

Università degli studi di Padova

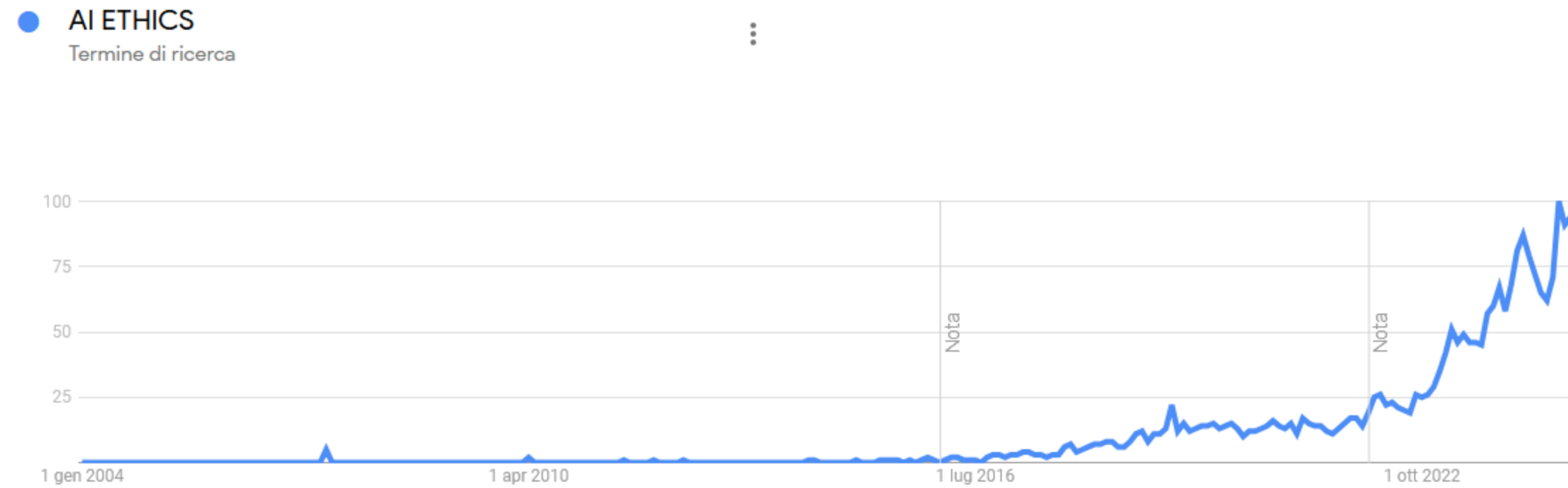
Perspectives

On the ethics of edtech

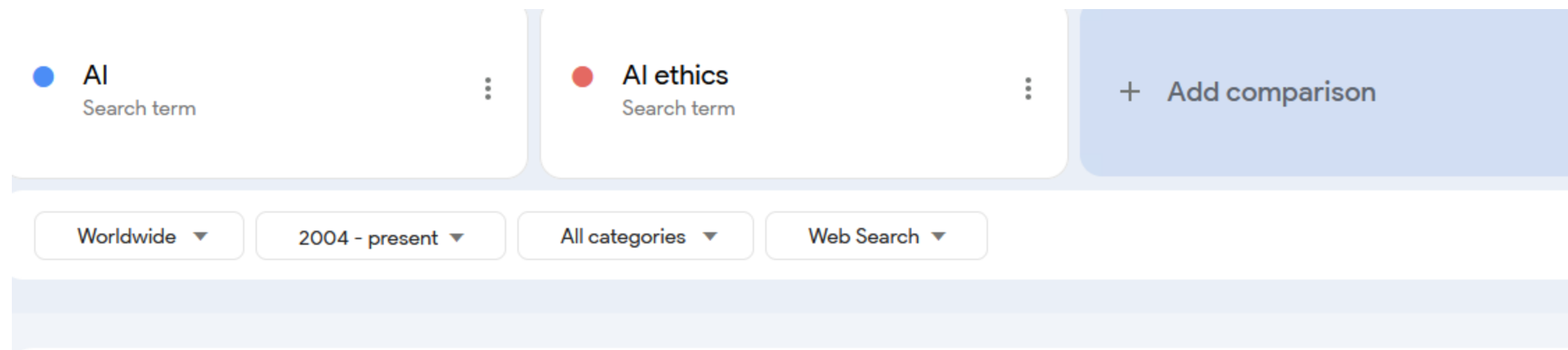
Outline

- 01 Ethics in the UE discourse
- 02 What's the problem with universal recommendations?
- 03 Postdigital Critique
- 04 Topological Critique
- 05 Epistemic Justice Critique
- 06 Affective infrastructures' critique
- 07 Ethics does not belong to the machines

Ethics goes to the bar...



But AI is already there...



Interest over time ?



AI

Interest by region ?

Region ▾



AI ethics

Interest by region ?

Region ▾



My starting point

Fair Data Cultures in Higher Education

[Home](#) [News](#) [Perspectives](#) [Mapping Practices](#) [The Space](#) [Publications](#)

If you are here

It is because you care. Because you want to know, understand and transform educational practice and research, in relation to the emerging phenomenon of datafication.

What can I do?

Higher Education Dynamics 59

Juliana E. Raffaghelli
Albert Sangrà *Editors*

Data Cultures in Higher Education

Emergent Practices and the Challenge
Ahead

 Springer



collana
Didattiche, Tecnologie e Media Education
Frontiere per la sostenibilità

Juliana Elisa Raffaghelli

(Post)Digital Scholarship

Professionalità accademica
e trasformazione digitale in università




Pensa
MULTIMEDIA

Data, a geopolitical problem: between regulations and building infrastructural sovereignty

EU pros & cons

10% PMI / 25% GI adopts IA
2-3 mln inversion EU 6-9 Asia 12 US

EU “Digital Colony”?

GDPR
(+)



