

To stem abuse, city launches regulations for an artificial intelligence–powered New York

Deffenbaugh, Ryan . Crain's New York Business ; New York Vol. 37, Iss. 38, (Oct 25, 2021): 13.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

For all its ability to speed government services and boost jobs in the technology industry, artificial intelligence carries the potential for abuses, including "explicit, outright discrimination," if not properly regulated, a new city report warns.

The 115-page "New York City AI Strategy" document, published Oct. 13 by John Paul Farmer, Mayor Bill de Blasio's chief technology officer, is the most comprehensive municipal effort yet to understand how algorithms and automation are likely to influence how New Yorkers live.

"Artificial intelligence and machine learning are rapidly assuming integral roles in everyday life," Farmer said in the report's introduction. "But the general public and some key decision-makers do not yet understand them well."

The possibility of AI abuses is an issue that lawmakers are grappling with at many levels. Advisers to President Joe Biden recently suggested he spearhead a technology "bill of rights" aimed at protecting Americans from artificial intelligence tools that invade privacy or discriminate.

Human biases

One major area of concern is that decision-making programs powered by AI have human biases baked in, affecting how people are hired, admitted to schools and even criminally sentenced. A bill under review in the City Council, for instance, would require online hiring tools that rely on artificial intelligence for decision-making to be audited for biases.

The city report, which describes itself as a baseline to help guide lawmakers' decisions, says:

* New York City has become a hub for the industry, capturing 13% of all U.S. jobs in artificial intelligence and \$7 billion in private investment. The city is also a base for AI research by Facebook, Google and Microsoft, as well as by health centers including Mount Sinai.

* The growth of the technology necessitates that city regulators have a grasp of how it works, such as how the Taxi and Limousine Commission must understand how Lyft and Uber use AI to predict demand, price rides and dispatch drivers.

* Government has used the technology to uncover potential locations with lead contamination in water and to identify students at risk of not graduating. More controversial uses include algorithms in the court that assess whether a person should be released before trial and facial-recognition technology employed in NYPD investigations.

* The city developed an AI program to automatically analyze the 15,000 utility bills the Division of Energy Management pays each month for facilities. The system spotted small anomalies and errors that added up to \$4.5 million in refunds in the past two years.

The report stops short of recommending any direct policies. It suggests the city consider how to better harness AI to share data among departments and with the public, through the New York City Open Data website. It also suggests officials open up more career-training programs in the AI and machine-learning fields as well as engage the public to hear how use of the technology has affected them.

DETAILS

Subject:	Algorithms; Artificial intelligence; Decision making
Location:	New York City New York United States--US
Publication title:	Crain's New York Business; New York
Volume:	37
Issue:	38
First page:	13
Publication year:	2021
Publication date:	Oct 25, 2021
Publisher:	Crain Communications, Incorporated
Place of publication:	New York
Country of publication:	United States, New York
Publication subject:	Business And Economics
ISSN:	8756789X
Source type:	Trade Journal
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	2587176004
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/stem-abuse-city-launches-regulations-artificial/docview/2587176004/se-2?accountid=44910
Copyright:	Copyright 2021 Crain Communications Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Last updated:	2021-10-28
Database:	ABI/INFORM Collection

Database copyright © 2021 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)