Digital ethics guidelines
Ambitions and support with developing trustworthy digital services

Version 2.0 – public

Content

1. Classification and scope **2**

2. Guiding principles and ambitions **3**

Make a difference 3

Make it good 4

Make it fair 5

Make it understandable 6

3. Step by step towards ethical actions **7**

What if dilemmas do arise? 7

4. Annex **8**

Our principles and values 8

Glossary 9

1. Classification and scope

Why are there "digital ethics guidelines"?

The trustworthy handling of technology, data and algorithms is a critical factor of success when it comes to implementing the "Swiss Post of tomorrow" strategy and the digital future viability it contains. These "digital ethics guidelines" show how we want to develop digital and data-driven services and business models based on our values – and go beyond data protection guidelines and security and compliance directives. This makes our services secure, trustworthy, sustainable and in line with the expectations of users and society.

How should the "digital ethics guidelines" be read?

The "digital ethics guidelines" list four guiding principles which we use for orientation purposes. These guiding principles come with various ambitions which we have formulated for the development of digital services. Dilemmas should not be excluded: conflicts of interest can arise between our ambitions and quantitative targets. The way to proceed with dilemmas or concerns is outlined in the "step by step towards ethical actions" section.

Scope

The "digital ethics guidelines" should be taken into account for new and existing digital or data-driven Swiss Post products and services.

Target group

The "digital ethics guidelines" are primarily aimed at all Swiss Post employees. Be it management or employees, working strategically or actively in implementation: all of us can and must take responsibility for handling our digital services ethically across their life cycle, thereby seizing an opportunity to differentiate ourselves on the market.

The "digital ethics guidelines" (or at least parts of them) may also be aimed at the general public, in order to show what our role is in developing digital and data-driven services.

This is a shortened version of the digital ethics guidelines that are publicly accessible. The internal version also contains a section with specific tips and notes. These reference internal processes and documents and have therefore been omitted.

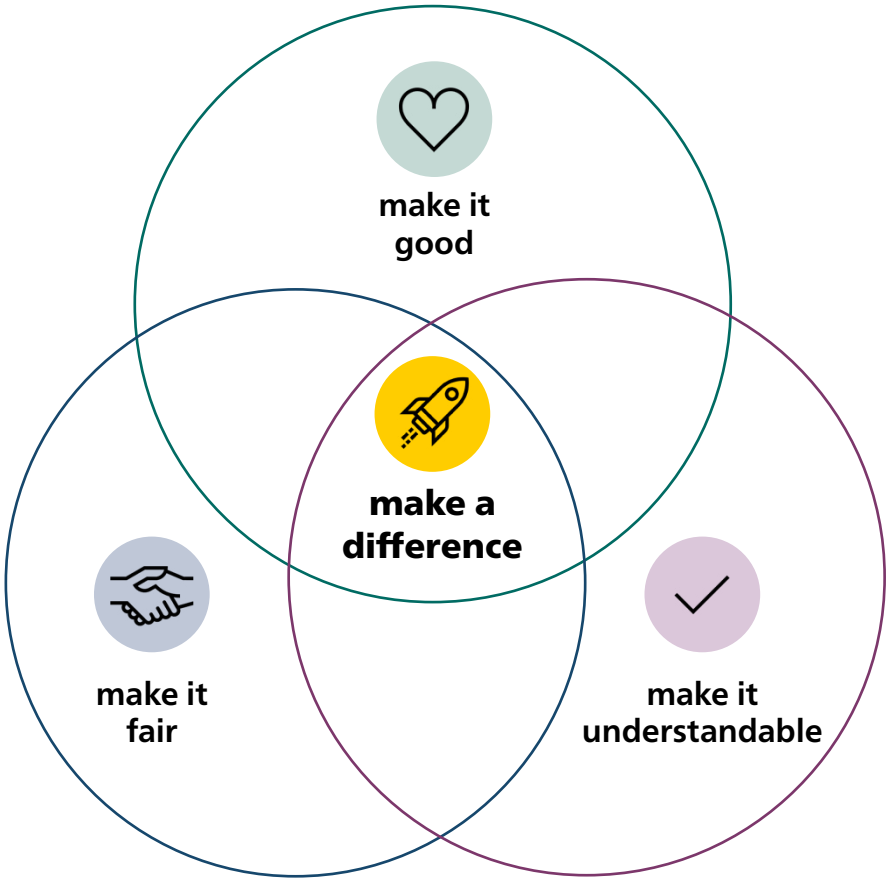
2. Guiding principles and ambitions

Make a difference

At Swiss Post, we see digital ethics as an opportunity. An opportunity to drive forward the digital transformation in wider society and to differentiate ourselves on the market. In this way, we want to play a pioneering role in digital ethics on the market. To seize this opportunity, we need to take further measures beyond regular compliance requirements.

