**4 - Data & IT Governance**

0:01  
Hello and welcome to the Data and IT Governance module of the AI Governance Framework for Nonprofits.

0:08  
This is the 4th of 6 modules that will guide you through important considerations for nonprofits when implementing AI.

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The information contained within this module reflects the insights and expertise that was shared by many nonprofit leaders who participated in a series of community listening sessions in the summer of July 2024.

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At the end of this module, you will understand the relationship between high quality data and high quality AI tools, and even more specifically, the output from high quality AI tools.

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You'll also know specific methods to implement data governance in your data and tools within your technical environment, whatever that might look like at your organization.

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And you'll also be able to identify best practices for creating a strong data culture in your organization.

1:01  
Now, why does data matter?

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Why are we starting to talk about data in this overall governance framework for AI for nonprofits?

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It's because data powers AI.

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AI recommendations, AI outputs, AI predictions, AI images, and more are only as powerful as the data that the AI tool is trained on.

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This is why when you hear many announcements about large scale commercial AI products, they tout the vast data sets that they have, whether they're trained on the entire Internet, whether they're trained on other information that people gave them.

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This is both the power of AI tools and can sometimes input some ethical risks into the AI tools themselves.

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It also matters because as you think about using AI in your own organization, you can think about how you relate AI to other activities that you already have in place.

2:01  
Whether you're a technical organization or you're don't consider your organization to be particularly technical, you can think of AI as advanced data analytics.

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These AI tools that are powered by data are powered by these vast external data sets like the Internet and more.

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But they can also build on the data that your organization has, whether that is materials that you've written for promotional use in the past or letters to donors, annual reports, whether it's financial information, whether it's information about your donors, whether it is information about the people and the communities that you serve.

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All of that information taken together is data that feeds this advanced data analytics system that you can now take advantage of because of AI.

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It also means that previous conversations about data-driven decision making still apply.

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So guidelines and guidance that you may have received in the past about being intentional about how you collect and store data that matters, and we'll talk a little bit more about that later in this module.

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How organizations think about data can fall in a couple of different places in the organization depending on how it's structured.

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So your data governance may appear in data policy, specifically if you have one in your organization, they may appear in your IT governance policies.

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Sometimes they may appear in both places, but the principles around data and data management are the same.

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So as we think about adopting AI within nonprofits, we're going to talk in this module specifically about data governance and data management.

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So I want you to think about it in terms of five parts for data governance and data management.

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Data access, data collection, data cleaning, data integration, and data monitoring are the five components of data governance and management that you should be considering.

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And data access has to do with who in the organization has access to what data, at what time, how that process is reviewed, how that process is managed, who gets access, when that's decided, and when it's decided to revoke access.

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Both individuals and technical tools, Salesforce and others, for example.

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That all falls under data access.

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Data collection is the process of collecting the data.

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So thinking about who generates data within your organization, whether it is your staff, as they interact with donors, as they serve, your community members as they work with each other and they communicate with each other as they process HR needs and finance needs and more.

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It could also be collected from external sources directly, whether those are your community members who might be providing you information through websites or applications that you use.

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Data cleaning means that you are taking into account that the data is not only looking good to the eye, but more importantly that the data is in a format that the various technical tools that you're using, whether it is Slack, whether it is a new AI tool, making sure that your data can be used by those technical tools.

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Data integration means that the information that you have, the data that you have is actually integrated into your technical environment and it can get from 1 technical tool to another as needed.

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And data monitoring is the process of reviewing and updating the data to make sure it's current, to make sure that it stays relevant for the decisions and the predictions that you are relying on the data and relying on the AI tools to give you based on that data.

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Now, AI data governance can look many ways in different organizations, but essentially what is most important is that your organization has a way to trace from the origin of the data to the prediction.

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So you want to make sure that regardless of how technical or non-technical you consider your organization, that you have an idea, and more than an idea even, that you can track what data has gone into what tools.

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Now for some of the tools, it may be fairly straightforward.

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If you're using a note taking tool, for example, the data or the conversation that you had that those notes were generated from, It may be a little bit more complicated than that and you may need to track down what information from what databases went into what.