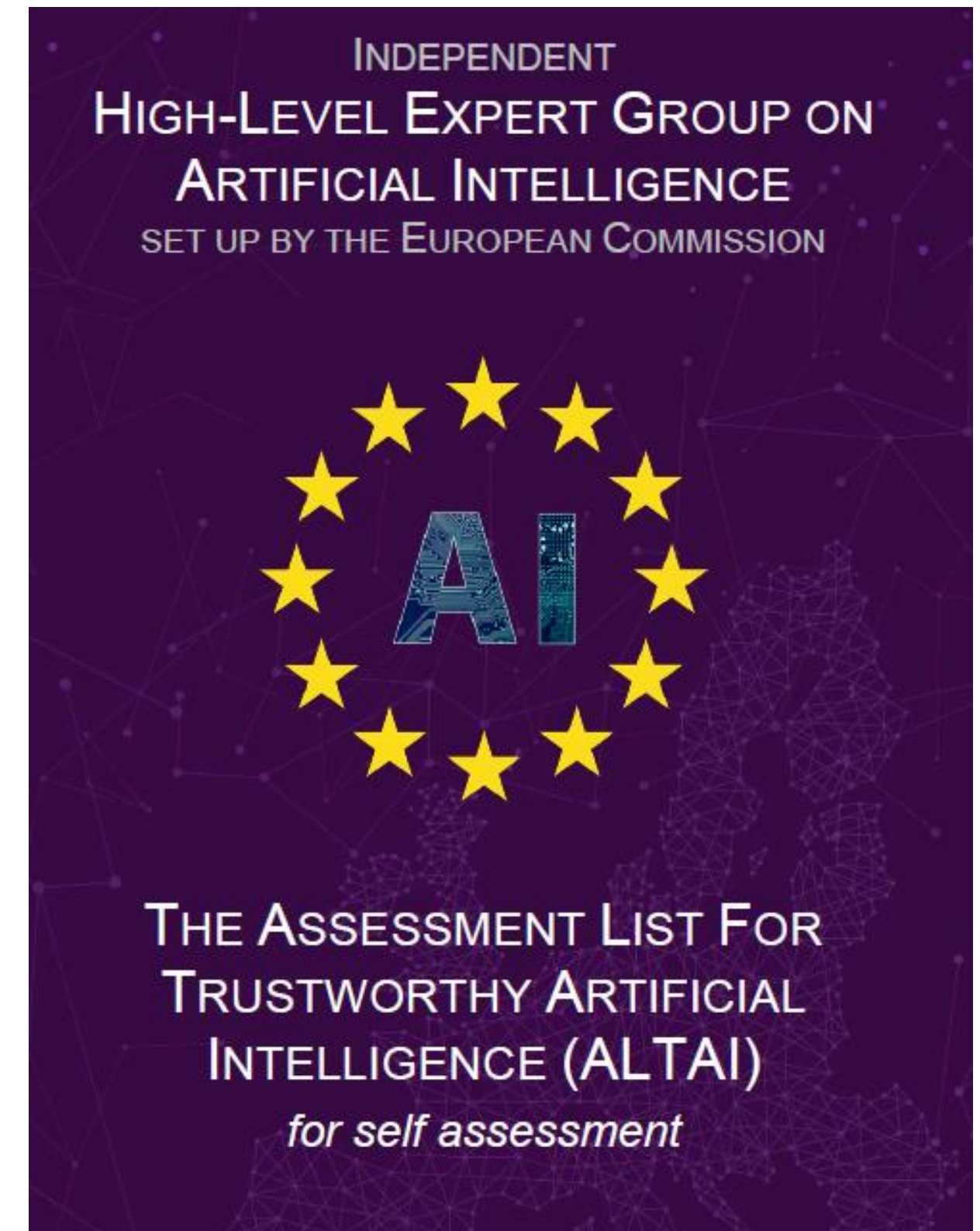
Ethics in the UE discourse

2019

- Human Agency & Oversight
- Technical Robustness and Safety
- Privacy & Data Governance
- Transparency
- Diversity, non-discrimination & Fairness
- Societal & Environmental Well-Being
- Accountability

