

The ODI in 2024: Advancing trust in data



Foreword by Sir Nigel Shadbolt and Louise Burke

2024 was another significant year for the ODI. We saw the burgeoning importance of artificial intelligence (AI) in many aspects of our work and personal lives.

Meanwhile, more than two billion people were registered to vote in elections across the globe, from the UK, US and EU, to India, South Africa and Japan, with the prospect of new governments bringing in changes to legislation affecting data and AI. We experienced technological and political change on an remarkable scale, and those changes present us with an opportunity to shape a future built on strong data infrastructure.

Our **Five-Year Strategy**, published in 2023, set out what we believe are the elements of an open and trustworthy data ecosystem for a world where data works for everyone.

Our approach allows us to adjust our implementation and engagement as the world and the organisations we work with change. We are guided by six principles: strong data infrastructure is essential for building an open, trustworthy data ecosystem; the best possible foundation is open data;

for data to work for everyone, it needs to work across borders; there needs to be trusted, independent organisations – like the ODI – to help people benefit from better data infrastructure; those collecting and using data need to be highly alert to inequalities, biases and power asymmetries; and the world needs a new cohort of data leaders.

These principles are showing themselves to be ever more relevant each year, as technological advances, particularly artificial intelligence, influence all aspects of our lives, work and society. The examples included in this annual report demonstrate those principles in action, from supporting companies to improve their data practices, to helping shape government policy for the coming years.

We are very proud of everything we have achieved this year. We would like to extend our gratitude to our funders, clients, and partners for their unwavering support of our efforts in research, policy development, training, advocacy, thought leadership, and global outreach. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful and enduring impact on the data ecosystem – a mission that is more crucial now than ever.

2024 in summary

At the ODI, the work we do – and the changes we advocate for – in the data ecosystem are underpinned by research. Throughout 2024, the importance of artificial intelligence in all aspects of our lives continued to grow.

We focused particular efforts on our data-centric AI research, becoming established as a leader in the field. We published a series of reports and blogs exploring the future of data and AI, culminating in the white paper **[Building a better future with data and AI](#)**.

Reflecting the current appetite for all things AI-related, these blogs and reports have been some of the most well-read pieces of content ever produced by the ODI, while we also grew a dedicated audience through our AI-related webinar series.

We were supported in our data-centric AI work with funding from the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation and Omidyar Network.

We were highly active in the broader data ecosystem across 2024, keeping data on the agenda through economic, social and political upheaval. With the change in the UK government in 2024, we took the opportunity to shape policy around our central belief that data infrastructure should be recognised in its own right, and in turn can be a driver for economic growth.

We fed into the AI Opportunities Action Plan, commissioned by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology and devised by Matt Clifford.

In our response to the government's industrial strategy consultation, we advocated for a ten-year National Data Infrastructure Roadmap to support the development of interoperable systems, AI-ready datasets, and privacy-enhancing technologies, to build the strongest possible foundation for the AI economy. Furthermore, we proposed how the **[National Data Library](#)** could provide ethical and secure access to public data assets, fed into debates on the **[Data Use and Access Bill](#)**, and contributed to the Department of Health and Social Care consultation **[Change NHS: help build a health service fit for the future](#)**.

We sponsored the open data track at the State of Open Conference and took part in several sessions.

We participated in London Data Week, [curating an event](#) that brought experts together to talk about the role of data in art, culture, sport and leisure. We were once again a [partner for the AI Fringe](#), which took place in London to coincide with the [AI Seoul Summit](#), and we took part in events including the [Canadian Open Data Summit](#), and many others. And we curated 17 webinars for our active membership community and broader network, of nearly 5,000 people, to share the diversity of our work.

We adapted and advanced our [data literacy](#) offers, responding to the increasing demand for working with data and AI. We added an AI assistant tutor to our platform, providing learners with 24/7 tailored guidance and feedback. More than 2,250 people enhanced their skills through our workshops and self-paced courses, and a further 800 professionals took part in face-to-face tutoring.

[Our event with the Data Empowerment Fund](#) brought together over 300 people from 33 countries to showcase the role of data empowerment in tackling some of the world's most pressing challenges.

We partnered with Humanity United to facilitate a [peer-learning network](#) to equip data organisations in the supply and labour rights sector with guidance, tools, and the capital they need to develop or scale. As part of the project, we convened a three-day workshop in Bangkok to foster collaboration between all participating organisations, and hosted an online event with more than 100 attendees from 23 countries.

In October 2024, we took on the organisational stewardship of [Solid](#), an open standard for managing digital identities and storing personal data for re-use across applications on the Web. Solid allows personal data to be stored in user-controlled Pods (Personal Online Data Stores), enabling people to decide how their data is accessed and used. By integrating Solid's privacy-preserving technology, the ODI can shape a future where data sharing benefits individuals, businesses, and society while respecting personal agency.

Solid and the ODI aim to build a robust data infrastructure for the 21st-century digital economy, empowering individuals, fostering economic growth, and addressing urgent privacy and governance challenges.

Through our work with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH we conducted research on global best practices for government agencies in Mexico and Thailand, delivered data ethics training in South Africa, run workshops on data sharing in Iraq and Egypt, and collaborated with Latin American countries to collectively advance data and AI governance.

We continue to steward OpenActive, having done so since 2016, funded by Sport England. During that time, we have grown OpenActive into a piece of critical national data infrastructure which now has around 4,000 providers of sports opportunities, with 3.5 million activities.

OpenActive is now well positioned to support the integration of physical activity into healthcare, providing an opportunity to both support the delivery of Sport England's strategy and implement government health policy. More broadly – in the data ecosystem – we are seeing increasing demands for open standards.

In the turbulent economic and political environment of 2024, the ODI continued to forge ahead – focusing, as always, on our vision for a world where data works for everyone.

Through our research, policy advocacy, training, and consultancy, we made significant progress and achieved much of which we can be proud.

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Acknowledgements

The funders that make our work possible

Contact the ODI



The ODI's Data as Culture commission 'Constant Washing Machine' by Blast Theory. The artwork invites people who work with AI to connect the good habits of everyday washing to 'Responsible AI' practice.

theodi.org/what-we-do/data-as-culture





Principle one

We believe that a strong data infrastructure is the foundation for building an open, trustworthy data ecosystem on a global scale and that this can help address our most pressing challenges.

Image: From ODI's *Five-Year Strategy*:
Illustrated Special Print Edition, by Adrian Philpott x DALL.E.



What we set out to achieve in 2024

In 2024, we aimed to make a positive contribution to building, hosting and stewarding key data infrastructure. We established and ran programmes of work that kept us at the cutting edge of innovation, and able to see emerging trends and technology in the global data ecosystem.

How did we do?

We wanted to learn from our success in the water sector and identify the next areas that could benefit from data access and align with the Smart Data Roadmap. We tailored data strategies for the Competition and Markets Authority, and the telecommunication and transport sectors.

We partnered with seven academic institutions, including [King's College London](#), the [National Law University of Delhi](#), and [Duke University](#) in the USA, expanding our capacity for rigorous research on various topics, including AI safety, AI data licences, and responsible data stewardship.

Our horizon scanning produced 13 briefings, exploring key topics relevant to the data ecosystem, such as [data spaces](#), healthcare data and the [National Data Library](#), helping us shape and lead the national and international debate.

We made notable submissions to important policy consultations, responding to [Invest 2035: The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#), [Change NHS 10 Year Health Plan for England](#), and the [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#). Following the UK General Election in July, we stepped up our policy engagement with the incoming government, meeting key ministers and civil servants to discuss [Solid](#), the [Data \(Use and Access\) Bill](#) and data protection.

Case study: Solid

In October 2024, the ODI brought Solid – an open standard developed to give individuals and organisations greater control over their data – into its data stewardship activities. The Solid project, protocol, and community have become part of the ODI’s wider portfolio to promote ethical data sharing and build a more transparent, secure, and user-centric data ecosystem.

The ODI's involvement with Solid is a natural extension of our work across [the data spectrum](#). While open data remains a vital foundation for transparency and accountability in data infrastructure, not all data can – or should – be open. Solid offers a protocol for managing sensitive data, allowing for individual privacy while enabling secure data sharing.

This partnership is not just about technology – it’s about shaping the future of data governance in ways that respect privacy, empower individuals, and promote responsible data use across sectors such as health and education.

As Solid continues to evolve through its open-source community, our stewardship will help ensure that user-centric data models – like Solid – become a central part of the global data ecosystem, benefiting individuals, businesses, and society.

