MeMo: KI

Meinungsmonitor
Künstliche Intelligenz

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Opinion Monitor Artificial Intelligence [MeMo:KI]

A joint research project by the University of Düsseldorf and the Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) to gauge long-term public opinion and media coverage of artificial intelligence in Germany.

Artificial intelligence is undoubtedly one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Technologies such as ChatGPT already give us an idea of how AI applications will radically transform all areas of our society. If we wish to shape this transformation democratically, then people need to form a rational opinion on AI and be aware of its benefits and risks.

People who are responsible for making decisions tend to rely on their personal impression of "public opinion" in order to bolster their (own) position. This can have far-reaching consequences for the use and design of AI, for example if public money is invested on the basis of a feeling about public opinion. This is where the Opinion Monitor Artificial Intelligence [MeMo:KI] comes in: as an alternative to anecdotal knowledge, it provides an empirical database and thus a reliable picture of what people think about AI. This can help decision-makers, since they can base their decisions on sound scientific findings. The reasons for rejecting, approving of, or using artificial intelligence can thus be open and transparent, and help encourage the shaping of the technology in a democratic way.

What do people think about artificial intelligence?

How do the media report on artificial intelligence?

Who talks about artificial intelligence on Twitter?

Underlying idea of the project

The Opinion Monitor Artificial Intelligence pursues a dual objective. First, as a monitoring tool, it provides the public, academic and political domains with information on developments in public and published opinion on artificial intelligence. Second, as a long-term project in the social sciences, it helps describe and explain scientifically the digital transformation of society and the debate surrounding the use of artificial intelligence.

Project funding

The Opinion Monitor Artificial Intelligence [MeMo:KI] has been funded by Stiftung Mercator since April 2021. The pilot phase of the project from January 2020 to March 2021 was successfully implemented together with the University of Düsseldorf research team and with funding from the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Monitoring opinion and discussion

The project draws on a range of methods from the social sciences.

1. Monitoring opinion

A monthly survey of the general public[1] collects the following information:

- AI-related attitudes (desirability of AI in different areas, perceptions of risk)

- Knowledge and ideas about AI

- Actual use of AI products and behavioral intentions

2. Monitoring media coverage

The published discourse is monitored through a monthly analysis and semi-automatic evaluation of the 34 largest print and online media. This shows which topics are reported on in connection with AI and which perspectives on the topic dominate media coverage.

3. Monitoring Twitter

We examined Twitter activities around the topic of AI every six months in 2021/2022, on the one hand identifying the key actors in communication ("Who is talking about AI?"), and on the other providing information about their network structures ("Who networks with whom on the topic of AI?").

We prepare the results for the general public and make them available in the form of graphs on the project website[2]. The general public and interested stakeholders can obtain information via the online dashboard. This is where the results of the survey, for example of the group-specific desirability of AI in various areas of application, can be accessed interactively (see Fig. 1).

Meinungsmonitor Künstliche Intelligenz

[1] Approx. 1,000 people aged 18 and over in Germany who use the Internet at least occasionally.

[2] More information at www.cais-research.de/forschung/me-moki

Figure 1: Results of the monthly survey on artificial intelligence as presented in the dashboard.

Scientific evaluation

While the most important goal of the monitoring is to provide the general public with information about the public discourse and its impact on people's attitudes toward AI, the team also analyzes the causes behind changes in opinion. Together with representatives in civil society, we also research particularly pressing current issues in topic-specific special studies, e.g. on the role of AI in the world of work and sustainability, on AI in art and culture, and on the effects of large-scale language models such as ChatGPT.

- The research results of the thematically different special surveys are presented on the website as easy-to-understand factsheets

- Publication of studies in the form of specialist articles

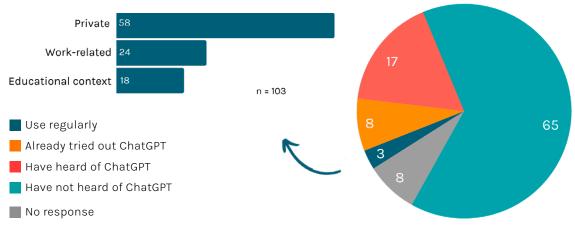- Deeper exploration of relevant developments

Figure 2: Example of a special survey conducted in 2022/23. Awareness and context of use of ChatGPT.

Private 58
Work-related 24
Educational context 18
n = 103

- Use regularly
- Already tried out ChatGPT
- Have heard of ChatGPT
- Have not heard of ChatGPT
- No response

17
8
3
8
65

N=1,028 respondents; figures in %; 2023/calendar week 4; population aged 18 and over.