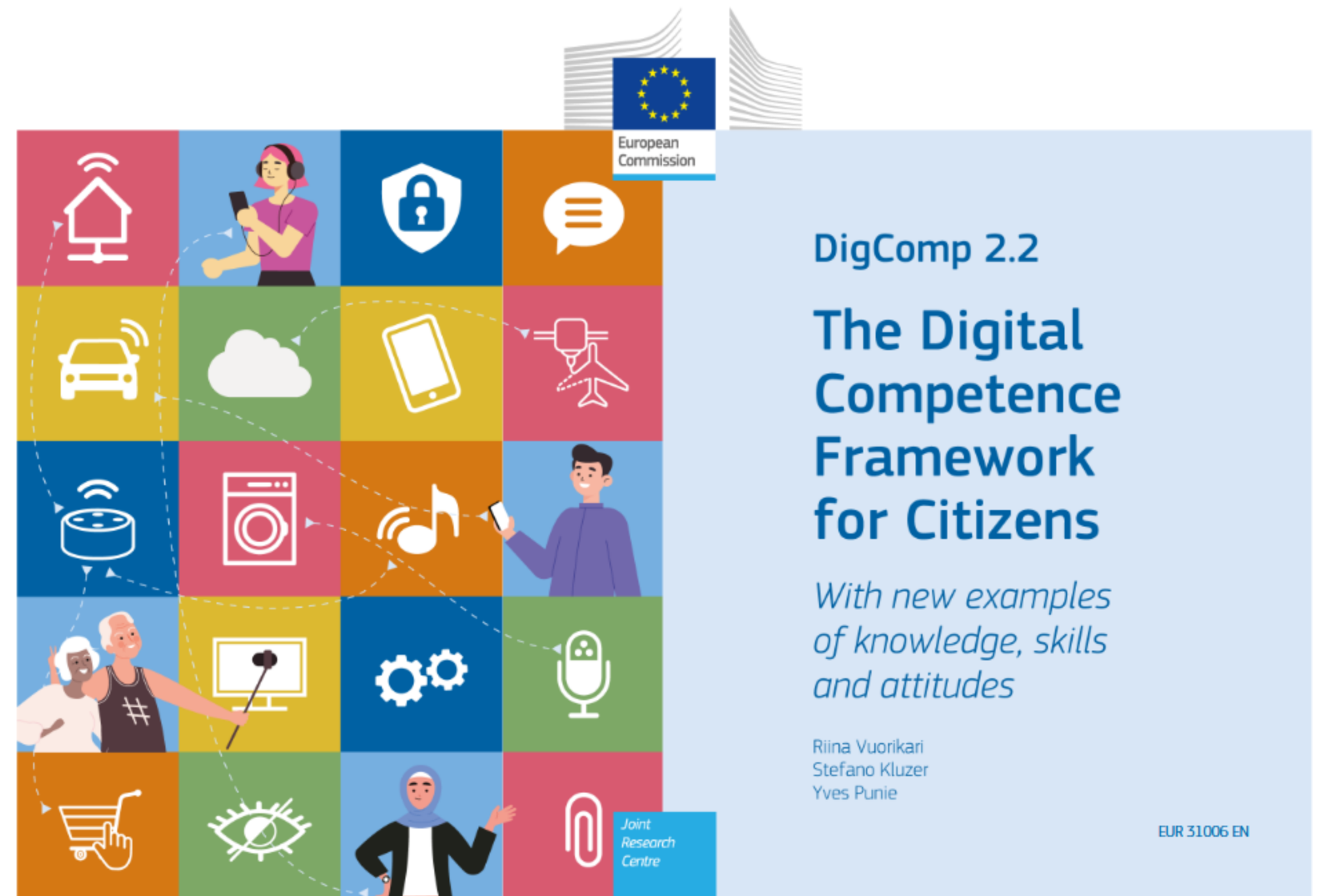