EXPLORE

solidproject.org

[ODI and Solid come together to give individuals greater control over personal data](#)

SERVICES

- Independent
- Research
- Standards



Case study: OpenActive

As stewards of OpenActive since 2016, the ODI has built the initiative into critical data infrastructure, enabled by funding from Sport England. OpenActive’s near real-time data feeds contain around 3.5 million activities from around 4,000 providers and continues to grow. This data supports key services including [Every Body Moves](#), which was widely promoted by Channel 4 during the Paralympic Games, and regional services such as [MCR Active](#) and London Sport’s [GetActive](#). OpenActive’s standards specifications also enable key infrastructure services such as [OpenSessions](#).

In 2024 the ODI worked to build a sustainable future for OpenActive. We continued to modernise OpenActive’s technical infrastructure, engineering a new data store and dashboard, while gathering and sharing knowledge of OpenActive’s core code-base. This will enable a more open

maintenance model in the future whilst ensuring the infrastructure is reliable and robust. We also evaluated a range of operating models for OpenActive, undertaking user needs analysis, research and financial modelling to determine the viability of operating models.

Building on our experience of OpenActive we are now exploring new use cases for data standards in aligned sectors including volunteering, where similar issues around the brokerage of demand against supply exist. We are also exploring opportunities to integrate OpenActive with other community services data initiatives to provide a comprehensive source of data to support health and social prescribing use cases.

EXPLORE

- [openactive.io](#)
- [New Supplier Marketplace](#)
- [New Dashboard](#)

SERVICES

- [Policy](#)
- [Standards](#)
- [Tools](#)



Spotlight on: Improving the discoverability of data

Data is vital for machine learning, but many datasets lack sufficient machine-readable documentation to allow people to use them responsibly. Without this information, finding, understanding, and using these datasets safely and ethically can be time-consuming, hindering efficient data reuse and responsible AI development.

We embarked on a partnership with [MLCommons](#) to advance data-centric AI and improve AI safety. We helped to build a global community to foster the adoption of [Croissant](#), an emerging open, machine-readable standard for documenting ML datasets that aims to make data more easily accessible and discoverable.

More than 700k datasets are now annotated with Croissant. We have recommended Croissant as a data transparency solution for AI policy in both the UK and EU.

We promoted Croissant through blogs and events, and developed software to allow Croissant to be used on CKAN open data portals, prompting interest from extension stewards. We also shaped community discussions on creating and using Croissant metadata, proposing workflows to make it easier for data publishers to adopt Croissant.

EXPLORE

[Project | Croissant](#)

[The ODI to help develop an open metadata standard for machine learning data](#)

[Transforming AI data governance with Croissant: a new standard for ML metadata](#)



ODI Research
ADVANCING TRUST IN DATA



Spotlight on: Policy for essential data infrastructure

With the change of UK Government in July 2024, we had a real opportunity to shape policy around data and AI. We released our policy manifesto in March, but it wasn't until the King's Speech, after the Labour government took power, that we could see a new direction taking shape.

We believe data infrastructure should be recognised not only as a horizontal enabler but as a critical growth-driving sector in its own right, similar to advanced manufacturing or life sciences.

Robust data infrastructure – capable of supporting AI-driven analysis – must be developed and invested in. In our response to [Invest 2035](#), the ODI called for a ten-year National Data Infrastructure Roadmap to underpin the development of interoperable systems, AI-ready datasets, and privacy-enhancing technologies.



We believe the proposed [National Data Library](#) could provide ethical and secure access to public data assets, but it must be designed to be AI-ready from the outset. This includes implementing tried-and-tested data hygiene measures championed by organisations such as the ODI, which we outlined in our input to Matt Clifford's [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#) when views were being sought in August 2024.

[We responded](#) to the Data (Use and Access) Bill when it was laid in parliament, followed by briefings for key Parliamentarians and civil servants. At the Second Reading of the Bill in the House of Lords, we were referenced by two peers when they addressed the House. We submitted to further consultations by Ofgem, the FCA, the NHS and the EU's Future-proof AI Act. We hope to see our vision and the government's plans for data and AI closely aligned in the years ahead.

EXPLORE

[Consultation responses](#)



Case study: Supporting data stewards

Organisations that steward data don't have a playbook for success. They face challenges around getting the most value out of the data they collect, use and share while ensuring this is done in ways that are responsible and ethical.

The ODI is uniquely positioned to help data institutions and other data stewards to maximise the value of their data, minimise the risk of harm and do so using global technical best practice. We help organisations create frameworks that set the right legal, technical, commercial and governance foundations for responsible and impactful data stewardship.

We've supported a variety of data stewards in different sectors, at different stages of maturity, across the globe. We've designed stewardship models for Producers Direct

in the agriculture sector to ensure ethical supply chains that benefit small holder farmers, supported by data sharing.

We have built data publishing platforms for the UK water sector to unlock the benefits of transparency and innovation in new ways. And we've provided best practice advice to a host of existing data institutions, such as the [INSIGHT Data Hub](#) in the health sector, [Global Fishing Watch](#) in the fisheries sector, and government bodies like [Natural England](#) that steward important data about the environment.

EXPLORE

[Responsible data stewardship](#)

[Enabling innovation across the water sector with Stream](#)

SERVICES

- Consultancy
- Independent
- Innovation





Principle two

Strong data infrastructure includes data across the spectrum, from open to shared to closed. But the best possible foundation is open data, supported and sustained as data infrastructure. Only with this foundation will people, businesses and governments be able to realise the potential of data infrastructure across society and the economy.

What we set out to achieve in 2024

We maintained our leading edge in research and thought leadership on data across the [spectrum](#), while expanding access to our free content and tools, allowing a broader global audience to benefit.

We sought new funding partners to enable us to do this, and invested in original research, public policy, and advocacy, together with innovation and thought leadership. We supported those who needed specific help in implementing knowledge, processes, tools, and best practices around open data. We worked with those developing AI to ensure that the data they are using and training their systems on are fit for function, demonstrating how high-quality, trusted open data is a foundation for AI.

How did we do?

We produced seven joint research and policy outputs about data across the spectrum, from closed to shared to open data. We published three practical explainers to explore how privacy-enhancing technologies have been

deployed in real-world situations. Our [work on Data-Centric AI](#), comprising five policy interventions and a [white paper](#), generated 34 media mentions and cemented our thought leadership in the data-centric AI space. Our [Global Policy Observatory for Data-centric AI](#) report further demonstrated our ability to inform responsible AI development and ensure that the benefits of AI are accessible globally.

Our team of researchers used their expertise to engage with the development of AI standards for the benefit of the broader data-centric AI ecosystem. For example, we supported the development of [Croissant](#), an emerging open, machine-readable standard for documenting machine-learning datasets.

Furthermore, we prepared a series of sector-specific briefs showcasing the impact of responsible data stewardship, gender equity, and diversity in clinical trial data. These briefs highlighted the potential for data to improve healthcare, research, and inclusion, and have been used to enhance outcomes in those sectors.

Spotlight on: The water industry

The water sector is undergoing an open data transformation, with public and regulatory calls for more transparency, and a need for more innovation and decarbonisation within the water companies themselves. Open data and responsible data sharing are seen as a critical way forward.

The ODI is leading the wave of change in the water industry, with water companies embedding open data in their digital strategies and actively publishing open data individually and through the [Stream](#) industry data platform. We've helped water companies to develop strategic approaches to open data, and implemented global best practices for open data publishing, including maximising value, minimising risk, and embedding technical approaches.

We've also supported the development of Stream into a data institution, one that will support open data publishing, secure data sharing and the development of industry data standards.

For the first time, data held by the water sector is being published online. Stream has published almost [80 datasets](#) this year, ranging from company performance to domestic water quality and consumption. [The National Storm Overflow Hub](#) launched, combining near real-time discharge data for all the storm overflows in England in one interactive map, with supporting datasets, and providing data that may help water users make better informed decisions about whether or not to enter the water.

EXPLORE

[Southern Water's open data strategy](#)

[Supporting the development of Dŵr Cymru
Welsh Water's open data strategy](#)



Spotlight on: Privacy-enhancing technologies

Emerging privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) are often complex and expensive to implement, making it difficult for organisations to articulate a clear business case for their adoption. This has limited their adoption so far. Further research and communication is required to ensure that the benefits of their use are distributed more widely throughout data ecosystems. Furthermore, questions remain unanswered, such as how these technologies may be scaled and the downstream impacts their increased use may have on data flows within ecosystems.

