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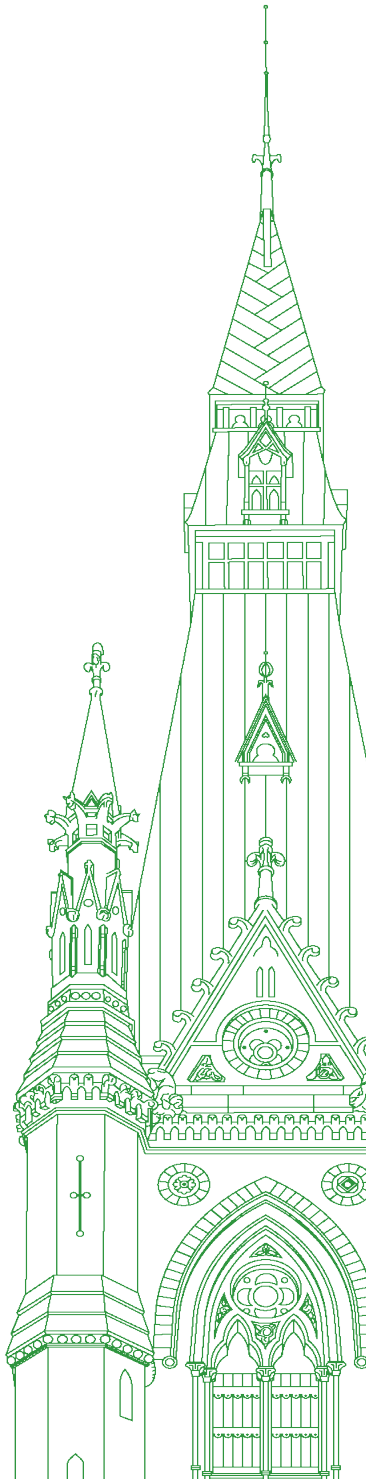
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Chair: Chris Bittle

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

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● (1100)

[*English*]

The Chair (Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 46 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3), the committee is meeting to resume its study of artificial intelligence and Canada's democratic institutions.

Today's meeting is taking place in public, in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. Members are attending in person. They have the option to attend remotely.

I would ask all in-person participants to consult the guidelines written on the cards on the tables. These measures are in place to help prevent audio and feedback incidents and to protect the health and safety of all participants, including the interpreters.

Even though Monsieur Perrault is a frequent visitor, I'd like to remind all the witnesses that committee members may ask questions in either official language. If you need interpretation, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the listening channel. As I commented earlier, Monsieur Perrault has probably been to committee more often than some of the members who are around the table.

I have a few comments to make for the benefit of the members. As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair. Whether you're on Zoom or in the room, raise your hand if you would like to speak. The clerk and I will do our best to manage the speaking list.

I'd like to welcome our witness—he probably needs no introduction—Stéphane Perrault, Chief Electoral Officer, who will have five minutes for an opening statement.

[*Translation*]

Stéphane Perrault (Chief Electoral Officer, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer): Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak with the committee today about its study on artificial intelligence and democratic institutions.

Given the growing impact of artificial intelligence on a broad range of areas, but in particular on the information environment that underpins electoral democracy, I believe that this study is critically important.

Elections Canada has, over the past couple of years, been regularly engaging with partners in Canada and abroad in order to study the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence. For instance, this September, Elections Canada and the United Nations Development Programme co-hosted the Global Conference on Responsible AI and Elections in Ottawa.

Given the speed at which this technology is evolving, it's essential for election management bodies to continue working together to share perspectives and experiences regarding artificial intelligence and its impact on electoral democracy.

My remarks today will focus primarily on the challenges posed by this technology and on some of the possible solutions. I'll also touch briefly on how Elections Canada is exploring some of the benefits that artificial intelligence can bring in support of its work.

The greatest impact of artificial intelligence on elections is in relation to the information environment. Early discussions on artificial intelligence and elections were largely concerned with the potential use of synthetic content to create deepfakes and mislead voters. Although this risk remains significant—as we saw last week in Spain, for example—the impact of artificial intelligence on the information environment runs much deeper. Artificial intelligence changes not only how information is created, but also how it's distributed, accessed and examined.

Artificial intelligence can be used to create high-quality content quickly and at a low cost. However, it can also be used to distribute and promote information, both true and false; to reach targeted audiences; and to amplify conversations, both real and synthetic.

Canadians are also increasingly turning to artificial intelligence chatbots that organize and summarize information from various sources in order to respond directly and precisely to their questions. These tools can be used, for example, to obtain information on the electoral process or to compare the platforms of different political parties or candidates.

● (1105)

[*English*]

While the potential benefits of AI capabilities for information sharing are obvious, so are the risks. The greatest concern, in my opinion, relates to the opacity of AI influences on the information environment and how that opacity can undermine trust in the electoral process.

AI is making it increasingly difficult for individuals not only to distinguish synthetic content from real images or voices but also to understand who is behind that information, why they are receiving it and what sources are used by chatbots to formulate responses.

If the line between legitimate speech and coordinated manipulation is blurred and if the filtering of information by AI tools is not transparent, the ability of electors to make informed choices and to trust democratic outcomes is at risk. A sound democratic process requires a minimum level of transparency regarding the information that feeds it.

In 2024, I recommended that transparency labels should be a legal requirement for the use of synthetic content in electoral communications. I understand that this is within the scope of Bill C-34, now before Parliament. If there is one area in which this should be pursued more aggressively, it is in the context of electoral communications. I would add that as of last August, this is a requirement imposed by the EU on AI providers and operators.

