

The BridgeAI Project

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Abstract

This paper presents an updated overview of the "BridgeAI" project, a pioneering science-for-policy initiative funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). Now in its second year, BridgeAI continues to build upon its original goals, working towards a strategy to align Artificial Intelligence (AI) research, policy, and practical application. The project provides Portugal with an evidence-based framework to implement the EU AI Act (AIA), ensuring responsible AI innovation through multidisciplinary collaboration. BridgeAI connects academia, industry, public administration, and civil society to create actionable insights and regulatory recommendations. This paper details the project's latest advancements, key recommendations, and future directions. Although not exclusively focused on MT, the project pertains to NLP in general and ultimately to each of us as citizens.

1 Introduction

AI is reshaping industries, governance, and society at large. While it offers tremendous opportunities for economic growth and efficiency (Floridi et al., 2018), it also poses ethical, social, and environmental challenges (Novelli et al., 2023). The AIA aims to regulate AI systems to ensure safety, accountability, and human-centered design. However, implementing these regulations effectively requires collaboration between policy makers, researchers, and industry leaders (Morley et al., 2019).

Historically, the outcomes from science-policy interfaces have not proved to be straightforward

and do not usually lead to the establishment of effective collaborations (Jagannathan et al., 2023). The process by which knowledge is transferred from scientists to decision-makers is usually considered ineffective, due to a lack of understanding.

BridgeAI emerged as a response to this need, positioning Portugal as a leader in responsible AI. The 12-month project bridges the gap between AI regulation and real-world application, fostering a collective effort to create trustworthy AI products that prioritize societal well-being (Jagannathan et al., 2023). BridgeAI aims to respond to these challenges by moving towards a context-based approach that facilitates the creation of actionable knowledge at the intersection of science and practical, ethical, social, legal, and political domains. Furthermore, we aim to enhance the informed and effective implementation of the AIA in Portugal and empower stakeholders to transition from passive compliance with regulations to active participation in the responsible design of AI internationally (Floridi et al., 2018). In its second civil year, BridgeAI has focused on producing concrete recommendations for AI regulation in Portugal.

2 BridgeAI Approach and Implementation

BridgeAI employs a multidisciplinary, evidence-based approach to AI regulation. The project is structured around five key working groups (WGs):

WG0 | AI technological case studies: Foundational and transversal WG that created the case studies of AI products from the [Center for responsible AI](#), serving as the basis for other WGs.

WG1 | Risk Assessment tools in AI products: Develop a practical AI risk assessment tool for public and private entities, based on tools already available to assess responsible AI principles (Morley et al., 2019).

WG2 | AI Ethics in Regulatory Processes: Define how we should address AI ethical concerns in

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the regulatory processes and how to provide ethical training at several levels.

WG3 | AI Act interface with other regulations, norms, audits and implementation metrics: Determine the key implementation initiatives that should arise to ensure the AI Act is effectively implemented and that all are conciliated (e.g., certification, standards, audits and control).

WG4 | Advanced training and literacy: Define strategic measures for Portugal to increase levels of AI literacy and propose training programs to be developed.

WG5 | AI ethics and regulatory efforts outside the EU: Point out best practices in AI regulation and ethics being developed outside the EU and understand how Portugal can learn from these.

3 Key Partners and People

BridgeAI counts with the following partners: ANACOM, British Embassy Lisbon, Champalimaud Foundation, INESC-ID, Instituto do Conhecimento, Instituto de Telecomunicações, JLM&A, Plano Nacional de Leitura, SGS, The Alan Turing Institute, Unbabel, Universidade Católica, Universidade de Lisboa, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, and VdA. The project also counts with the participation of individual experts from the United Nations (UN), the UN AI Advisory Board, and civil society.

4 Key Recommendations

BridgeAI has formulated several strategic recommendations (SR) for Portugal's AI regulatory landscape, including:

SR 1 | Create and adapt instruments to identify and assess potential risks associated with AI applications, facilitating compliance with the AI Act.

SR 2 | Create red teams, specialized teams for adversarial testing, to identify vulnerabilities and risks in AI systems, helping companies design and deploy better AI systems.

SR 3 | Establish an AI regulatory sandbox, a controlled environment to test and validate disruptive AI solutions before full-scale deployment.

SR 4 | Launch an AI literacy survey to understand what citizens know about AI and create multidisciplinary AI literacy initiatives.

Furthermore, there was a unanimous recommendation: Portugal needs **agility, continuity, and talent**. Agility to build new bridges and innovate responsibly through collaboration. Continuity to

deepen impact and strengthen multidisciplinary partnerships. And talent—across universities, companies, and public administration—to lead Portugal toward new opportunities for growth and societal well-being.

5 Next Steps and Future Directions

Moving forward, BridgeAI will finalize and deliver a positional paper with all the project's recommendations to the Portuguese public administration, presenting it to relevant governmental and regulatory bodies to support AI policy implementation. Additionally, the project aims to strengthen engagement with governmental bodies to facilitate the seamless adoption of its recommendations, and expand international collaborations to align Portuguese AI regulations with global standards.

6 Acknowledgements

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