



Digital Competences and the AI Act – Why digital skills matter in regulatory legislation – ALL DIGITAL’s reaction to the political agreement on the AI Act

With the achievement of a political agreement between the European Parliament and the European Council on 8 December, the much-anticipated AI Act has cleared one of the last hurdles towards its adoption and consequently becoming European law. As the emergence of artificial intelligence technologies substantially impact how we live, work and learn with digital tools, ALL DIGITAL welcomes the efforts undertaken by European lawmakers to regulate and enable the use of this technology to occur in line with European values and towards the betterment of our societies. We also acknowledge the scope and focus of this piece of EU legislation within the context of the European treaties, and the limitations therein with regard to education, and competence and skills development.

Nevertheless, the importance of fostering digital competences within the framework of artificial intelligence’s potentially disruptive impact on our societies cannot be overstated yet is regrettably absent from the motivation and contextualisation of the proposed AI Act. As AI continues to evolve and play an increasingly significant role in various aspects of society, it is imperative that individuals and organisations develop the necessary competences to engage with, understand, and regulate these technologies effectively.

In line with the principles of the ALL DIGITAL Manifesto For Enhancing Digital Competences Across Europe, and supporting the concrete examples on the use and application of AI in version 2.2 of the European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp 2.2) ALL DIGITAL is presenting 10 considerations on the role of digital competences in regulating artificial intelligence technologies:

1. **Protection of Fundamental Rights:** Digital competences are critical for safeguarding fundamental rights in the context of AI. Competent regulators can establish frameworks that protect privacy, prevent discrimination, and uphold other essential rights, ensuring that AI technologies align with legal and ethical standards.
2. **Informed Decision-Making:** Digital competences enable individuals, policymakers, and regulatory bodies to make informed decisions about AI applications and their impact on society. Understanding the underlying technologies, ethical considerations, and potential societal implications allows for more effective and nuanced decision-making in the development and deployment of AI systems.
3. **Ethical Oversight:** Fostering digital competences is crucial for establishing ethical oversight in AI development and deployment. Competent individuals are better equipped to assess the ethical implications of AI systems, ensuring that these



technologies adhere to ethical principles, respect human rights, and avoid unintended consequences.

4. **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** The dynamic nature of AI requires continuous learning and adaptation. Fostering digital competences encourages a culture of lifelong learning, enabling individuals and regulatory bodies to stay informed, update their knowledge, and adapt regulations as the AI landscape evolves.
5. **Promotion of Responsible Innovation:** Digital competences are essential for promoting responsible innovation in AI. Competent individuals can contribute to the development and adoption of AI technologies that align with societal values, respect human dignity, and prioritise the wellbeing of individuals and communities.
6. **Risk Assessment and Mitigation:** Digital competences empower stakeholders to assess and mitigate the risks associated with AI technologies. This includes understanding the potential biases in algorithms, addressing issues related to privacy and security, and developing strategies to minimise the negative societal impacts of AI applications.
7. **Adaptability to Technological Advancements:** The field of AI is rapidly evolving, with new technologies and applications emerging regularly. Digital competences ensure that individuals and regulatory bodies can adapt to these advancements, staying abreast of the latest developments and adjusting regulations to address novel challenges and opportunities.
8. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** AI regulation involves collaboration across various disciplines, including law, ethics, technology, and social sciences. Fostering digital competences facilitates effective interdisciplinary collaboration, as individuals with a solid understanding of digital technologies can communicate and collaborate more efficiently with experts from diverse fields.
9. **Public Engagement and Education:** A digitally competent society is better equipped to engage with and understand AI technologies. Public awareness and education about AI are essential for fostering informed discussions, soliciting public input in regulatory processes, and ensuring that the benefits of AI are widely understood and accepted.
10. **Global Competitiveness:** Nations and organisations that invest in fostering digital competences position themselves as leaders in the global AI landscape. Competent professionals and regulatory bodies contribute to the development of robust AI ecosystems, attracting talent, fostering innovation, and promoting international collaboration.





Enhancing digital competences is a foundational element of effective AI regulation and is the key to a successful implementation and enforcement of the proposed AI Act. It empowers individuals, organisations, and regulatory bodies to navigate the complexities of AI technologies, address ethical considerations, and ensure that these powerful tools are developed, deployed, and regulated in ways that benefit society as a whole.

ALL DIGITAL is a leading pan-European association based in Brussels, representing member organisations across Europe that work with 20,000 digital competence centres.

We focus to support Europeans that have an insufficient level of digital skills. That means that they're having less chances to find work, to use online services, to have a better quality of life, to be included in today's society.

We believe that every European should be able to exploit the benefits and opportunities created by digital transformation.

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