With funding from the [Patrick J. McGovern Foundation](#), we developed practical explainers and reports to equip organisations with the knowledge to help them adopt PETs. This year, we released five publications and presented them to

audiences at a variety of events, including industry and governmental conferences, as well as through workshops delivered to government employees on accessing sensitive data and multistakeholder deliberations on the use of PETs, including within the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD).

Particular highlights include the inclusion of our resources in the [Information Commissioner’s Office work on PETs](#), membership of the [Roundtable for AI, Security and Ethics](#) and speaking invitations at industry and academic conferences, such as [PETs Symposium](#), [Eyes-Off Data Summit](#) and [Flower AI Summit](#).

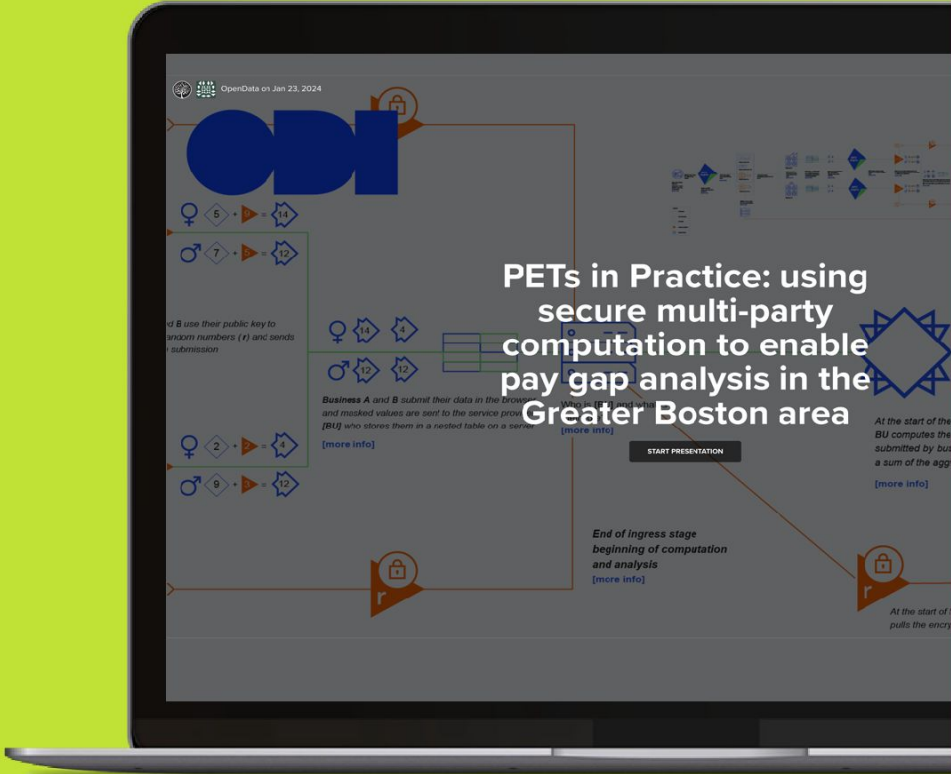
EXPLORE

[PETs in practice 1](#)

[PETs in practice 2](#)

[PETs in practice 3](#)

[Trust and transparency in PETs](#)



Case study: Data Dive podcast series

Private sector data can play a significant role in driving social, economic, and scientific progress. It is a crucial resource for tackling global challenges like climate change, health disparities, and inequality. But making it accessible poses questions around privacy, security, and governance.

The [Data Dive podcast series](#), produced by the [Open Data Institute](#) for the [Industry Data for Society Partnership](#), explored these issues. Across five episodes, the series provided advice for organisations starting their data access journey, and for those wanting to use private sector data in their research and social impact activities.

The podcast featured a range of guests, from tech companies including Microsoft, Github and LinkedIn, to utility companies such as UK Power Networks and Northumbrian Water.

Guests discussed why some companies might be reluctant to share their data, and explored ways in which they could progress on their data-sharing journey. They also looked at how innovators and researchers could use private company data to create impact, while providing practical advice for data scientists and innovation teams to maximise the value of the data they have.

EXPLORE

[Data Dive podcast series](#)

SERVICES

- Consultancy
- Innovation
- Thought leadership
- Tools



Case study: Supporting whole-life carbon initiatives

The ODI’s partnership with Arup is our longest standing collaboration. The data ecosystem for whole-life carbon in the built environment is complex, with a number of different organisations and initiatives creating different data infrastructure.

There is a clear need for this infrastructure to be more scalable, joined-up and trusted in order to tackle the problem of decarbonisation in the sector.

We are jointly analysing and supporting whole life carbon (WLC) initiatives in built environmental data ecosystems by mapping data flows, services, and value exchanges. This includes examining sociotechnical infrastructures like data stewardship models and understanding how these initiatives deliver value through data sharing for providers and broader societal benefits.



Together, we have strengthened connections between different WLC data initiatives, providing research and insights on best practice for value generation, scalability and interoperability.

We are supporting Arup on projects within the Environment Agency’s flood and coastal erosion framework. This involves working with flood asset managers and coastal asset managers to improve data practices so that they can better prepare for and respond to floods and coastal erosion.

The framework forms the basis of a new way of working to help better protect people and the environment while ensuring sustainable development is at the core of the projects.

EXPLORE

[Global engineering giant Arup renews partnership with Open Data Institute](#)

SERVICES

- Consultancy
- Data trust
- Independent
- Membership
- Research



Case study: Generative AI tools

As technology continues to advance, disparities in access to data and information persist, creating a digital divide that hinders social progress and economic development. Ensuring that everyone is able to access and use data effectively is critical for empowering people to make better decisions and create equitable outcomes for society.

We've been working with Microsoft to explore the potential of generative AI tools to support people to access and use data. We conducted a landscape review of the different generative AI tools to support data publishing and use, as well as hosting a data prompting workshop with King's College London to explore how some of these free generative AI tools could be

used by people working in the civil service and the third sector to enhance their work with data.

We found there to be real potential for these tools to facilitate easier access to data, as well as helping users with data comprehension, analysis, visualisation and decision-making, making them particularly useful for individuals who may lack technical expertise. Following on from the workshop, we developed additional guidance on prompting these models, supporting others to use these tools to find and use data.

EXPLORE

[Democratising access to data: Bridging the data divide with generative AI models](#)

[Generative AI tools for data discovery and use, reflections from a data prompting workshop](#)

SERVICES

- Innovation
- Research
- Tools
- Thought leadership



Spotlight on: Trustworthy data practices

While there are many existing frameworks and tools focused on data governance and management, individuals working with data often lack easy and practical tools that can be used to improve trust in data in a holistic way, from datasets to people and processes.

We developed and updated a number of tools that address this need, combining research-led methodologies, a user-friendly interactive interface and innovative use of large language models to enhance the tools' capabilities. This includes the [CARE tool](#), the [Data Sharing Risk Assessment](#) and the [ODI Maturity Assessment](#). The goal for these is to make our knowledge and insights more accessible and enable others to embed them into their practices.

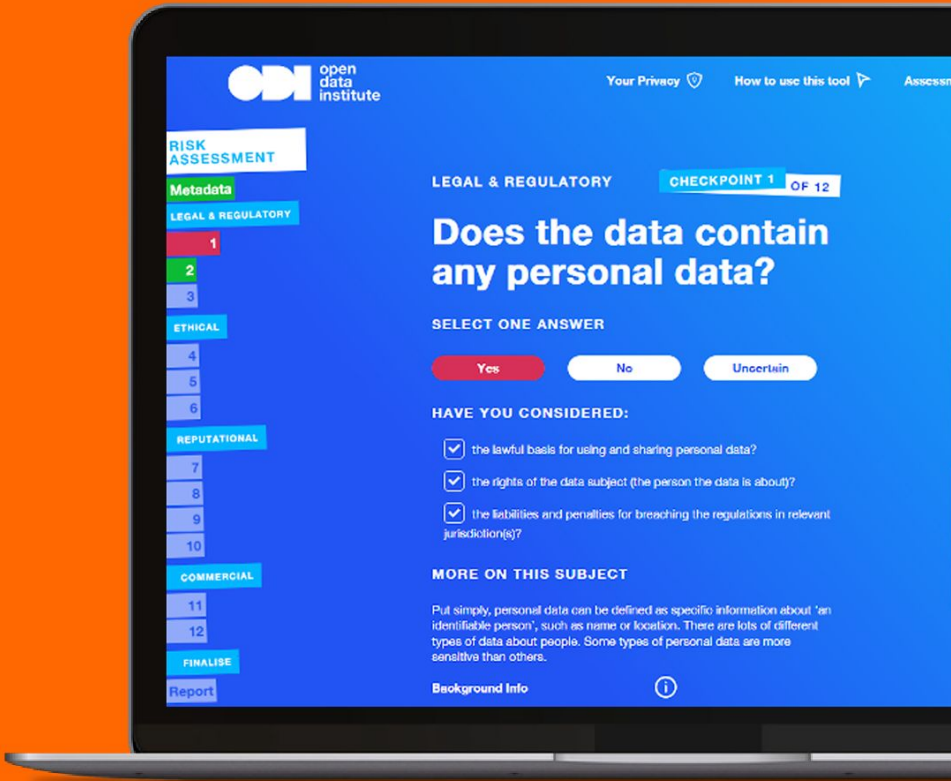
These tools will be particularly beneficial to organisations in regulated sectors that have mandated opening data, such as the water industry, or in data sharing initiatives where building trust in providers of data is important, such as in data supply chains.

