Maine AI Task Force Pre-Meeting Preparation for Friday, February 14, 2025

Topic: Demystifying AI & National Perspectives from Other States

In this memo, you will find a preview of the Task Force's agenda for our next meeting, speaker bios, a brief description of AI technology and its history, and information about other states' AI task forces.

Scheduling note:

- You should have received an updated calendar invite from Daniel Matz at GOPIF for the Task Force's March meeting, which has been rescheduled for Thursday, March 13 from 2-4 PM.

Meeting Overview for February 14, 2025

This meeting is designed to:

- Demystify AI: Break down core concepts and terminology to ensure all participants have a clear understanding of what AI is, its historical evolution, and why modern generative AI is transforming technology.
- Learn from Other States: Explore how states across the country have tackled similar challenges through various task force models and policy initiatives.

Agenda:

- Co-Chair Welcome and Agenda Preview (5 minutes)
- AI Technology Overview (20-minute presentation and 15-minute Q&A)
    - Dr. Usama Fayyad (Northeastern's Roux Institute) will provide an introduction to the fundamentals and innovations of AI.
- Overview of State & Federal Actions on AI (30-minute presentation and 15-minute Q&A)
    - Cassandra Madison (COO, Center for Public Sector AI) and Nishant Shah (Senior Advisor for Responsible AI, State of Maryland) will share insights into how other states and the federal government are approaching AI challenges.
- Task Force Discussion & Debrief (25 minutes)
    - Open discussion to review learnings and consider next steps.
- Looking ahead (10 min)

- Review upcoming and preview forthcoming survey for Task Force member input

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Speaker Bios

- **Dr. Usama Fayyad** is the Executive Director of the Institute for Experiential AI at Northeastern University. He is also the Chairman at Open Insights, a company he founded to provide data strategy consulting and AI/machine learning solutions to enterprises. Dr. Fayyad has an extensive background in data science and AI, having served as Yahoo!'s Chief Data Officer and co-founding the DMX Group and Audience Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Michigan and has contributed significantly to the fields of machine learning and data mining.
- **Cassandra Madison** is the Chief Operating Officer at the Center for Public Sector AI (CPSAI). She has a strong background in public policy and technology, focusing on integrating emerging technologies into government operations. Cass has held various roles that bridge the gap between technology and public service, emphasizing responsible AI adoption and ethical considerations in technological advancements. She holds a degree in International Relations and Affairs from the University of Colorado Boulder.
- **Nishant Shah** is the Senior Advisor for Responsible AI for the State of Maryland. He has a robust background in technology policy and governance, working to develop safe, transparent, and ethical AI practices within state government. Nishant has held positions that involve crafting policy recommendations and overseeing initiatives aimed at balancing technological progress with public accountability. He holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Maryland.

AI Basics & The Evolution of Generative AI

A Brief History of AI:

- Early Beginnings: AI has its roots in mid-20th century research aiming to simulate human reasoning and decision-making through rule-based systems and early computational models.
- Evolution Through Decades: Over time, AI evolved from simple, manually programmed algorithms to more sophisticated statistical and machine learning models that can analyze vast datasets and learn from patterns.

What Makes Modern Generative AI Unique:

- Learning from Data: Unlike earlier systems that followed fixed "if-then" logic, modern generative AI models learn from enormous datasets to identify patterns, predict outcomes, and even generate original content.
- Rapid Advances: Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) are notable for their rapid iteration and deployment. They continuously improve in accuracy, reliability, and analytic capability, thanks to deep learning techniques and massive computational power.
- Real-World Impact: These advancements have unlocked unprecedented capabilities—from generating realistic text, images, and videos to enabling dynamic, interactive applications that were once the domain of technical specialists only. This shift underscores both the opportunities for innovative service delivery and the potential risks (e.g., transparency, bias, and cybersecurity challenges) that need careful policy attention.

National Perspectives: AI Task Forces Across States

How Other States Are Addressing AI: Drawing on insights from the Center for Public Sector AI (CPSAI), we see that 26 states have established or are developing emerging technology task forces to guide AI policy. The common approaches include:

- Legislative Advising:
    - Many states have created advisory bodies through executive orders or legislation to offer policy recommendations and draft legislative language addressing AI ethics, procurement standards, and regulatory frameworks.
- Oversight & Systems Management:
    - In states like Ohio and Delaware, task forces focus on operationalizing ethical guidelines by setting standardized procedures for AI procurement, deployment, and continuous evaluation of AI systems within state agencies.
- Project-Based Initiatives:
    - Examples from Arkansas and Massachusetts show task forces identifying high-value AI use cases across sectors (from fraud prevention to workforce development) to drive targeted pilot projects and innovative service solutions.

- Judicial Models:
    - Unique approaches, such as in New York, involve the court system directly in regulating AI usage to ensure ethical and legal safeguards, particularly in high-stakes decision-making contexts.

One task force that may offer a particularly helpful example for Maine is New Jersey's AI Task Force, which released its report in late 2024. Governor Murphy established the task force to study emerging AI technologies, issue findings on their potential societal impacts, and offer recommendations for government actions to encourage the ethical and responsible use of AI technologies. You can access the NJ AI Task Force final report and read about other initiatives the state is undertaking at the state's Office of Innovation website.