****

 **AGENCY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT OF FREE ACCESS**

**TO PUBLIC INFORMATION**

**THE RELATION OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION TO OPEN DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

****

**Skopje, November 2024**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Access to information, open data and artificial intelligence (AI) are closely related topics that significantly affect the development of society, especially in the context of increasing transparency, efficiency and innovation.

Open data is information that is available to the public, often published by public institutions, private companies or non-profit organizations. They are structured so that anyone can freely use, analyze and share them. The key goal of open data is to enable greater transparency and accountability in society, as well as to stimulate new solutions and innovations.

Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, is a technology that uses algorithms and analytical methods to automatically process and analyze large amounts of data. It is constantly evolving and can create valuable insights from complex data, which would be difficult for people to access through traditional methods.

Combining open data and AI expands access to quality information and enables new applications that can contribute to societal benefit. For example, by analyzing open data with the help of AI, predictive models can be created for public health problems, urban planning or environmental protection. In this way, access to information not only becomes faster and more efficient but also helps in solving real problems.

However, to achieve the maximum potential, it is necessary to develop clear regulations and standards that will ensure that the information will be used ethically, transparently and with respect for the privacy of citizens.

Thus, access to open data significantly encourages the development of artificial intelligence and increases its practical application in various fields such as health, transport, economy and public administration.

In the modern digital world, access to information, open data and artificial intelligence are three different concepts, but at the same time closely related, because each of them enables a faster, more efficient and more transparent exchange of knowledge. Understanding their differences and interrelationships can improve their use in everyday life, as well as in the scientific and business spheres.

**Access to information:** This concept represents the ability of individuals, organizations and the public to gain access to data, documents and information that are relevant to them. For example, the Freedom of Information Act (FAI) allow citizens to access public data from government institutions. Access to information is key to transparency and accountability, and a basic principle is that every citizen should have the opportunity to access data that is relevant to their life and the public interest.

**Open data:** Open data is a specific form of information access, whereby the data is publicly available, free to use, modify and share. Usually, such data is prepared in a way that allows for its automatic processing and analysis, which makes it useful for various research and business purposes. Examples of open data are statistical information, and data on public health, demography, transport and ecology, which are available for use by all interested parties.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Artificial intelligence uses advanced algorithms and analytical methods to process data, allowing machines to learn from vast amounts of information. AI uses open data as fuel to create models that can solve complex problems and make predictions. For example, by analyzing open data, AI can predict trends in public health, climate change or economic movements.

**DIFFERENCES AND RELATIONSHIPS:**

**Differences:** Access to information is a broader concept that encompasses the right of every individual to have access to relevant information, while open data is a specific way of sharing data that is structured and free to use. AI, on the other hand, is a technology that processes data and creates valuable insights from it.

**Connectivity:** Open data serves as the foundation for many AI applications, as it provides massive access to information relevant to machine learning. When institutions provide open data, they directly contribute to the development of new AI solutions that can help solve societal and business problems.

Access to information, open data and artificial intelligence are tools that together shape the way society uses and manages data, enabling greater innovation, transparency and accountability.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF OPEN DATA:**

**Access to public information** is a key principle that ensures the transparency and accountability of institutions to citizens, enabling them to access data that is of public interest. This approach is particularly important in the context of **open data** because it allows the data to be not only available on demand but also **proactively published** by institutions in a format that is easily accessible and useful to the public.

**What does access to public information mean?**

Access to public information is a legal right that allows citizens, journalists and researchers access to documents and information held by public institutions. The main goal is to ensure that institutions work transparently and that citizens can find out how decisions affecting their lives are made. With this, the public can participate in democratic processes, monitor how public resources are spent and encourage institutions to work more responsibly.

**How does access to information relate to open data?**

**Open data** represents an advanced form of access to information, whereby data that is of public interest is published **proactively** and is available in a digital, machine-readable format. This means that citizens, businesses and researchers do not have to make special requests to access this information, as the institutions publish it automatically.

Open data enables:

* **Simplified access to information**: Instead of making formal requests, citizens and companies can easily access the data they need through public open data platforms.
* **Transparency and innovation**: Institutions by publishing open data increase transparency, and citizens and business entities can use this data for innovation, research and creation of new products and services.
* **Efficiency and increased accountability**: When data is available as open data, the accountability of public institutions increases, because everyone can check how decisions are made and whether they are in line with the public interest.