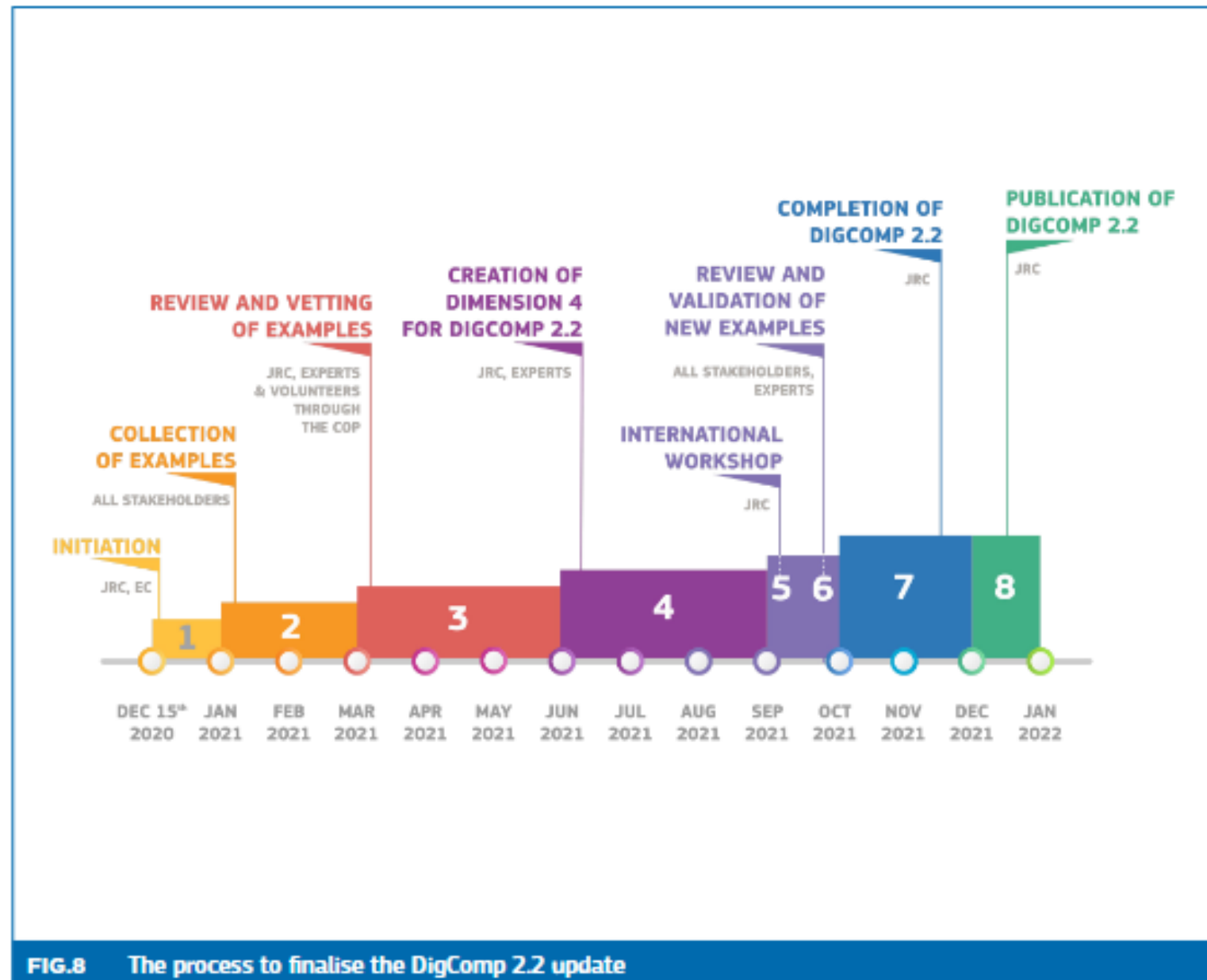
2020