Central to this is our goal: : **Make a difference!**

We can achieve this by making our digital services **good**, **fair** and **clear**.
We have listed what this specifically means as part of our ambitions on the following pages.



Make it good.

Trustworthy handling of data is the basic condition for operationalizing ethical services and products. We consider all stakeholders and take into account the impacts of our activities on them.



Impact

- We know the stakeholders of our project and determine what positive and negative impacts it has or may have on the stakeholders.
- If we identify negative impacts, we evaluate how we can reduce these with suitable measures.
- If the negative impacts of the project outweigh the economic benefits, we stop pursuing it.



Data usage

- We conceptualize our projects in such a way that the goals and purposes of data usage are clearly defined.
- We know the available data sources and their conditions of use, and can estimate whether the basis is suitable and reasonable enough.
- We attach great importance to a qualitatively high-value data basis, because our services are only as good as our data.



Security

- We take all necessary precautions to guarantee data and model security, and to protect against unauthorized access.
- We only put solutions on the market if they meet our security and quality standards and have been tested accordingly.

Make it fair.

People's needs are at the heart of digitization. We promote our users' freedom of choice and consider their privacy.



Sovereignty

- We give our users the information they need to make informed and independent decisions on whether, and for how long, they wish to consent to their data being used.
- We create procedural and technical possibilities for this consent to be granted or revoked easily by the user.
- We avoid exploiting our stakeholders' ignorance or inactivity to procure any more personal data from them than is necessary.



No marginalization

- We ensure that no-one is discriminated against based on their data (its basis or processing) or based on the model.
- We enable users to access to a service in a manner that they accept (online or offline).



Appropriateness

- We do not mislead users, and do not try to lead them towards a desired outcome through ignorance or ambiguity.
- We check that all technology (analytics, AI systems), methods and tools we use are necessary and suitable for the planned purpose.
- We have humans review automated recommendations and decisions from AI systems if they produce a decision or judgement about a data subject.

Make it understandable.

We are accountable for our work, communicate transparently and take feedback seriously.



Transparency

– We communicate transparently, and in a manner appropriate to the specific target group, about our goals, intentions and use of data.

– We act transparently towards the relevant stakeholders if AI models are being used.



Documentation and responsibilities

– We ensure that data processing is traceable and document our work steps.

– We ensure that responsibilities for the procurement, approval, use and exploitation of data and models are regulated, and that these regulations are complied with.



Feedback and means of redress

– We take feedback seriously and pay heed to it.

– We offer the possibility of reporting erroneous or wrong decisions (e.g. ones supported by algorithmic systems) easily.

3. Step by step towards ethical actions

What if dilemmas do arise?

Dilemmas do arise and can also persist. In such situations, it is important to look at the case from various angles and find a solution together. These steps can help.



Be aware

We know Swiss Post's digital ethics guidelines and know what significance and impact (un)ethical behaviour can have for users, customers, employees and society.



Be competent

We know methods and approaches (ethics by design) or know where we can acquire this knowledge for ourselves in order to deal with potential digital ethics dilemmas at an early stage and find suitable approaches.



Be consistent

We act according to basic digital ethics principles and values, adhere to our "digital ethics guidelines" and request the same commitment from other employees.



Speak up

If there are signs that digital ethics principles and values are not being adhered to, we talk about it and show how the situation can be improved – primarily through a direct discussion or by getting the line manager involved.



Get support

If differing opinions persist, we consider other perspectives in order to view the concern or dilemma in a more holistic way.

- Getting team members or the leader involved.
- If differing perspectives persist, the Swiss Post digital ethics department can be involved in order to offer support and find a solution (contact)
- We may bring in an external expert (subject to confidentiality obligations) to examine the situation.



Learn & be a role model

We ask questions, share input across team borders, take on feedback and look for solutions collectively. We learn from past experiences, document them and continuously exchange information in the network.

