for which a value of zero implies that bias is absent.
- Equality of Outcome: This worldview says that the SAT score may contain structural biases so its distribution being different across groups should not be mistaken for a difference in distribution in ability. Statistical Parity Difference ^[36] is generally the most adopted form to capture this idea, and computes the ratio of the rate of successful outcomes between two population groups, with a value of one implying the absence of bias.

Calibration is also capable of perpetuating pre-existing biases. It should be noted that fairness could be interpreted very differently in different environments and different countries and hence one deployment of a given algorithm may encounter several different fairness measurement barriers.

Finally, it's perhaps worth noting that it is not mathematically possible to construct an algorithm that simultaneously satisfies all reasonable definitions of a "fair" or "unbiased" algorithm.

Regardless of the measure used, algorithm bias can be mitigated at different points in a modelling pipeline: Preprocessing, In-Processing, and Post-Processing. The table below presents a snapshot of different methodologies to mitigate bias in Al systems.

Stage	Ŧ	Technical Solution
Pre-processing	(Q)(Q)	 Reweighing subjects Oversampling Minority Group Disparate Impact Remover Learning Fair Representations
In-processing		 Adversarial Debiasing Regularisation Approach Fairness Constraint Counterfactual Fairness
Post-processing		Calibrated Equality Of OddsReject Option Classification

Table. Modelling stage and different technical solutions for algorithm bias and discrimination.

PERFORMANCE AND ROBUSTNESS

Performance and Robustness as a technical concept is closely linked to the principle of prevention of harm. Systems should neither cause nor exacerbate harm or otherwise adversely affect human beings. This entails the protection of human dignity as well as mental and physical integrity. Preventing harm can also entail consideration of the natural environment and of the living world. Most of the legal basis is established by an interaction between Regulatory Agencies, Professional Associations and Industry Trade Groups, where standards, rules and codes of conduct are created:

- » Financial algorithms: SEC, FCA, FSB, BBA, BIS
- » Power systems: FERC, IEEE
- » Electrical appliances: NIST, National Fire Protection Association, State Legislation
- » Automotive sector: National Transportation Safety Board, Soc Auto Engineers



Algorithm Performance and Robustness is characterised by how effectively an algorithm can be deemed as safe and secure, not vulnerable to tampering or compromising of the data they are trained on. We can rate an algorithm's performance and robustness using four key criteria:

- Resilience to attack and security: AI systems, like all software systems, should be protected against vulnerabilities that can allow them to be exploited by adversaries, such as data poisoning, model leakage or the infrastructure, both software and hardware. This concept is linked with the mathematical concept of Adversarial Robustness^[38], that is, how would the algorithm have performed in the worst-case scenario? (e.g. how the algorithm would react during the 2008 Financial Crisis?).
- Fallback plan and general safety: Al systems should have safeguards that enable a fallback plan in case of problems. Also, the level of safety measures required depends on the magnitude of the risk posed by an Al system. This notion is strongly associated with the technical concept of Formal Verification^[37], which in broad terms means: does the algorithm attend to the problem specifications and constraints? (e.g. respect physical laws).

- Accuracy: Pertains to an AI system's ability to make correct judgements, for example to correctly classify information into the proper categories, or its ability to make correct predictions, recommendations, or decisions based on data or models. Accuracy as a general concept can be quantified by estimating the Expected Generalization Performance^[39], which means that in general the question of "how well the algorithm works?" is asked (e.g. in 7 out of 10 cases, the algorithm makes the right decision).
- Reliability, Reproducibility & Replicability: For any scientific enquiry, reliability, reproducibility and replicability are key. These aspects depend on three core elements of any model: data, code & environment. A reliable Al system is one that works properly with a range of inputs and in a range of situations, whilst reproducibility in a machine learning workflow means that every phase of either data processing,

ML model training, and ML model deployment should produce identical results given the same input. Replicability means that the same conclusions or outcomes can be found using slightly different data or processes. Without reproducibility, model performance can't be verified. Without replicability, it is difficult to trust the models based on findings of either specific project outcomes or a single study. See ^[66] for further exposition.

This idea is tied with the software engineering concept of Continuous Integration^[40], that is, is the algorithm auditable? (e.g. does it reliably reproduce its decisions).