Thanks to this work, we now have a suite of tools, canvases and best practice frameworks on data maturity, risk assessments and data publishing available for free under an open licence. The source code for all tools is openly licensed on [Github](#) and access to digital products will be available in Q1 2025.

EXPLORE

[ODI Maturity Assessment tool Github repository](#)

[ODI Care Tool Github repository](#)





Principle three

For data to work for everyone, it needs to work across borders – geographic, organisational, economic, cultural and political. For this to happen ethically and sustainably, there needs to be trust – trust in data and trust in those who share it.

Image: From ODI's *Five-Year Strategy: Illustrated Special Print Edition*, by Adrian Philpott x DALL.E.



What we set out to achieve in 2024

In 2024, we continued to build systems and processes to advance trust in data and to professionalise the data ecosystem.

We did this by streamlining our data assurance offerings and creating a clear value proposition to help organisations increase trustworthiness with the products and services we have developed. By accessing and adopting our tools, it is easier for organisations to share data, and assure them of the quality and reliability of the data shared and the organisations sharing it.

How did we do?

We developed three new digital tools that have been adopted and tested by organisations across diverse sectors: the [CARE tool](#), the [Data Sharing Risk Assessment](#) and the [ODI Maturity Assessment](#).

These interactive digital tools constitute our growing ‘trustworthy data practices’ product portfolio that helps and encourages organisations to share high-quality, trusted data.

With the new tools, we will soon be able to provide an annual assessment and benchmark of companies' data strategies and we have embedded generative AI into the tools to make them more user-friendly and accessible to those with less subject matter knowledge.

Alongside our interactive products, we updated and expanded the suite of openly available tools, canvases, frameworks and models which are available for free under an open licence, including the popular [Data Ethics Canvas](#), which now covers ethical considerations when deploying AI. The goal for these is to make our knowledge and insights more accessible and enable others to embed them into their practices.

We worked with King’s College London and Microsoft to explore how existing generative AI tools can be used to facilitate easier access to data, making them particularly useful for individuals who may lack technical expertise.

Spotlight on: Empowering ethical practices in data and AI

Many professionals face growing pressure to ‘get it right’ when working with data and AI. Navigating the complex ethical considerations these technologies bring can be challenging. We make these complexities accessible through engaging learning experiences and practical tools.

Our [Data Ethics Professionals course](#) equips participants with the knowledge, skills, and frameworks to address such challenges, ensuring decisions align with societal values, regulatory demands, and organisational goals. Through workshops and self-paced modules, professionals from sectors like public health, finance, and technology learn to operationalise data ethics. We ran the course for the first time via [Government Campus](#) with a department tackling the challenges of using AI transparently to combat fraud.

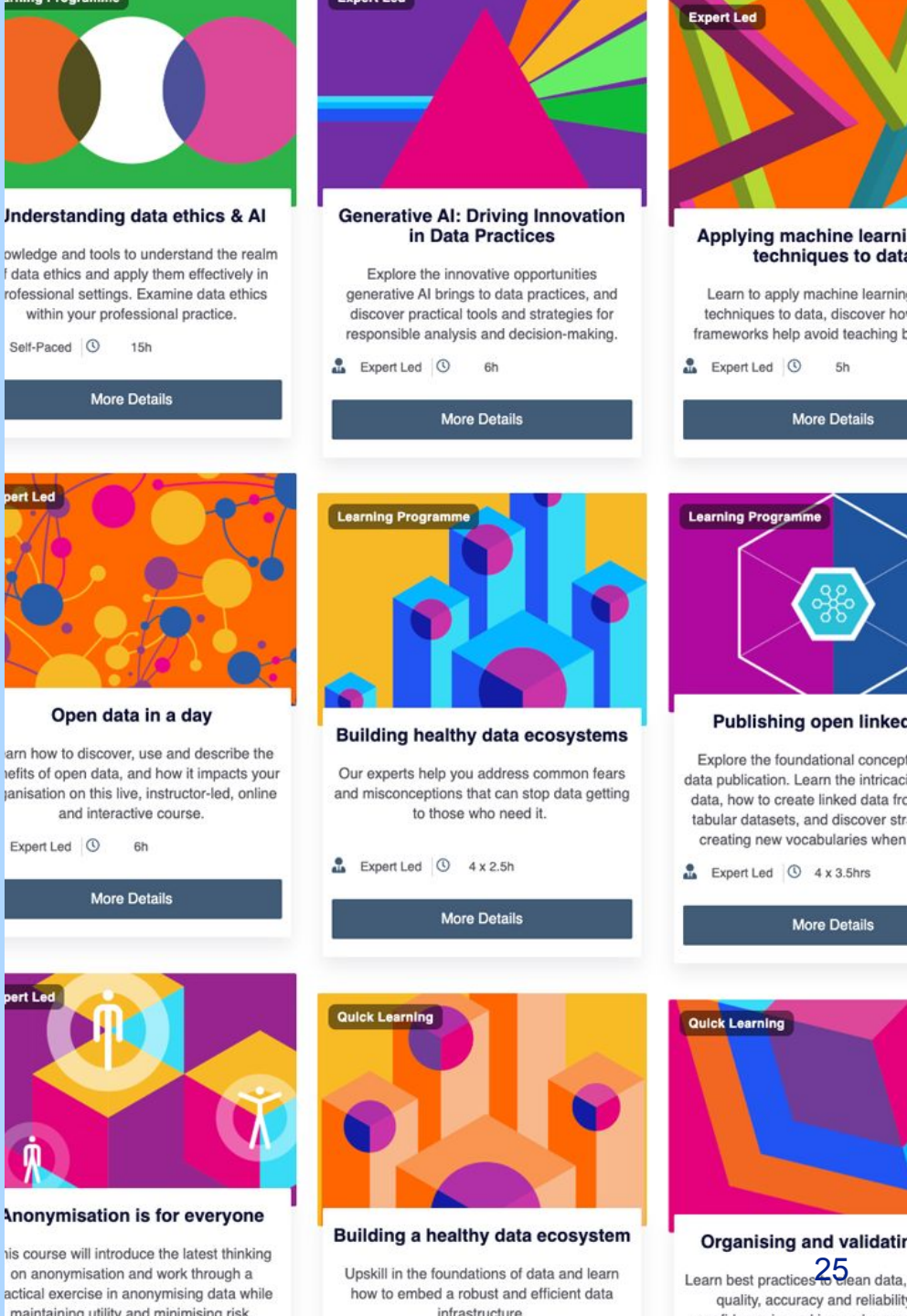


In 2024, we enhanced the course with cutting-edge tools:

- **AI Assistant Tutor:** Providing 24/7 tailored guidance and feedback.
- **Data Ethics Maturity Model:** We relaunched our Maturity Assessment Tool for simple, actionable organisational assessments.
- **Consequence and Risk Evaluation Tool:** Helping organisations ensure that products and services positively impact society while aligning with their organisational goals.

The success of our training is evident in the 2024 learning statistics: **800 professionals** engaged in face-to-face or tutored learning, while our **online self-paced courses** reached **over 2,250 learners**. This highlights the growing appetite for flexible, just-in-time learning.

EXPLORE
[Government campus](#)
[ODI learning](#)



Case study: Using open data to improve ocean stewardship

Global Fishing Watch uses open data and cutting-edge technology to increase our understanding and improve ocean stewardship for the benefit of all.

