HIGHLIGHTS – Exploring the Risks and Benefits Presented by Artificial Intelligence Applications

On Thursday, 27 October 2022, TIC Council hosted a virtual panel entitled: "Exploring the Risks and Benefits Presented by Artificial Intelligence Applications".

The webinar was moderated by **Karin Athanas**, TIC Council Americas Executive Director, and introduced by **Hanane Taidi,** TIC Council's Director General, who presented the speakers and the main topic of the webinar. The panel focused specifically on discussing how recent AI developments can support industries and applications in the conformity assessment sector, the risks encountered and the ways to mitigate those risks. Speakers at the event included:

- **Steve Griffith**, Senior Industry Director of Transportation Systems and Cybersecurity at the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)
- **James Redstone**, Director of Public Policy at the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- **Jacques Kruse Brandao**, Global Head of Advocacy at SGS
- **Travis Norton**, Director of Global Technical & Information Services at Bureau Veritas

How is the industry making use of AI technologies today and what risks are they encountering. That was the question the panel delved into first, and it was noted that AI technologies can now be found throughout a company's processes; from front end, administrative applications such as human resources, to the manufacturing and supply chain steps. This technology can assist companies in improving energy efficiency by regulating the energy use of connected devices and be used to support product design and development. Specifically, applications such as monitoring and controlling processes can help in improving safety, as an AI system can use data to optimize procedures and adapt to rapid changes in situations, e.g. air quality can be improved dynamically thanks to AI.

It was noted that only one in four companies is using AI to support their human resources activities, and this is mainly among companies with over 500 employees, but the technology has a wide range of potential applications. It is commonly being used to assist companies in hiring and evaluating employees but has the potential to enhance the employee experience by supporting further learning and development, performance management, mental health monitoring, and to judge employee engagement. However, one panellist stressed that the use of AI in this way requires auditing of the AI system to identify and address potential biases and companies that would like use AI in this way should closely evaluate the data they will use to train the AI as a preventive measure to identify and remove potential biases that would adversely affect protected classes.

What risks presented by AI are of top concern for industry? The quality of data and protecting the data from cyberattack, unauthorized use, the introduction of corrupted or malicious data were all noted as top concerns. Additionally product risks such as safety and security of the AI system and potential risks to consumer

TIC Council
Rue du Commerce 20-22, 1000 Brussels, Belgium | +32 2 880 21 37
secretariat@tic-council.org | www.tic-council.org
VAT: BE0724881295 | Transparency Register No.: 840667012559
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safety were also highlighted. One speaker noted that regulations do not exist or are not harmonized globally, and this creates a unique burden on industry to analyse data sets while keeping an eye out on privacy risks and compliance across regions with different legislation on the matter.

And what is needed to establish a strong foundation for trusted AI for the future?

The TIC Council Americas Executive Director, Karin Athanas provided an overview of the common risk factors considered in establishing a trustworthy AI and panelists noted that to achieve this goal further work is needed to harmonize standards, harmonize terminology, and to reduce the barriers created by inconsistent legislation between regions. One panellist commented that it was easier to identify what AI was not rather than to define AI. There are many definitions currently available to date, but should they be inclusive of AI systems following a series of yes/no statements?

And in the training of AI systems, it was highlighted that if an organization plans to use historic data to train their AI, they are introducing the biases of the past. Standardized approaches to the development of data sets are needed, standardized test methods and a common terminology when referring to AI would assist regions in applying requirements consistently, and it was stressed that a wide range of stakeholders were essential in achieving that standardization.

Looking to the future, AI technologies have the potential to help better regulate traffic in cities, reducing congestion, accidents, and coordinating the quick arrival of emergency services when needed. AI technologies can also assist companies in succession planning, in enhancing the safety of their products or making them more sustainable, and a myriad of other applications.

The panel was concluded with a Q&A session in which the panellists answered several questions from the audience.

For those who missed the virtual panel or would like to rewatch the discussion, here are the presentation slides and the recording of the event.

The TIC Council Americas continues to explore digitalization and the relationship of cybersecurity, internet of things, and artificial intelligence. If you'd like to stay informed on upcoming discussions and activities, reach out to kathanas@tic-council.org.

Check our list of webinars to find about more about TIC Council's work in providing thought-provoking presentations on the current market trends and legislative developments around conformity assessment.

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