Each technical criterion embodies several technical mitigation strategies (table below). These technical strategies can aid the analyst in measuring the expected generalisation performance, detecting concept drifts, avoiding adversarial attacks, and having best practices in terms of systems development and algorithm deployment.

Criteria		Contract Solution
Expected Generalisation Performance		 Cross-validation: k-fold-cv, leave-one-out, etc. Covariance-penalty: Mallow's , Stein Unbiased Risk Estimator Concept drift: gradual mitigation, abrupt correction, \ pre-emptive detectio
Adversarial Robustness		 Evasion attacks: fast gradient sign method, DeepFool, etc. Defence: label smoothing, variance minimization, Ther mometer Encoding, etc.
Formal Verification	$\overset{\diamond}{\bigtriangledown}$	 Complete: Satisfiability Modulo Theory, Mixed Integer Programming, etc. Incomplete: Propagating bounds, Lagrangian Relaxation, etc.
Reliability and Reproducibility		 Data & pipeline versioning : Data Version control, Pachyderm, Kubeflow Code versioning: Git (Github), Mercurial (BitBucket), etc. Hyperparameter tuning : Optuna, Sigopt Experiments tracking and logging: Neptune, MLflow, Comet. Reproducible analysis: Binder, Docker, etc. Automated testing: Travis CI, Scrutinizer CI, etc. Model Serving : Kubeflow, Cortex, Seldon

Table. Mapping technical criteria and solutions for algorithm robustness and performance.

INTERPRETABILITY AND EXPLAINABILITY

Being able to provide clear and meaningful explanations is crucial for building and maintaining users' trust in automated decision-making systems^[41]. This means that processes need to be transparent, the capabilities and purpose of systems openly communicated, and decisions – to the extent possible – explainable to those directly and indirectly affected. Without such information, a decision cannot be duly contested. The ultimate user benefits from being able to contest decisions, seek redress, and learn through user-system interaction; the developer also benefits from a transparent system by being able to "debug" it, to uncover unfair decisions, and to effect knowledge discovery.



Hence, the capabilities and purpose of algorithms should be openly communicated, and decisions explainable to those directly and indirectly affected in a timely manner and adapted to the expertise of the stakeholder concerned (e.g. layperson, regulator, or researcher). In the US, credit scoring has well-established right to explanation legislation via The Equal Credit Opportunity Act (1974). Credit agencies and data analysis firms such as FICO comply with this regulation by providing a list of reasons (generally at most four, per interpretation of regulations) to support their decisions. From an AI standpoint, there are new regulations that give the system's user the right to know why a certain automated decision was taken in a certain form - the "Right to an Explanation" under the EU General Data Protection Regulation (2016).

In the context of AI and ML, Explainability and Interpretability are often used interchangeably. Algorithm Interpretability is about the extent to which a cause and effect can be observed within a system, and the extent an observer is able to predict what will happen, for a given set of input or algorithm parameters. Algorithm Explainability is the extent to which the internal mechanics of an ML (deep learning) system is explainable in human terms. In simple terms, Interpretability is about understanding the algorithm mechanics (without necessarily knowing why) or the ability to present the relationship between algorithm's inputs and outputs in understandable terms to a human.; Explainability is being able to explain what is happening in the algorithm or the ability to provide the factors influencing model outcomes. There are multiple ways to generate and provide explanations based on an algorithmic decisionmaking system. Types of explanation can be classified in the following ways:

- » By model: Intrinsic or Post hoc
- » By method: Model-agnostic or Model-specific
- » By scope: Global or Local
- » By result: How explanations can be presented

The figure at the start of this section presents two of these classification types and models or explanation techniques the different classifications demand: model-specific and agnostic, global and local^{[42][43]}. Below we unwrap these concepts, as well as outline some technical solutions:



Model-specific (intrinsic): With model-specific explainability, a model is designed and developed in such a way that it is fully transparent and explainable by design. In other words, an additional explainability technique is not required to be overlaid on the model in order to be able to fully explain its workings and outputs.

Model-agnostic (post-facto): With model-agnostic explainability, a mathematical technique is applied to the outputs of any algorithm including very complex and opaque models, in order to provide an interpretation of the decision drivers for those models.