The ODI supported [Global Fishing Watch](#) to assess their current data practices and lay a strong foundation for integrating data ethics into their workflows where clear standards are established based on best practices.

We worked with Global Fishing Watch to embed data ethics across the whole organisation and ensure responsible innovation. Our support included developing a plan for embedding data ethics into its operations and raising awareness among employees through training.



We co-developed an initial draft of data ethics principles with their ethics committee to provide guidance, and supported two pilot projects in establishing best practices to identify and assess potential risks of harm to individuals and communities represented in the data.

The ODI will continue to partner with Global Fishing Watch in 2025 and shape its comprehensive data ethics commitment, emphasising the principles of responsible data stewardship to ensure ethical and transparent management of data. As part of this the ODI will also support the organisation's growth into a recognised [data institution](#) promoting sustainable and equitable practices.

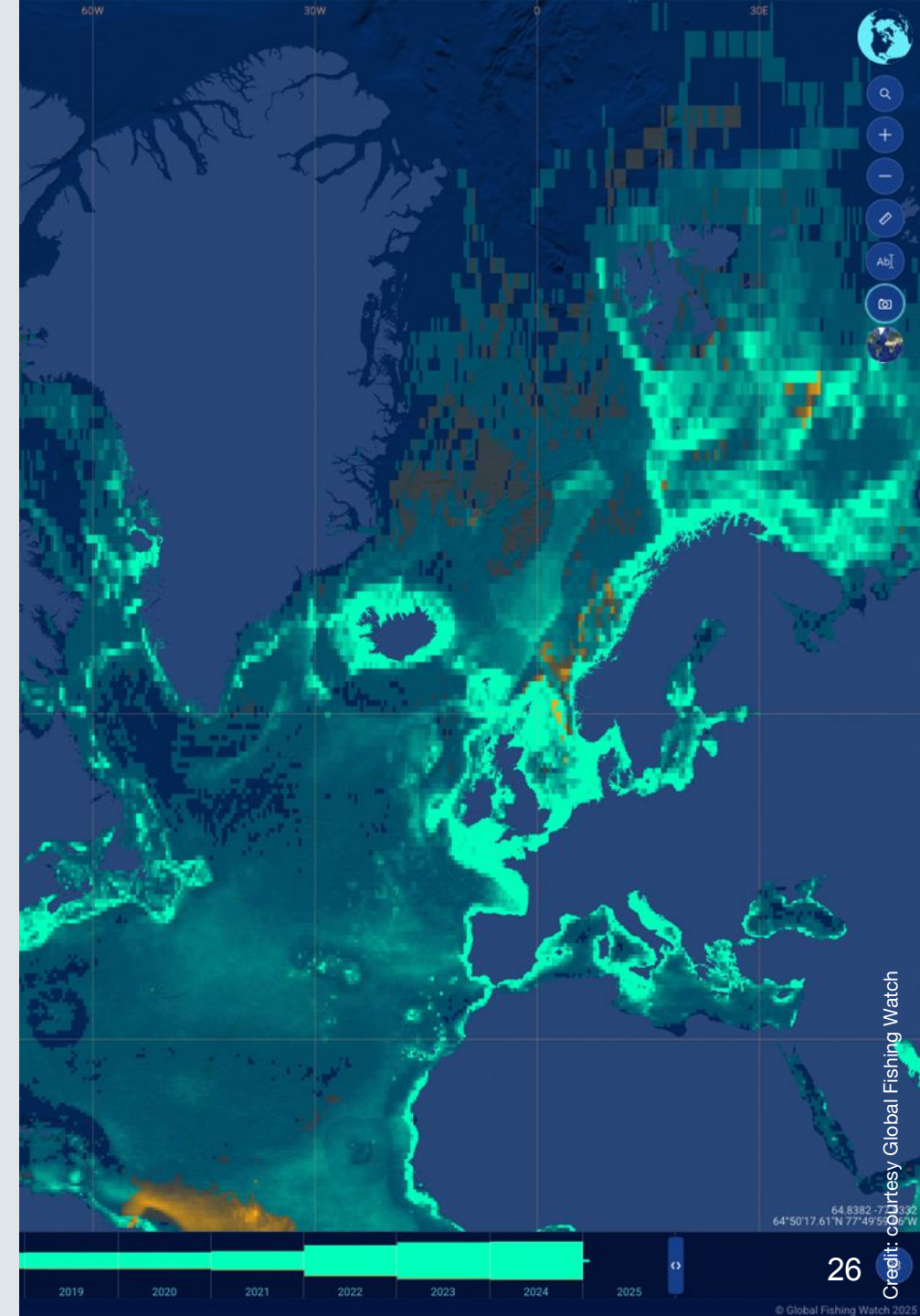
EXPLORE

[Embedding data ethics at Global Fishing Watch](#)

SERVICES

Consultancy

Tools



Case study: Department for Transport data ethics

The use of data around how people navigate transport systems is fundamental, but existing frameworks do not adequately address ethical considerations, leading to potential risks in policy and service design. The Department for Transport (DfT) required a comprehensive approach to establish a culture of ethical data usage across the department and its associated agencies.

We explored interventions across different decision-making levels. This included co-developing a set of data ethics principles, establishing a triaging process, writing up internal use cases, carrying out a data ethics maturity assessment, and supporting senior stakeholders to obtain their Data Ethics Professionals certification.

Additionally, we provided presentation materials to aid internal data ethics communication.

The structured approach and tools provided by the ODI embedded ethical considerations into DfT’s decision-making processes. The collaboration has significantly enhanced DfT’s ability to manage data ethically, ensuring responsible and informed decision-making in the future.

This project has not only improved internal practices but also set a benchmark for other government agencies. We have had a number of follow-up conversations with connected organisations who wished to replicate the project.

SERVICES

- Consultancy
- Tools





Principle four

There is greater need than ever for trusted, independent organisations to help people across all sectors, economies and societies to benefit from better data infrastructure.

Image: From ODI's *Five-Year Strategy: Illustrated Special Print Edition*, by Adrian Philpott x DALL.E.

What we set out to achieve in 2024

In the face of economic pressure and a reduction in government funding, we are committed to developing a sustainable business model that is diverse enough to ensure our independence from any single or limited group of vested interests, while also enabling us to explore a variety of potential revenue streams. At the start of the year, we focused on diversifying our network and funding mechanisms while staying true to our core mission. We aimed to ensure sustainability through a business model that preserves, strengthens, and expands the ODI.

How did we do?

Our ability to convene diverse stakeholders combined with our organisational expertise supported our expansion into new sectors and geographies, where we delivered targeted events, outputs and campaigns. This expansion into new markets and sectors is vital to our long-term sustainability. Our [Data Dive podcast series](#) for the Industry Data for Society Partnership featured guests from Microsoft, Github, UK Power Networks, Northumbrian Water, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, LinkedIn and Ookla,

while our work with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office in Latin America is helping to foster collaboration and advance data and AI governance.

We've hosted 18 webinars across the year, with 1,872 attendees. A significant part of the success is down to the Data-centric AI series, with bookings rising from the first edition in June of 287 to the fifth webinar in November, generating 600 bookings.

We relaunched our [membership scheme](#) in 2024 to include free access to ODI's self-paced learning modules to optimise sales and increase the respective value of both offerings. The new membership and learning offering was soft-launched in November, and we anticipate a growth in our membership community and a wider reach for our courses throughout 2025.

We developed a suite of digital products which help organisations implement data strategies in trustworthy and ethical ways across the data spectrum. The products are integrated into our consultancy and learning offering and have enabled us to continue our work helping the water sector innovate with data.

Spotlight on: Advocacy and convening

As 2024 began there was one certainty in British politics – an election would be triggered at some point in the year. Many commentators expected polling in the autumn, but we had to be prepared for whenever it was called.

We launched our own policy manifesto in March at an [event in parliament](#) with the then-Minister for Data, Julia Lopez MP, and the then-Shadow Minister for Data, Chris Bryant MP speaking on a panel alongside other senior Parliamentarians from the major parties. Over the following months, we engaged with senior politicians and advisers, ministers and shadow ministers, as they unveiled their party manifestos and policy ideas. We spoke at the [AI Fringe](#), and on roundtables on health data, education and AI, and data in public services.