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But tracking that overall process is important and is a key part of data governance.

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Also in data governance, we want to make sure that we are thinking about what it means to combat bias.

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So making sure that we are considering different sources of bias, different types of bias, whether it is the information, demographic information that is collected on individuals and how that might tie to decisions that are made about hiring or decisions that are made about giving benefits and providing services to your communities.

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And any bias that may be in those decision make, decision making processes that is then encoded into the data sets.

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And so you want to think about how you can collect your data, you can structure it and you can use it in ways that gets rid of the bias and really focuses on the services that you were trying to provide in an equitable and fairway.

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The role title may vary, but the chief steward of data is responsible for two main functions.

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And so you want to make sure that this person knows that they are responsible for and can follow through with creating a central AI technical resource that allows for greater insight across the organization into all of the AI initiatives.

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And this is important because one, people want to know what's going on with inside the organization, but also it can help people understand how data they generate, data they change through what might be in a CRM, what might be in a program management database, how that data effects decisions that other people are making within the organization.

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And having a central AI technical resource that lays out what tools are used and what data goes into those can be really helpful in creating a strong culture and a strong decision making process within your organization.

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The chief steward of data is also going to be responsible for creating a structure for monitoring AI projects.

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This doesn't mean that they have to be the sole person that green lights or stops any proposed AI project.

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But as organizations grow and evolve as they use new technology, in this case AI, you want to make sure that you have a structure for understanding what's going on, where and where these projects are, as well as what's considered successful or unsuccessful.

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So you can make decisions about what to continue or not to continue.

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Now, the chief steward of data can can be in a variety of different positions in the organization.

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If you have ACO or CTO, the chief steward of data is probably one of those two positions.

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Could also be held in the director of IT or director of operations.

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You have a smaller organization, you may just need to designate one person who might seem the most technical or the most data savvy to be responsible for functioning as your chief steward of data.

10:00  
Data governance can be implemented in a variety of different ways, and there are many different methods that people use to carry out this function.

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A simple method is taking a Slack channel and converting it into something that can function as a technical resource on what inputs are acceptable for props, for example.

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So creating a prompt library for people to use within the organization so that they can ensure the tools they're using, the AI tools they're using, they're using.

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Well, it can look like making sure that in the onboarding process, you're orienting staff to AI tools that are used, data policies, this data procedures, AI risk.

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It also can look like establishing accountability and assigning responsibility for monitoring and maintaining ethical standards when it comes to data.

10:51  
So again, how are we collecting our data?

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How are we using the data?

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How are we giving access to the data?

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All of that can be included in the ethical standards piece.

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If you are an organization that outsources your IT and your data work, you want to remember that vendors work for you.

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So you should be asking vendors and demanding that they answer things like what does short term and long term maintenance look like for AI tools and the data that is being used to power them?

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What training are they providing for users?

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What is their AI tool trained on and who's responsible for monitoring output?

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And even more importantly, what happens if something goes wrong?

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Who can turn off the tool and what does it look like to repair the output?

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This again can vary in scale based on the tool you're using.

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If it is a fairly small AI tool, such as note taking, the risks may be smaller.

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If it is a larger tool that you're using to help make decisions about which of your community members are receiving resources, that is going to have a much higher bar to to achieve.

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In reviewing the responses that vendors may give you to these questions, there are several best practices to keep in mind as you begin to implement strong data practices.

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You want to start small, test something out, learn from that before growing and using AI in more ways.

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And you also want to remember that AI is a very powerful tool, but it may not be the right answer in every situation, and that's OK.

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So something you may learn from a small test is that AI is not the right answer in that situation.

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You also want to think about providing periodic training for team members on how to use the AI tools and what ethical data use and data decision making means in your organization.

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You want to make sure that people are clear about where your values are and about what decisions you are willing to make or not make based on your data and based on the AI tools.

13:03  
If you follow these best practices and if you develop strong data and IT governance practices within your organization, you will have a good chance of adopting AI well into your organization.