

The Role of Ethics in Establishing Guardrails for AI Innovation

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Characteristics of AI innovation

- Innovation is a combinatorial process in which knowledge is combined and recombined in new ways
- Digital technology is inherently plastic and has tremendously expanded the innovation opportunities space
- AI further accelerates the exploration of the expanding combinatorial space for digital innovation
- This creates conditions of increasing, possibly deep, uncertainty

Role and limits of ethics

- Consequentialist (utilitarian) and rules-based (deontological) approaches to ethics fail to provide guidance to innovation
- They need to be supplemented with approaches that can incrementally govern innovation decisions
- Virtue ethics, the ethics of care, and frameworks such as the capabilities approach are promising
- To be effective, they will need to guide individuals, organizations, as well as higher-level forms of governance