When the election was called for July – and won by the Labour Party – we were well placed to provide advice on the development of new policies. We were asked to contribute to the AI Opportunities Action Plan, and responded by focusing on the [National Data Library](#). We engaged with senior politicians and special advisors to brief on key topics around data and AI, and produced thought leadership on a variety of subjects, including the [role of data in the NHS](#). We [responded to the Data \(Use and Access\) Bill](#) when it was laid in parliament and briefed members of both houses of parliament, ministers and officials. At the [Second Reading](#) of the Bill, we were referenced by two peers when they addressed the House. We are part of the government’s Smart Data Council, and are also members of the UK Open Government Network.

EXPLORE

[Launching the ODI policy manifesto](#)

[Reflections on the AI Fringe](#)

[Consultation responses](#)



Case study: Data-centric AI campaign

Last summer, we set about showcasing our current work on data-centric AI to policymakers, regulators and other major stakeholders globally, coinciding with key interactions with the new government to influence their thinking on data and AI policy. As a leader in the field, we advocate for the building of robust and equitable data and AI infrastructure so that the country can benefit from the opportunities presented by AI.

From June to early August 2024, we ran a campaign promoting our [Data-centric AI research](#). The blogs, reports, events, social media and thought leadership presented our vision for the future of data and AI, all grounded in robust, cutting edge research. The cornerstone of the campaign was the white paper, [Building a better future with data and AI](#).

During the campaign, our data-centric AI content accounted for 11% of total page views on our website. The white paper was the most visited content of the campaign (1,040 page views during the campaign, 2,195 across 2024), and generated 34 pieces of media coverage, including pieces in the [Financial Times](#), [City AM](#), and [Computer Weekly](#). Our campaign has been a highlight of 2024, with content page views performing well above our average. The webinar have developed a new audience, with bookings rising significantly throughout the year.

EXPLORE

[The future of data and AI](#)

[Building a better future with data and AI: a white paper](#)

[Learn from world experts on the data in AI](#)

SERVICES

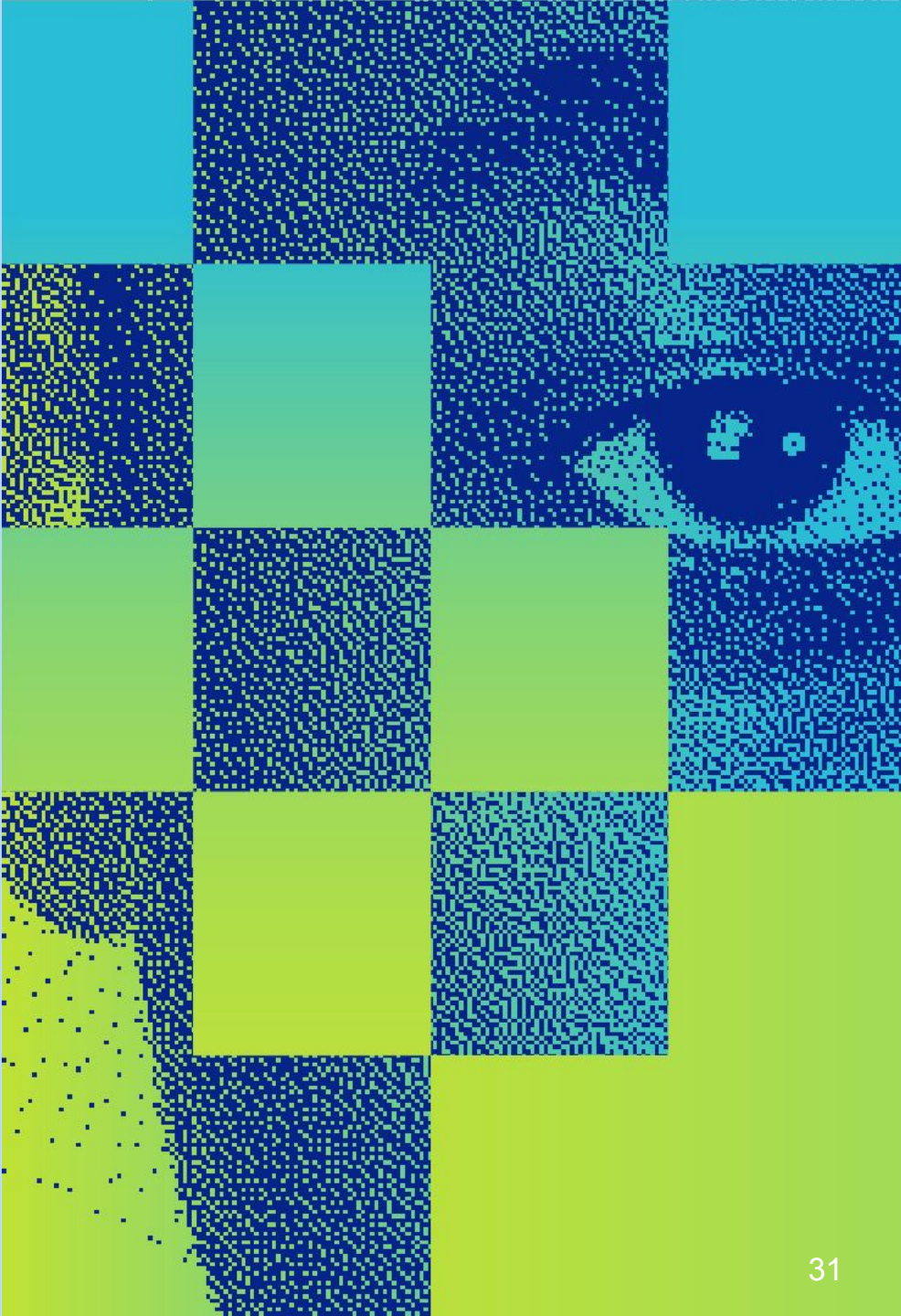
- Independent
- Research
- Thought leadership

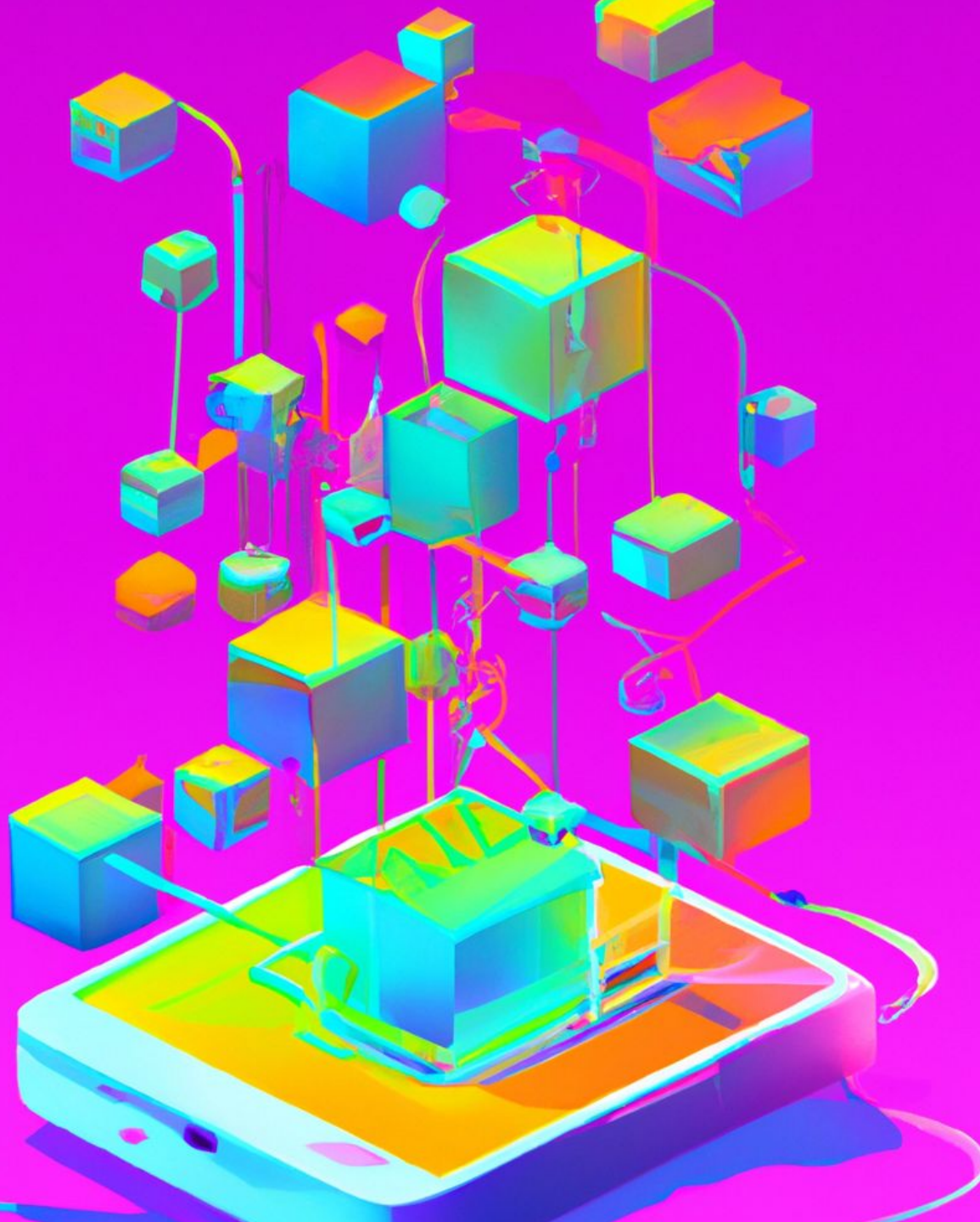


ODI Research

ADVANCING TRUST IN DATA

The ODI Research logo, featuring a circular icon with five colored dots (blue, green, yellow, orange, and red) arranged in a circle.