Global: This facet focuses on understanding the algorithm's behaviour at a high/dataset/populational level. The typical users are researchers and designers of algorithms, since they tend to be more interested in the general insights and knowledge discovery that the model produces, rather than specific individual cases.

Local: This facet focuses on understanding the algorithm's behaviour at a low/subset/individual level. The typical user

of local explanations are individuals being targeted by an algorithm, as well as members of the judiciary and regulators trying to make a case about potential discrimination.

It is important to note that the explainability requirements may be different for different regions and different use cases. This means that the same approach may not be applicable in all contexts of deployment of a given algorithm.

Most interpretability and explainability enhancing strategies occur at the in-processing and post-processing stage (table below). We can split the procedures mainly in the model-specific and model-agnostic axis, with all modelspecific approaches being able to provide global and local explanations by design (in-processing). Model-agnostic procedures act as a post-hoc 'wrapper' around an algorithm, with some techniques only focusing on local explanations (e.g. LIME) or global explanations (e.g. Partial Dependency plots). The mitigation strategies need to take into account the use case domain and level of risk, the organisation's risk appetite, all applicable regulation and laws, and values/ ethical considerations.

Table. Modelling stage and different technical solutions for algorithm explainability and interpretability.

Stage	F	Technical Solution
In-processing/ Model-specific		 Rule-based explanations: decision trees, rule-induction methods Model's coefficients: linear regression, linear discriminant analysis Nearest prototype: k-nearest-neighbour, Naïve-Bayes
Post-processing/ Model-agnostic		 Surrogate explanations: LIME, Explainable Boosting Machines, PIRL Perturbation: Gradient-based Attribution Methods, Permutation Importance, SHAP Simulation analysis (what-if?): counterfactual explanations and algorithmic recourse

ALGORITHM PRIVACY

From the principles level, privacy is closely linked to the principle of prevention of harm^[44]: systems can cause or exacerbate adverse impacts due to asymmetries of power or information, such as between employers and employees, businesses and consumers or governments and citizens. Preventing harm demands bespoke data governance that covers the quality and integrity of the data used, its relevance considering the domain in which the algorithm will be deployed, its access protocols and the capability to process data in a manner that protects privacy. There are different types of adversarial threats

Evasion attack: Here attacker perturb inputs of the machine learning model and corrupts the output of machine learning model. (Modifying inputs to influence model)

Poisoning attack: Here attacker will manipulate the training data set and when model is trained based on that then outcomes are lower performance, and it opens vulnerabilities / backdoor for the attacker. (Modifying training data to add backdoor)

Extraction attack: Here attacker will be querying the model to steal its features to create replica and steal the design of the model. (Steel a proprietary model)

Inference attack: Here attacker queries the model to infer the sensitive data (example PII data) that was part of training data and thereby learns about those. (Learn information on private data) It is possible to group these issues in two key areas:

- Privacy and data protection: Systems must guarantee privacy and data protection throughout a system's entire lifecycle^{[45][46]}. This includes the information initially provided by the user and the information generated about the user over the course of their interaction with the system. Finally, protocols governing data access should be put in place, outlining who can access data and under which circumstances^[47].
- Model inferences: The security of any system is measured with respect to the adversarial goals and capabilities that it is designed to defend against. In this sense, one needs to provide information about: (i) the level of access the attacker might have ('black-box' or 'white-box'); (ii) where the attack might take place (inference or training); and (iii) passive versus active attacks^[48].

Therefore, the risk assessment of Algorithm Privacy can be disentangled into 'data', 'algorithm', and the interaction between both components. Below we outline the key methods available to assess risks coming from each of these elements:

Data: The standard procedure to assess risks in this vertical is the Data Protection Impact Assessment^[49]. This procedure has been legally formalised in many jurisdictions, such as in the EU, UK, Canada, California, Brazil, etc. In the UK, a qualitative rating can be provided depending on the perceived level of data protection. Another vector is data poisoning^[50], where an attacker maliciously manipulates the training data to affect the algorithm behaviour.

- Algorithm: The key attack vector in this component is inferring model parameters and building 'knock-offs' versions of it. To assess vulnerability, the auditor could apply techniques that aim to extract a (near-)equivalent copy or steal some functionalities of an algorithm^{[51][52][53]}.
- Data-Algorithm interaction: The attack vectors in this component are inferring data about members of the population or about members of the training dataset through interactions with the algorithm. Attacks such as statistical disclosure^[54], model inversion^[55], inferring class representatives^[56], membership and property inference^{[57][58][59]} are different techniques to which an algorithm can be subjected in order to assess levels of vulnerability.