- White book on AI: An European approach for Excellence and Trust



DigComp 2.2.

2022



Ethical Guidelines on the use of AI and Data in ED

2022

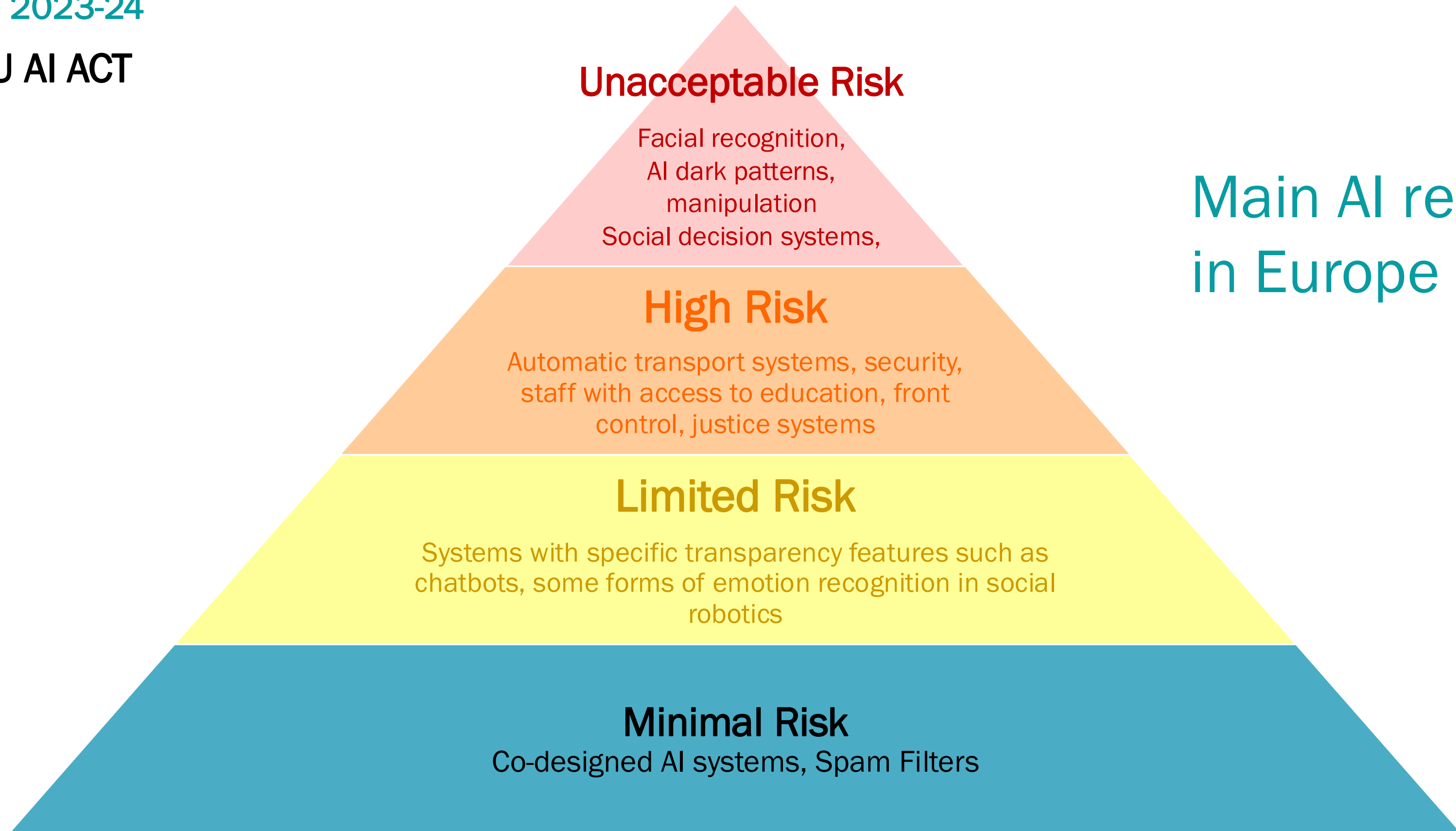
- 1  **Human Agency and Oversight**
- 2  **Transparency**
- 3  **Diversity, non-Discrimination and Fairness**
- 4  **Societal and Environmental Wellbeing**
- 5  **Privacy and Data Governance**
- 6  **Technical Robustness and Safety**
- 7  **Accountability**



