

Foreword

Artificial intelligence is a tool. While curating the articles within this edition the editorial team was guided by two main questions: what is African AI and where is its utility? The African continent has begun to pursue its utility in the areas of health, education, finance, and the delivery of digital government services among others. This edition of JIPIT dedicates its full breadth to the analysis of the use of AI in Africa and its impact on privacy, security, democracy, and legal services.

This edition is to be read as a companion to the events of March 2023 at the inaugural Conference on the State of Artificial Intelligence in Africa held by CIPIT at the Strathmore University campus. The COSAA Report and Policy Brief are also useful companions to this edition. The JIPIT AI Edition seeks to demonstrate first, that the use of and considerations around Artificial Intelligence is not just the purview of the Global North and second that the State of AI in Africa is a multisector analysis.

Algorithms and data are the scaffolding of AI. While Africa has made great strides in defining, enacting, and regulating Data Protection laws, it is still at the nascent stage of development, especially developing algorithms and populating datasets unique to Africa. This does not mean however that there is a void in this type of emerging technology on the continent. We hope that this edition cements the fundamental thought that the successful development of AI to solve African problems will only occur by developing algorithms and databases that are cognizant of the African context.

Dr. Melissa Omino,
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