From an engineering standpoint, there are emerging privacyenhancing techniques to mitigate personal or critical data leakage. These techniques can act in different moments of the system development: (i) during the pre-processing stage by feature selection, dataset pseudo-anonymisation and perturbation; (ii) during in-processing by using federated learning, differential privacy, and model inversion mitigation; and (iii) during deployment by implementing rate-limiting and user's queries management. The table below presents these methods and key references.



Table. Modelling pipeline and different technical solutions for algorithm privacy.

CASE STUDIES

In this section, we provide three salient case studies of algorithmic auditing and assurance processes. The purpose of these examples is to illustrate how the principles of Responsible AI can be operationalised to assess functional algorithms, what kind of mitigation strategies can be applied in practice, and what ongoing monitoring requirements might be required in order to maintain assurance. We consider facial recognition in video analytics (section 4.1), Al-based document digitisation (section 4.2), and the use of AI in trading signals across energy and bond markets (section 4.3).

VIDEO ANALYTICS-FACIAL RECOGNITION

The risk assurance journey for a biometric authentication system using facial verification comprises four sections set out as follows:



Triage

- The use of facial recognition technology immediately flags the system as having high regulatory risk, noting that such systems count as "high-risk" under the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act proposal^[1].
- The technology processes information that relates to identifiable individuals via facial data, from which sensitive personal data such as ethnicity can also easily be inferred, leading to data protection and privacy being key issues.

- The complexity of facial recognition models does lead to some concern with regards to both bias and explainability risks, noting for example that it has been documented elsewhere that such systems can show differing quality of service for differing skin types.
- » However, the anticipated use-case of the system, offering authentication for end users to access customer services, is understood to have negligible impact on end users' life chances which reduces some of the risks posed by the system with respect to equality/discrimination.
- Further, the anticipated use-case results in underperformance of the system not resulting in damaging consequences, whether financial or otherwise, leading to reduced risks concerning efficacy and robustness, although the presence of a suitable fallback mechanism for end users to access the customer service offering in such an event would corroborate such assessment.
- The system's direct interaction with external customers and its global application both amplify the risks highlighted.



Verification

- The inherent risks identified during the triage stage are investigated via a qualitative privacy assessment, a qualitative bias assessment and a request for additional information from the system owner:
 - Confirmation of the system's use-case of customer service access authentication;
 - Understanding of fallback mechanisms in place should individual customers not be able to access the customer service offering via the system's facial recognition authentication mechanism.
- The qualitative privacy assessment provides a suite of information consistent with and in addition to that of a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). The system owner provides details of the data minimisation and model inversion mitigation processes that have been deployed in order to defend against data leakage. The completed qualitative privacy assessment informs a decrease of the residual risk for privacy and regulation.
- The qualitative bias assessment describes the system owner's diligence with respect to ensuring that the system is fair across a range of protected characteristics. The system owner considers the following with respect to bias/harm:
 - Ethnicity, with 'white' as the non-protected group and 'non-white' as the protected group, and gender, with 'male' as the non-protected group and 'female' as the protected group;
 - Measuring the differences in the false negative rate ('Disparate Mistreatment'^[34]) between the nonprotected and protected groups;
 - Setting a difference of 5% or less for the false negative rate as being free of bias.

- In the absence of evidence of a completed quantitative analysis being undertaken for bias, the completion of a quantitative bias assessment is subsequently requested. The system owner provides sufficient data and model detail to verify that the system fails to exhibit that it's free of bias for both protected characteristics, ethnicity and gender.
- The system owner provides additional information confirming the use-case for the system and details an appropriate fallback mechanism for customers unable to access the customer service offering via the facial recognition authentication system, which together confirm the assessment for efficacy and robustness risks.



Mitigation

With outstanding elevated risk with respect to bias, the 'fairness constraint' mitigation technique is implemented ^[60]. The technique requires the addition of constraints during the system's model training in order to enforce the reduction in bias). The application of this methodology reduces the amount of bias exhibited by the system to acceptable levels.



