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Draft algorithm charter

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How is Open Data used by small businesses and start-ups? (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/how-is-open-data-used-by-small-b[...].esses-and-start-ups/)

How is Open Data used by big business? (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/how-is-open-data-used-by-big-business/)

How is Open Data used by social enterprises? (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/how-is-open-data-used-by-social-enterprises/)

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Draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/draft-algorithm-charter/)

Submissions summary: draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/submissions-summary-draft-algorithm-charter/)

Algorithm assessment report (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/algorithm-assessment-report/)

Related algorithm work (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/related-algorithm-work/)

Responding to the algorithm assessment (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/responding-to-the-algorithm-assessment/)

Video: transparency and accountability of government algorithms (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/video-transparency-and-accountability-of-government-algorithms/)

Updated 28 February 2020

The draft *Algorithm charter* commits government agencies to use algorithms in a fair, ethical, and transparent way.

Draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Draft-Algorithm-Charter-for-consultation.pdf) [PDF 255 KB]

Draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/draft-algorithm-charter/#charter) [HTML]

Consultation on the draft algorithm charter

Public consultation on the draft Algorithm charter closed on 31 December 2019. Thank you to those who provided feedback. A summary of submissions is now available. Updates about the draft charter will be published here in due course. If you have any questions please email us at datalead@stats.govt.nz (mailto:datalead@stats.govt.nz).

Submissions summary: draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/submissions-summary-draft-algorithm-charter/) [HTML]

Submissions summary: draft algorithm charter (https://data.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Algorithms/Draft-Algorithm-Charter-Summary-of-Submissions-February-2020.pdf) [PDF 225 KB]

Computer algorithms

Computer algorithms are now a fundamental element of data analytics. Algorithms support the services that government provides to people in New Zealand and to help deliver new, innovative, and well targeted policies to achieve government aims.

What are operational algorithms?

The draft charter would apply to operational algorithms as defined on page 7 of the *Algorithm assessment report*: These are analytical processes that interpret or evaluate information (often using large or complex data sets) that result in, or materially inform, decisions that impact significantly on individuals or groups. They may use personal information about the individuals or groups concerned, but do not need to do so exclusively.

Algorithm assessment report (https://data.govt.nz/use-data/analyse-data/government-algorithm-transparency-and-accountability/algorithm-assessment-report/)

Improving government algorithmic transparency and accountability

In a world where technology is moving rapidly, and Artificial Intelligence is on the rise, it's essential that government has the right safeguards in place when it uses public data for decision-making. The government must ensure that data ethics are embedded in its work, and always keep in mind the people and communities being served by these tools.

In 2018, the Government Chief Data Steward undertook a review of how government agencies use algorithms to improve the lives of New Zealanders and found that there's room to promote good practice across the data system.

Government Chief Data Steward (https://data.govt.nz/about/government-chief-data-steward-gcds/)

A commitment to improve government algorithms

The draft *Algorithm charter* commits government agencies to improve transparency and accountability in their use of algorithms over the next five years.

The *Algorithm charter* draws on the *Principles for the safe and effective use of data and analytics* co-designed with the Privacy Commissioner and provides specific actions for agencies to ensure that they have the right tools and safeguards in place to increase transparency and ethical practice.

Principles for the safe and effective use of data and analytics (http://www.stats.govt.nz/about-us/data-leadership#principles)

Privacy Commissioner (https://www.privacy.org.nz/)

Draft algorithm charter

Across the government data system, algorithms have a key role in supporting agencies to undertake their work to improve the lives of people in New Zealand. This charter exists to demonstrate government's commitment to using algorithms in a fair and transparent way.

Our organisation is committed to transparent and accountable use of operational algorithms and other advanced data analytics techniques that inform decisions significantly impacting on individuals or groups. Over the next 5 years we will use the *Principles for safe and effective use of data and analytics* in our work. We will draw on best practice guidance where it exists.

This means we will:

- clearly explain how significant decisions are informed by algorithms and be clear where this isn't done for reasons of greater public good (for example, national security)
- embed a Te Ao Māori perspective in algorithm development or procurement
- take into account the perspectives of communities, such as LGBTQI+, Pasifika and people with disabilities as appropriate
- identify and consult with groups or stakeholders with an interest in algorithm development
- publish information about how data are collected and stored
- upon request, offer technical information about algorithms and the data they use
- use tools and processes to ensure that privacy, ethics, and human rights considerations are integrated as a part of algorithm development and procurement
- regularly collect and review data relating to the implementation and operation of algorithms, and periodically assess this for unintended consequences, for example bias
- have a robust approach for peer-reviewing these findings
- clearly explain who is responsible for automated decisions and what methods exist for challenge or appeal via a .nan.

Signatures

The charter will be signed by the organisation's chief executive, chief information officer, and chief privacy officer.