2023-24

EU AI ACT

Main AI regulation in Europe



What's the problem with universal recommendations?

- Universal guidelines encounter the dilemmas of situated human activity (Tamburrini, 2020).
- Guidelines might be in open contradiction between each other (e.g.: openness or transparency vs. privacy, Raffaghelli, forthcoming)
- Actors might find the recommendations too abstract and too distant from their practice (e.g.: check for a system algorithmic biases)
- An ethics of values (*deontology*) or an ethics of consequences/impact (*consequentialism*)?



A postdigital critique

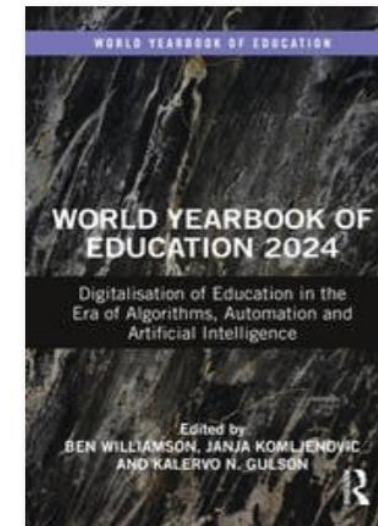
The problem of universalism applied to the ex-ante definition of a set of skills and competences.

The politics of digital literacy frameworks and their liaison with EdTech Myths (Pangrazio & Sefton-Green, 2024)

Dealing with the liminality of AI and technology (postdigital stance)

Is AI literacy teachable? Is AI literacy on ethics teachable?

BUT...Pay attention to the critique of critique!



Chapter

Digital literacies as a 'soft power' of educational governance

By [Luci Pangrazio](#) , [Julian Sefton-Green](#) 

Book [World Yearbook of Education 2024](#)