**Advantages of open data in the context of access to information**

Open data provides significant benefits over traditional access to public information:

* **Simplified availability and speed**: Instead of waiting for a response to a request for information, users can access data instantly through online platforms.
* **Data in structured format**: Open data is published in a digital format suitable for analysis, which is useful for researchers and businesses who want to create applications or analytical models.
* **Increased transparency and trust**: When institutions regularly publish data, the trust of citizens and the public towards their work increases.

**Conclusion**

Access to public information and open data are interrelated concepts that support the right of the public to be informed as well as the transparency of institutions. Open data advances access to information by enabling a simpler and more proactive way to share information, thus contributing to increased accountability, trust and innovation in society.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:**

**Access to information** And **artificial intelligence (AI)** represent different concepts but are closely related and in many cases interact with each other. These two concepts contribute to a better-informed society and more efficient decision-making processes. Here are the key differences and how they relate:

**Access to information**

**Access to information** is a constitutional and legal right that enables citizens, researchers and journalists to request and receive data and documents from public institutions. This right, guaranteed in many democratic states through laws on free access to information and international documents, increases the transparency and accountability of institutions and allows citizens to participate in public life and monitor how decisions are made.

**Key features**:

* It refers to public data and information that institutions have, and citizens have the right to receive.
* The goal is to increase transparency and democratize knowledge.
* It requires institutions to proactively release information or respond to access requests.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

**Artificial intelligence** is a technology that uses algorithms and analytics to extract meaningful information from large amounts of data. Using techniques like machine learning and deep learning, AI can automatically analyze, process and interpret data to predict trends, solve problems and make recommendations that would be difficult for humans to process manually.

**Key features**:

* AI is a technology that uses access to data to learn, analyze and solve problems.
* No access to data on its initiative; it must obtain them from databases that can be both public and private.
* It uses data to create analytical models, predictions and intelligent systems.

**Differences between access to information and AI**

* **Purpose of the data**: Access to information refers to the right of citizens to access data held by public institutions, while AI represents technology that uses data for automated processing and analysis.
* **Use of data**: AI depends on the availability of data to perform tasks, while access to information enables a legal mechanism to obtain that data.
* **Application context**: Access to information is a right used to increase transparency, while AI is used to process and analyze data and support decision-making.

**Connectivity and additional features**

AI can be an important tool for analyzing information that is available through access to information. For example:

* **Analysis of public data**: With the help of AI, public data can be analyzed in ways that make it possible to extract meaningful insights and trends that would otherwise remain hidden.
* **Automating the process of accessing information**: AI can be used to automatically process information access requests, making the process faster and more efficient.
* **Predictive models and tools for decision-making**: When public data is processed with AI, models can be created to facilitate decision-making in areas such as public health, ecology and economics.

**Conclusion**

Access to information and artificial intelligence are key aspects of the modern digital age. Access to information enables transparency, while artificial intelligence facilitates the use of that information to derive useful and actionable insights. Together, they create new opportunities for informed, transparent and effective data management in the public and private sectors.

**\* \* \***

***CONCLUSION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION WITH OPEN DATA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*** focuses on how access to public information in North Macedonia is related to the concepts of open data and artificial intelligence (AI). This short document discusses the challenges and opportunities arising from the integration of open data and AI in public administration, as well as in decision-making processes.

Conclusions include:

1. **Legal Framework**: Existing laws on access to information and open data as a basis for promoting transparency and accountability of institutions.
2. **Challenges and Opportunities**: Privacy issues, data quality, and open data infrastructure. However, the use of open data can strengthen public trust and improve the functioning of institutions.
3. **The role of AI**: The application of AI enables the processing of large and extensive data, which can improve the availability of information and reveal new insights into what the public needs are.
4. **Recommendations**: It is necessary to strengthen the legal framework, invest in technologies and expertise, as well as create partnerships between the public and private sectors for optimal use of open data and AI.

In the future, the use of open data and AI will lead to an improvement in transparency and accessibility to information, and this integrated approach will also improve overall public services in North Macedonia.

**Author:**

**Oliver Serfimovski**