Principle five

For data to work for everyone, those collecting and using it need to be highly alert to inequalities, biases and power asymmetries. All organisations working in data must take proactive steps to ensure that they contribute fully and consciously to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive data ecosystem.

What we set out to achieve in 2024

We are dedicated to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work, from our internal operations to the execution of projects and services.

Throughout the year, we continued to advocate for diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) approaches to data usage, amplifying the voices of marginalised, minority, and oppressed communities, ensuring their perspectives are central to our work. We worked to upskill and positively influence our clients, suppliers, and delivery partners, supporting them to adopt diverse, inclusive, and equitable data practices.

How did we do?

In 2024, we published eight new impact stories about [responsible data stewardship](#) in a range of different use cases around the world, including India, Kenya and South Africa, supported by the [Patrick J. McGovern Foundation](#). We actively pursued and conducted research projects promoting diverse, equitable and inclusive data practices, working with policymakers in Egypt, Iraq, India and

South Africa, to integrate data and AI across policy cycles in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

We used our global reach and platforms to champion diverse voices across the data ecosystem. In May, we brought together 260 attendees from across five continents to mark the culmination of our peer learning network with [Humanity United](#), aiming to use data to strengthen workers' rights across the supply chain.

In November, we hosted an event for the [Data Empowerment Fund](#) exploring human labour in AI supply chains, and how to sustain and develop data communities. Speakers came from Latin America, North America, Africa and Oceania, and showcased a diverse set of initiatives that enable greater individual agency or community control over data.

Our DEI-focussed [learning offerings](#), including our suite of data ethics courses, equipped 320 people with the critical skills they need to help reduce harm within the workplace and across the data ecosystem.

Spotlight on: Empowering people with data

People generally have limited opportunities to participate in the systems of data collection, curation, sharing, and use that shape their lives. If people are not able to shape data ecosystems, there is a risk of creating deep mistrust, which could limit the potential of data to be applied to the big challenges of our time. At the ODI, we want a world where people can meaningfully participate in the data economy. Our [participatory data](#) work helps shape how data is used to create positive outcomes for society, the environment and the economy.

In November we hosted an event in partnership with the [Data Empowerment Fund](#) to showcase the role of data empowerment in tackling some of the world's most pressing challenges.

The event featured panel sessions and lightning talks from experts around the globe who directly support people and communities to be more empowered with data. It included sessions on AI supply chains, counter data, and how to build and sustain data communities.

The [Data Empowerment Fund event](#) brought together over 300 people from 33 countries, building a community of people interested in empowering people with data. The event gave a platform to data communities from around the world to share their stories, connect with others and ultimately build towards a future where data works for everyone.

EXPLORE

[Participatory Data](#)

[Data Empowerment Fund \(recordings\)](#)

[Data empowerment: making data and AI work for everyone](#)

[How can we empower data communities in the era of generative AI?](#)

[What makes participatory data initiatives successful?](#)

Case study: Strengthening workers across the supply chain

Data is crucial for advancing labour rights, but realising the full value of data and building an open, integrated data ecosystem faces challenges in areas such as data sharing, trust, source reliability, worker engagement, literacy, and sustainability of business models.

We joined forces with [Humanity United](#) to facilitate a peer learning network. Over eight months, the seven network members engaged in discussions, shared approaches, tested tools, attended ODI workshops and a networking event in Bangkok. The programme culminated in a public event with 269 registrations and 108 attendees from 23 countries, where network members shared their data challenges and visions for improving workers' conditions with the broader ecosystem.

On an aggregate level, the seven network members reached more than half a million stakeholders through their work and services, including workers, non-profit organisations, partners, trade unions, job seekers and global brands. All participants reported that the network had an impact on their behaviour and attitudes towards data trustworthiness and 75% of participants reported improvement in their ability to realise the value of the data they steward. All participants reported either already engaging or planning to engage in longer-term collaboration with each other.

EXPLORE

[Data for workers' rights peer learning network](#)

[Meet the participants in our data for workers' rights peer-learning network](#)

[Impact report for the Data for workers' ridge peer learning network](#)

SERVICES

- Consultancy
- Independent



Case study: Framing Responsible AI Implementation and Management (FRAIM)

The University of Sheffield’s [Framing Responsible AI Implementation and Management \(FRAIM\)](#) project aims to guide organisations planning to adopt responsible AI in practice and improve public understanding of the human aspects of AI in our everyday lives. The University wanted to embed artistic reflection and response throughout the project by appointing an artist in residence, and turned to our [Data as Culture](#) programme.

Data as Culture shortlisted a number of artists, interviewing them for an embedded role in the University's interdisciplinary research team. Blast Theory were selected for their approach to collaboration and award-winning work that introduces wide audiences to critical social and cultural questions in emerging technologies.

Blast Theory created a new mixed media artwork, ‘Constant Washing Machine’. The work invites people who work with AI to connect the good habits of everyday washing to ‘responsible AI’ practice.

FRAIM is a [Bridging Responsible AI Divides \(BRAID\) scoping project](#) funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council as part of the broader UK [Bridging Responsible AI Divides \(BRAID\) programme](#) to bring out the essential role of arts and humanities perspectives in shaping responsible AI dialogues.

EXPLORE

[Data as Culture website](#)

[Blast Theory Website](#)

[FRAIM website](#)

[Artists and researchers in-conversation \(video\)](#)

SERVICES

Research

Thought leadership



Spotlight on: Working globally

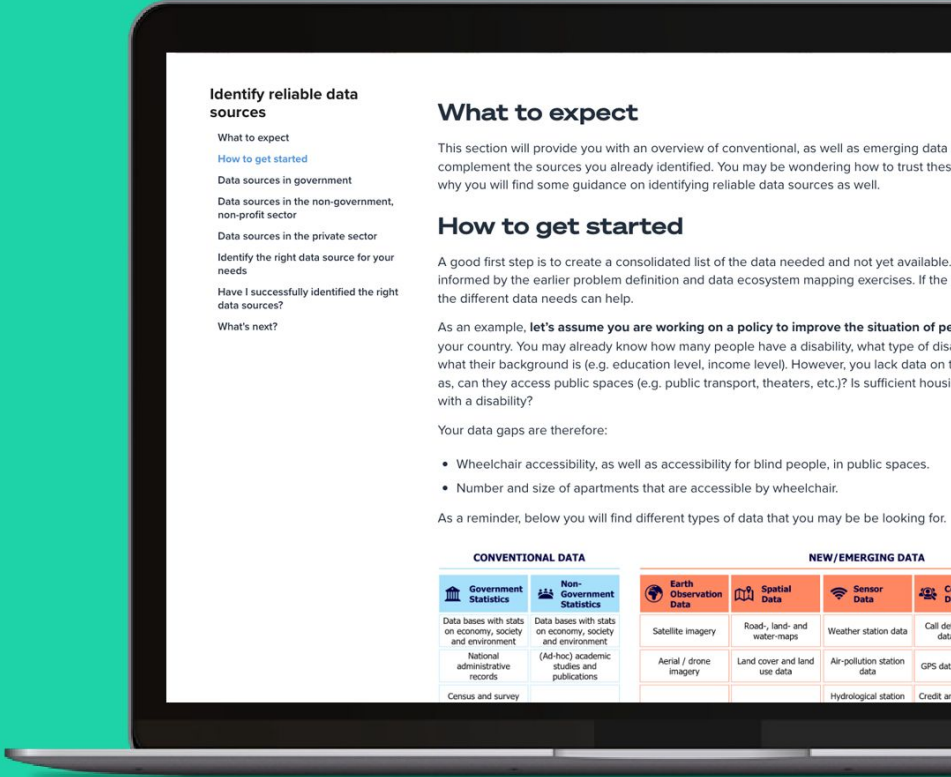
Governments around the world are trying to tap into the value of responsible data stewardship to deliver benefits to their citizens, but are at different stages of maturity. International development organisations like the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (FCDO) and the [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit \(GIZ\) GmbH](#) (Germany’s development agency) need data stewardship expertise to unlock this value.