The Errors of Thamus: An Analysis of Technology Critique

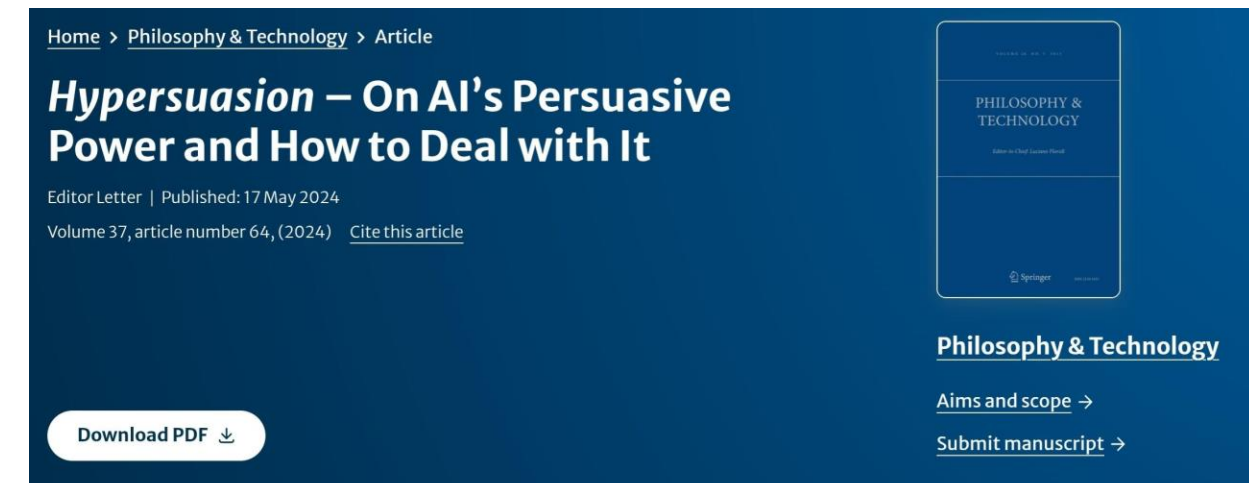
Ellen Rose
University of New Brunswick

The anti-utopian technology critique of Ellul, Postman, and other important social analysts has been the primary mode of critical response to technological developments since the 1950s. However, this mode of technology critique has had a disappointingly small effect on the way we, as a society, receive technology. Rather than attribute this failure to the negativity of the anti-utopian perspective, this article suggests that there are other important and largely overlooked factors at work—in particular, the critics' inability to speak about technology in a way that relates to us as

For your invention will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it, through lack of practice at using their memory, as through reliance on writing they are reminded from outside by alien marks, not from inside, themselves by themselves: you have discovered an elixir not of memory but of reminding. To your students, you give an appearance of wisdom, not the reality of it; having heard much, in the absence of teaching, they will appear to know much when for the most part they know nothing, and they

A topological critique

- Ethics applied to a private platform might work perfectly protecting PRIVACY being also much more ROBUST.
- BUT the digital infrastructure will not be aligned with digital sovereignty.
- Applied captology will limit users' agency (Floridi, 2024).
- Forgotten materiality of the digital, data and AI
- Do we need a topological analysis of data infrastructures behind AI as first, ethical and deontological choice?



Floridi Luciano ✉

2605 Accesses 1 Altmetric Explore all metrics ->

Persuasion (including manipulation and nudge) is the counterpart of *coercion*; both are forms of *control*, and hence belong to the art of politics, understood as the (preferably legitimate) control of people's behaviours (Floridi, 2020). Let me

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Sections

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References

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The Topologies of Data Practices: A Methodological Introduction

Original | Open access | Published: 15 January 2021

Volume 10, pages 67–84, (2021) Cite this article

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Mathias Decuyper ✉

An epistemic justice critique

- The values behind AI ethical frameworks in education are based on «universal values».
- In time, these values refer to the Western philosophical debates and background.
- Also, edu research is prevalently driven by Global North academics.
- Which is the contribution of indigenous backgrounds, i.e. the Ubuntu/African (self through others, Gwawa et al., 2022) view of technology, or the tequiologias (Aguilar, 2020)?