Monitoring

- Ongoing monitoring of the disparate mistreatment measure of the system pertaining to ethnicity and gender.
- An initial monthly frequency is provided, which is subject to change should the velocity of data being consumed by the system exceed the anticipated level.
- Escalation processes are in place to raise incidents (exhibiting bias) appropriately within the system owner's internal hierarchy.

AI BASED DOCUMENT DIGITISATION PLATFORM

The risk assurance journey for an AI based document digitisation platform, which performs information extraction and text classification, comprises four sections set out as follows:



Triage

- The platform processes information that relates to identifiable individuals, including sensitive financial data including source of funds and credit history, leading to data protection and privacy being key issues. In particular, such processing is within scope of GDPR increasing regulation risks.
- The platform's KYC (Know Your Customer) use-case, comprising signature detection, does lead to some concern with regards to bias risks, noting that less ablebodied individuals can suffer from reduced quality of service.
- The platform has been built to work with multiple cloud providers, leading to some concern with regards to robustness risks, noting that such wide interoperability creates increased technical demands.
- The high degree of human oversight, together with well-defined recourse mechanisms for customers who ultimately receive negative decision outcomes, leads the platform to have negligible impact on end users' life chances which reduces some risks with respect to equality/discrimination.
- The platform is being deployed in only a very small subset of jurisdictions in which the platform owner operates, leading to reduced amplification of risks.



Verification

- The inherent risks identified during the triage stage are investigated via a qualitative robustness assessment, a qualitative privacy assessment and a qualitative bias assessment.
- The qualitative robustness assessment describes the platform owner's diligence with respect to the behaviour of the models generated by and deployed on the platform. The platform has the following:
 - A model stress-test framework detailing the methodology for the generation of stress-test scenarios for each model use-case, the stress-test periodicity and escalation procedure;
 - Details of model snapshotting enabling previous model deployment in the event of unexpected changes in model performance;
 - Declaration of the incidence of human intervention (where there is a need to modify models' outputs) as the performance measure for all models.
- The qualitative privacy assessment provides a suite of information consistent with and in addition to that of a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). The platform owner provides details of the encryption framework in place for both data and trained models deployed to defend against individually identifiable direct data leakage, and the implemented query-throttling mechanism preventing data leakage through inference. The completed qualitative privacy assessment informs a decrease of the residual risk for privacy and regulation.
- The qualitative bias assessment describes the system owner's diligence with respect to ensuring that the system is fair across a range of protected characteristics.
The system owner considers the following with respect to bias/harm:

- Disability, with 'able-bodied' as the non-protected group and 'non-able-bodied' as the protected group;
- Measuring for equality of opportunity using the equal opportunity^[35] metric;
- A model is deemed free of bias if the left hand side of the above equation has a value of 5% or less.
- In the absence of evidence of a completed quantitative analysis being undertaken for bias, the completion of a quantitative bias assessment is subsequently requested. The platform owner provides sufficient data and model detail to verify that the system fails to exhibit that it's free of bias for the disability protected characteristic.



Monitoring

- Ongoing monitoring of the equal opportunity measure of all models on the platform pertaining to disability.
- An initial monthly frequency is provided, which is subject to change should the velocity of data being consumed by the system exceed the anticipated level.
- Escalation processes are in place to raise incidents (exhibiting bias) appropriately within the platform owner's internal hierarchy.



Mitigation

- With outstanding elevated risk with respect to bias, the 'regularisation approach' mitigation technique is implemented. The technique requires the addition of a regularisation term to the loss function during the model's training in order to enforce the reduction in bias.
 - The application of this mitigation technique reduces the amount of bias exhibited by the system to acceptable levels.

TRADING SIGNALS ACROSS ENERGY AND BOND MARKETS

The risk assurance journey for an AI/ML modelling platform which runs multiple machine learning models, created using a variety of programming languages and frameworks, comprises four sections set out as follows:



Triage

- » Use-cases of the platform include the generation of trading signals across energy and bond markets and automated financial portfolio construction. Robustness and efficacy risks are key concerns as underperformance of the respective models may result in outsized financial and reputational damages.
- The technical risk associated with the platform's operation across a broad set of programming languages and frameworks further highlights robustness risk as a concern.
- The abstraction of AI technicality and complexity, facilitating wider adoption, leads to raised risk with regards to explainability.
- The use-cases of the models on the platform are not likely to have detrimental impact on individuals' life chances, lowering governance and bias risks.
- » Identifiable individuals are not relevant to the platform's use-cases and thus data protection and privacy risks are not key concerns.
- The platform relies primarily on publicly available energy and bond market data, and thus the platform's data use is not subject to particular regulatory and governance regimes, reducing regulation risk.
- The platform's application across a large number of European jurisdictions amplifies the risks highlighted.