4. Annex

Our principles and values

Damage avoidance

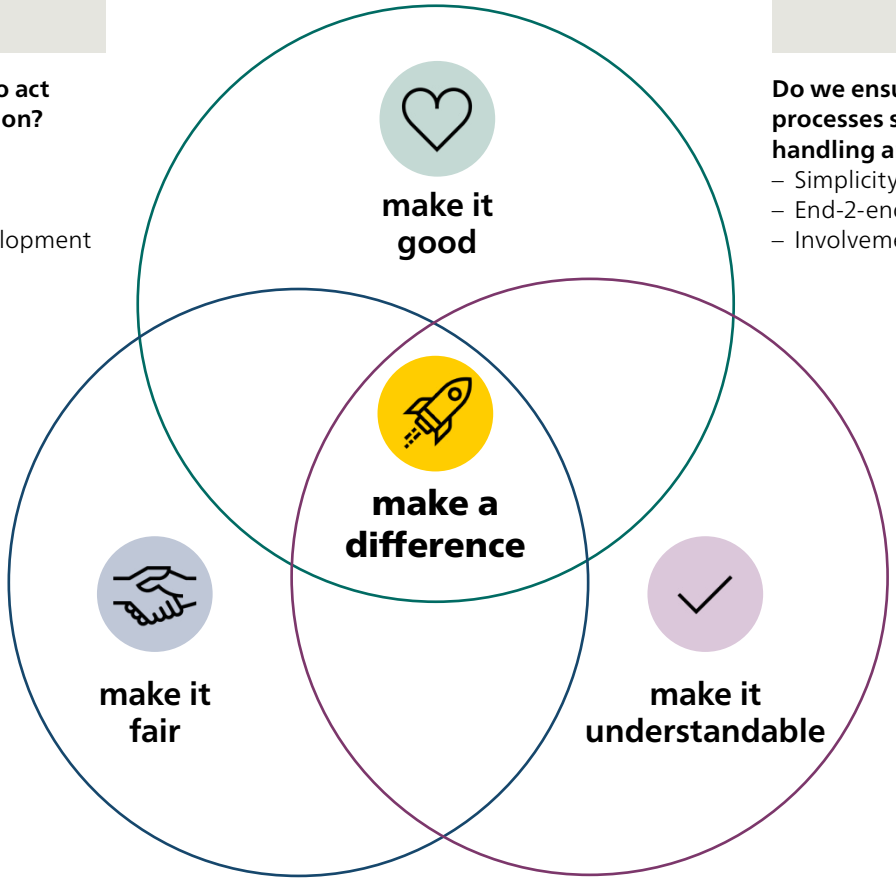
Do we ensure that no harm is caused to individuals and communities?
- Privacy protection
- Security
- Sustainability

Autonomy

Do we enable users to act with self-determination?
- Privacy
- Self-determination
- Data economy
- Participation in development

Checks

Do we ensure that internal processes surrounding data handling are manageable?
- Simplicity
- End-2-end responsibility
- Involvement



Fairness

Are our services characterized by fair conditions for users?
- Appropriateness & added value
- Inclusion, solidarity
- Avoidance of bias
- Equal conditions

Transparency

Do we explain how we use data and do we communicate in a manner appropriate to the specific target group?

- Clear communication
- Commitment

Accountability

Do we ensure traceability and auditability?
- Traceability
- Means of redress
- Governance
- Auditability

Based on the Data Innovation Alliance (DOI) framework

Glossary

Term	Explanation
Algorithmic system	An algorithmic system is a system comprising one or more algorithms which have been implemented in software to enter and analyse data, and to draw conclusions that are intended to contribute towards solving a predefined problem. The system can be self-learning or follow pre-programmed decision rules.
Analytics	"Analytics" refers to statistical and mathematical data analyses which predict or segment scenarios which are most likely to occur.
Analytical model	Analytical models are based on algorithms, recognize patterns in big data and transform them into mathematical equations.
Bias	A bias is a preference generally perceived as unfair, or a prejudice towards a person or group. Biases arise in data-driven services because e.g. the data only represents certain groups (data bias) or because models are designed in such a way that certain people/groups are favoured or disadvantaged (model bias). Bias is often unconscious. Biases can be identified and eliminated at an early stage through systematic analysis.
Data product (data as a product)	"A data product is an architectural artefact which translates source data on a clearly described, technical topic into a semantically defined structure, thereby generating added value. It is published on a platform provided for this purpose and consists of the program code needed for its provision, metadata for content-related and technical documentation, and the data itself. Access is provided via specified access patterns and the purposes for which it may and may not be used are clear. Responsibilities for approval, code, content and documentation are clearly and unambiguously defined."
Data source	A data source is the place where the data which is used comes from. This can be the place where the data was created or the place where physical information was digitized. However, within the context of this document, we are generally referring to the database which the data comes from.
Digital / data-based services	By this, we mean digital products and services which transmit, evaluate and/or convert information (data or content) across various platforms, devices and mechanisms. In the process, data is required as well as generated and modified. Digital and data-based services may – or may not – involve the use of AI: we also include models which function on the basis of algorithms defined by humans in this definition.
(Data) models	By "data model", we mean a structure which defines an area of validity for data to be described and processed – including the relationships between these types of data.
Reliability in data processing	Traceability in data processing – e.g. with regard to changes made to data products by using or enhancing additional data.
Stakeholders	We define stakeholders as people who have an interest in the product or service or who are affected by it in any way. Special consideration is also given to those who are only indirectly affected or who are not thought of at first (inclusion). For services, this may be Swiss Post customers, users, citizens, partners, employees or society as a whole.
Target group	We define a target group as the group of people we explicitly want to reach with the product or service.

Make a difference.

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