The ODI supported the FCDO and GIZ by providing research on global best practices around open data, secure data sharing and AI governance to government agencies in Thailand and Mexico. We also delivered workshops across government departments in Iraq and Egypt, using the [Data 2 Policy Navigator](#) to support better data sharing.

This work has resulted in the launch of the [Data to Policy Navigator](#) tool, which has been used with a variety of governments around the world, and was [recently accredited as a Digital Public Good](#).

We’ve supported several data-driven initiatives via the Navigator, such as amplifying women’s voices for economic participation [by addressing access to childcare in Mexico](#). We also supported the development of the Thai digital regulator – the [Electronic Transactions Development Agency](#) – as a data institution promoting responsible digital connectivity in Thailand. We’ve developed several cohorts of data ethics leaders in South Africa, and worked with a delegation from Latin America to foster collaboration with the UK and collectively advance data and AI governance.

EXPLORE
[Data2Policy: GIZ and the ODI working together](#)
[Data2Policy Navigator](#)
[Co-creating the future of data-centric AI governance in Mexico](#)





Principle six

The world needs a new cohort of data leaders – individuals who have data knowledge and skills and are equipped to understand the value, limitations and opportunities offered by data, data practices and data sharing.

Image: From ODI's *Five-Year Strategy: Illustrated Special Print Edition*, by Adrian Philpott x DALL.E.

What we set out to achieve in 2024

In 2024, we sought to build greater data literacy for organisations worldwide and equip decision-makers and leaders with the skills they need to gather, steward and share data responsibly.

We continued to evolve our courses, with online, self-paced options allowing us to expand the reach of our learning offerings.

How did we do?

We responded to changes in the data and AI ecosystem, securing funding to develop our data-centric AI learning courses across Latin America with a continuing partnership with the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) (FCDO). New strategic global partnerships with governments in Mexico, Thailand, and South Africa have also allowed us to increase the reach of our data literacy offering, ensuring that our courses are accessible and address local contexts effectively.

Much of our learning is now online, and it's a testament to the high quality of our courses that we once again won the KPMG learning suppliers' award for our work with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

In 2024, 2,065 individuals completed our self-paced digital courses, far exceeding our targets and solidifying our position as a leader in data literacy education. We also combined our learning and membership offering, giving members access to 11 self paced courses in addition to discounts on all our other courses.

Case study: Learning and membership

Supporting the data community is core to our work, and with recent developments in AI, the work of the ODI has become more important than ever. The rate of change in technology and policy has been unprecedented, and the amount of misinformation is increasing. As an impartial, values-driven organisation we are perfectly placed to give the data community the support it needs. With our Membership programme, we have been able to achieve this through our unique capacity to convene experts and audiences across all sectors.

This year we gave members free access to 11 self paced courses (worth £1,250 +VAT), in addition to the 15% off all other courses. With topics ranging from understanding data ethics and AI to legal and regulatory frameworks, these will equip data professionals with the confidence

and skills to meet today’s data and AI challenges. We have also expanded our webinar series, with topics ranging from public policy to data-centric AI, creating opportunities to hear from experts and peers on key issues and real life challenges. These webinars are free to everyone, with priority booking for members.

In 2024 there were 17 webinars showcasing the diversity of our work. Together they attracted 5,102 bookings. Not only are these an additional benefit for members, it has been an opportunity to reach a wider audience and to work with partners.

EXPLORE

[Policy: Data and AI Roadmap for Parliament](#)

[Learning: Transforming Data into Impact](#)

[Digital Public Services: Platformland](#)

SERVICES

- Learning
- Tools



Case study: Data Ethics Professionals

Learners from diverse sectors, including government, healthcare, and private industry, share common challenges in ethical data practices, such as managing personal data privacy, mitigating bias in AI, ensuring transparency, and fostering coordinated approaches to address ethical considerations across their organisations.

Throughout the course of eight webinar sessions, supplemented by online learning, we discuss critical issues such as ethical decision-making, ethical issues around collecting and sharing data, bias in AI, and embedding data ethics in organisations. Designed for diverse roles, the course features case studies and discussions, allowing participants to apply their learning contextually and learn from a network of peers in similar roles.

Ultimately, each learner develops a personalised case study, demonstrating their understanding and earning certification in data ethics and responsible AI practices.

This year, 68 people were trained as Data Ethics Professionals, gaining competencies to minimise potential harms from data practices, including AI deployment. They now lead ethical discussions and apply ethical tools within their organisations. Their influence extends globally, with some going on to pursue PhDs in ethical data practices and others organising data ethics conferences relevant to their sector. Jessica Dervishi of PwC won a 2024 TechWomen100 award for her impactful work embedding data ethics in her organisation.

EXPLORE

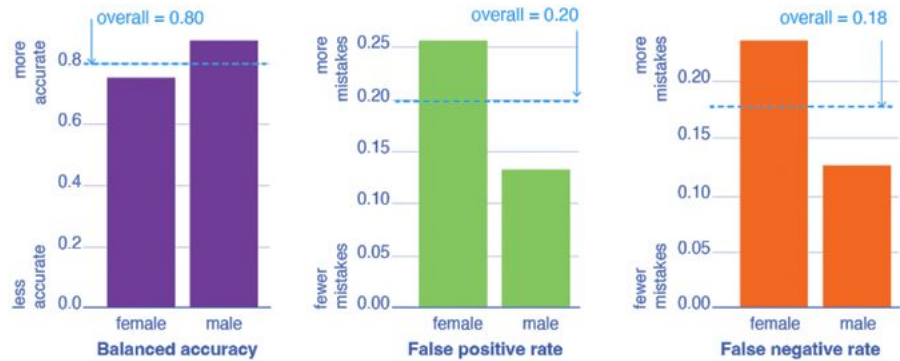
[Data Ethics Professional](#)

SERVICES

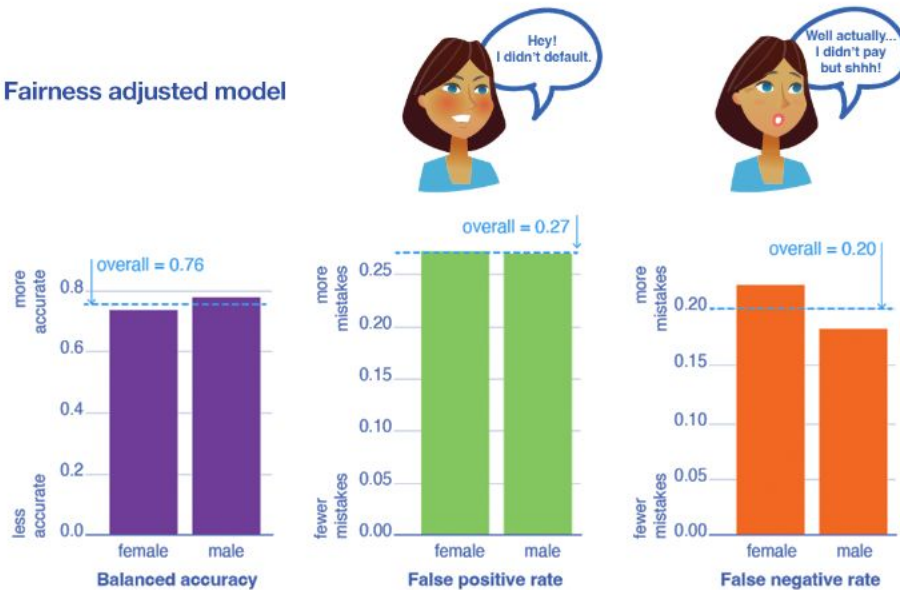
- Learning
- Tools

Data ethics case study analysis

Original model



Fairness adjusted model



Acknowledgements – our achievements in 2024 would not have been possible without the following funders:



Get in touch

For more information about how the ODI can support your data needs:

- Research
- Consulting services
- Policy
- Membership
- Learning

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