Verification

- The inherent risks identified during the triage stage are investigated via a qualitative robustness assessment, a qualitative efficacy assessment and a qualitative explainability assessment.
- The qualitative robustness assessment describes the platform owner's diligence with respect to the behaviour of the models generated by and deployed on the platform. The platform has the following:
 - To ensure reproducibility for ex-post analyses of trade decisions, all model outputs are recorded and stamped with an associated model snapshot reference and data state reference. Model and data rollback are available on demand;
 - In the event of unexpected changes in input data, as well as both model and data rollback (as above), offline human-engineered fallback models are available
 - Offline models are subject to monthly review and update;
 - Declaration of a bespoke 'imbalanced accuracy' measure being the standard targeted performance measure for all models. The imbalanced accuracy measure allows the model owner to overweight the discouragement of the model generating false negative signals which can be fine-tuned in line with the model owner's risk aversion.

The completed qualitative robustness assessment allows a decrease in the residual risk for robustness.

- The qualitative efficacy assessment captures the platform owner's diligence with respect to assuring model performance. The platform has the following:
 - All models on the platform are trained to maximise the imbalanced accuracy measure (see above) over each model's training data set only;
 - The standard retraining frequency for all models is monthly, although this can be set on a case-by-case basis as needed. However, there is no performance monitoring procedure in place to inform the retraining necessity.
- The completion of a quantitative efficacy assessment is requested to gather generalised performance data, that is model performance on unseen data for all deployed models. The platform owner provides sufficient data and model detail (across a representative range of models) to verify that the platform's models fail to exhibit acceptable generalised performance as measured by imbalanced accuracy.
- The qualitative explainability assessment details the work undertaken by the platform owner to ensure that the outputs of models on the platform can be reconciled to the models' inputs in a human-understandable manner. The assessment captures the following:
 - The expected use-cases for models on the platform are not presently subject to any interpretability/ transparency standards. However, before deployment, due consideration is given to such standards for any new use-case;

- The platform provides model-agnostic explanation capabilities via LIME on request;
- Due to the technical expertise of the platform users, non-technical explanations in plain text are not presently generated by the system. However, such explanations are human-generated on request in response to regulatory enquiries.

The completed qualitative explainability assessment allows a decrease in the residual risk for explainability.



Mitigation

- » With outstanding elevated risk with respect to efficacy, the 'k-fold-cross-validation' mitigation technique is implemented. The technique informs the correct setting of model hyperparameters in order to maximise generalised model performance.
 - The application of this methodology reduces the amount of efficacy risk exhibited by the platform to acceptable levels.

Monitoring

- » Ongoing monitoring of the imbalanced accuracy measure generated by the k-fold cross-validation technique for all deployed models, with an accompanying escalation procedure for instances of failure to reach target performance levels (set individually for each model).
- » Frequency of monitoring is set on a risk-adjusted basis, based upon the trading size and velocity associated with each model, with daily being the frequency for the highest risk models and monthly for the lowest risk models.



CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to map out the adoption of Responsible AI in cloud-based technology. We began, in section 2.1, by surveying the reputational, financial, and ethical risks inherent in the transition to algorithmic systems that have prompted a need for Responsible Al. In section 2.2, we surveyed more specifically the risks in the adoption of cloud-based algorithmic systems. To resolve concerns about both sets of risks, we propose the adoption of algorithmic auditing and assurance to achieve **Responsible AI, including Responsible** Cloud-based AI. The purpose of AI auditing is to assess algorithmic systems according to their key technical risks: bias and discrimination, performance and robustness, interpretability and explainability, and privacy.



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About Holistic Al

Holistic AI provides a software solution for AI Risk Management and Auditing. It is a platform provider for those wanting to harness AI ethically & safely - allowing their clients to monitor & evidence AI compliance with changing regulations & standards.

About UCL

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