Patterns




Volume 3, Issue 4, 8 April 2022, 100462

Perspective

The role of the African value of Ubuntu in global AI inclusion discourse: A normative ethics perspective

Arthur Gwagwa¹ , Emre Kazim^{2,3}, Airlie Hilliard^{3,4}


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The bigger picture

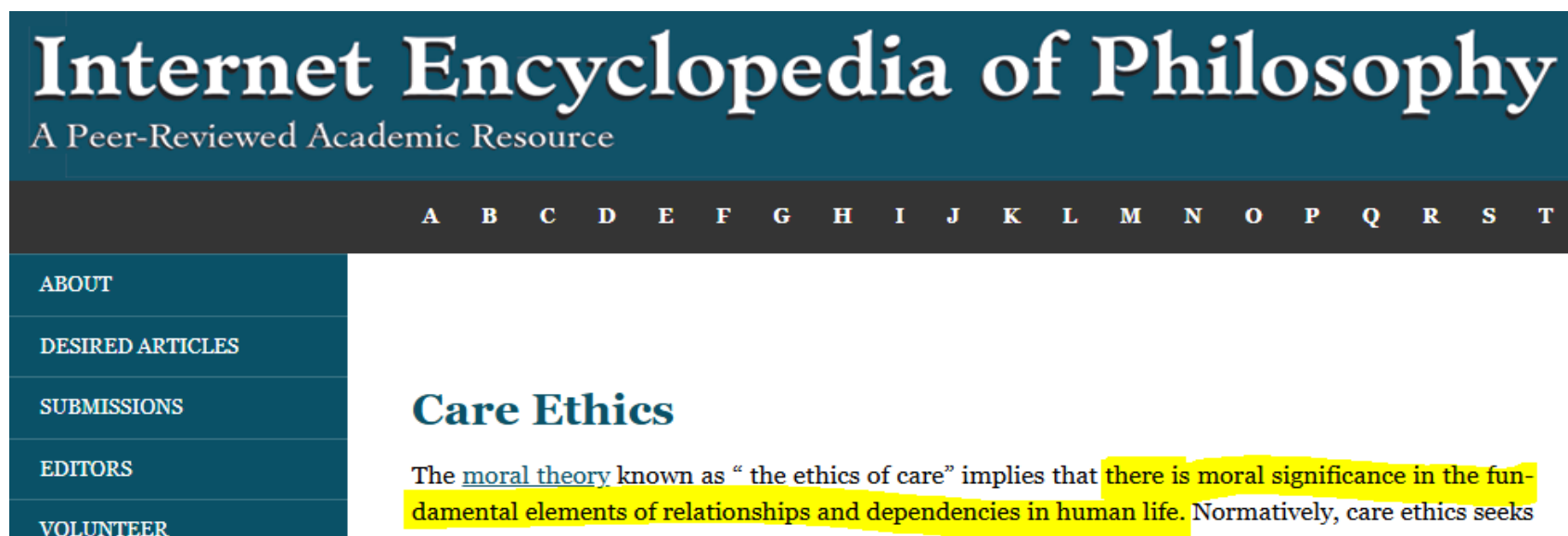
AI's social and economic benefits and its challenges to the African social and cultural perspectives are beginning to catch the attention of African policy makers if judged by the proliferation of AI think tanks and empirically grounded policy recommendations. However, unlike other regional blocks, like the EU, unified African positions and approaches in global AI ethics forums remain sparse. Although the current universal ethical guidelines and principles can provide Africa with a common ground with other cultures, care is needed in localizing these principles, as they may not be applicable in the African context.

Affective infrastructures' critique

Why do we neglect
an ethics of care,
that takes into
account the
affective
infrastructures?

*The circulation of affects between bodies can be analysed through affective economies and emotional glues. Starting from the idea that the experience of emotions cannot be separated from the experience of affects, **affective economies articulate how emotions operate in the intensity with which bodies are entangled.** Emotions align individuals with communities and social spaces in intensities mediated by the ways in which they are affected and, as subjects are immersed in a network that includes not only people, but also spaces, institutions and discourses, **affect appears as an unintentional mediator** of the relationships between individuals and their environment.*

Stephanie Martinic, PhD student, 2025



Ethics does not belong to the machine

Points to discuss (place to the center of our educational intervention):

- How can we deal with the centrality of teachers and learners' ethics as a **PRACTICE, POLITICS AND AGENCY** where...
- **...RESPONSIBILITY** for the other is key (the non-banality of our actions, beyond norms and correct procedures)?
- **BUT...**
- **...Is responsibility teachable/learnable? Which are the limits of our professional intervention as educators?**



Thank You!