To ensure transparency about sources used in responding to queries, I've also recommended in my 2024 report that platforms with AI chatbots be required to point to official authoritative sources when responding to queries about the voting process. Parliament should also consider whether this should include sources like party platforms or candidate publications when responding to queries regarding political positions.

More broadly, I've recommended that electoral communications by political parties, candidates and third parties should indicate their source. Currently, the law requires the tag line only for election advertising, which is much too narrow a requirement given the broad spectrum of electoral communications today.

As it stands, electors are left to navigate an increasingly complex information environment without knowing who is communicating with them, whether the content is real or synthetic or if the information they receive comes from authoritative sources. This lack of transparency should be addressed, in my view, as a priority.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words on how Elections Canada uses or intends to use AI in its activities. I've appointed a champion for AI, and we are currently finalizing an internal AI strategy that emphasizes employee literacy, sound governance, engagement and cautious exploration. This is an area where we are being deliberately prudent.

We have no plans to use AI in processes related to the vote or the counting of ballots or in providing information to voters. Back-office activities, however, can benefit from the efficiencies of AI. This can include basic administrative tasks such as summarizing documents or more complex activities such as improving software coding or assisting in complex geography functions.

Above all, as an electoral management body, Elections Canada needs to be transparent about its use of AI, and we will be publishing a transparency statement to achieve this. This is something that our colleagues in Australia are already doing, and I think it's a good idea. As we consider the use of AI, our main priority will always be to ensure the integrity of the electoral process and the trust of electors.

Thank you. I look forward to answering members' questions.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll go to Mr. Cooper first, for six minutes, please.

Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Sturgeon River, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Perrault. Welcome back to committee.

While there has been a lot of focus on how AI can be used to spread disinformation and sow confusion amongst voters during elections, I would put it to you that an equal if not bigger threat is malicious cyber-activity, including AI-enabled cyber-activity from hostile foreign states like the P.R.C. to attack and infiltrate electoral infrastructure, including Elections Canada's systems, data, websites and communications before or during an election.

Is that a concern to you?

● (1110)

Stéphane Perrault: It is a concern.

I'd say that there are two aspects where AI presents, from what I know, an increased threat.

One is much more sophisticated phishing expeditions. The ability of a human to detect a phishing activity is harder for people, and that's why we continuously make our training harder and more sophisticated for our employees. That's one area.

The other aspect—and we've seen that very recently—is the fact that AI is now able to uncover weaknesses in code and exploit those weaknesses. I think we're going to see more sloppy code exposed by AI.

AI can be a threat in that regard, but it can also be a tool. It's important for all institutions, certainly for Elections Canada, to ensure that there's robust, quality coding at the basis of the solutions we deploy and that we have processes in place to ensure that, but AI is also an asset in that regard.

Michael Cooper: Thank you for that.

In 2021 and 2022, the U.K. Electoral Commission suffered a massive data breach, which the U.K. government has since attributed to P.R.C. state-affiliated actors. For more than a year, the hackers had access to the electoral registry containing the names and addresses of 40 million U.K. voters. They could have caused massive disruption had they installed malware.

The CSE assesses in its 2025 update, “Cyber Threats to Canada's Democratic Process”, that hostile foreign actors are almost certainly attempting to acquire this type of data from Elections Canada, which they can then weaponize against Canadian democratic processes. What measures has Elections Canada taken to protect the security and resiliency of its systems in the face of these threats?

Stéphane Perrault: Like many institutions, we do face cyber-attacks on a daily basis in very large numbers. That's why we work very closely with the Canadian centre for cybersecurity. To ensure that our systems are robust, we have detection mechanisms in place in every device at Elections Canada, from laptops to telephones. We work very closely with the centre to make sure they are robust. We also have private sector partners who assist us in that regard.

It is something that we're always paying attention to. Our audit committee, on a regular basis, revisits our security posture and the improvements we're making to ensure the security of our infrastructure. I think the worst mistake would be to believe that we are immune from attacks. I think every institution must accept that they are vulnerable. They must continue to improve their cybersecurity posture.

Michael Cooper: In terms of the CSE, are there real-time and ongoing communications with Elections Canada when these threats are identified?

Stéphane Perrault: There are regular communications. During an election, we have a touch-base on a daily basis, but there's ongoing, 24-7 monitoring of our infrastructure by the CSE.

Michael Cooper: Have systems been updated and protocols put in place?

Stéphane Perrault: Systems need to be updated regularly. We talked earlier about poor code. It's important that we deal with legacy systems and that we modernize the infrastructure. We're pursuing that on a regular basis.

Michael Cooper: What about protocols around some very basic things like secure passwords? That was one of the major reasons the hackers were successful in infiltrating the U.K.'s Electoral Commission.

Stéphane Perrault: That's why we adopt and follow the instructions of Treasury Board and the centre for cybersecurity.

Michael Cooper: Simply put, should Canadians be confident that Elections Canada's systems are secure from these type of threats in light of measures that have been put in place?

Stéphane Perrault: They should be confident that we are taking every reasonable measure to protect our system.

Michael Cooper: In terms of training with respect to staff, can you elaborate a little bit on some of the protocols and measures that have been put in place?

Stéphane Perrault: On an annual basis, we have mandatory cybersecurity training for all our staff. We also go through phishing exercises, as I indicated earlier. We are going through more sophisticated phishing scenarios to make sure that people are attuned to the risk of phishing. As I indicated, with our AI strategy we will be implementing a new policy, which will include AI training for all employees.

● (1115)

Michael Cooper: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much, Mr. Cooper.

Next, we have Mr. Caley for six minutes, please.

Braeden Caley (North Vancouver—Capilano, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Perrault, for joining us today. It's great to see you again.

First of all, thank you for the smoothly run by-elections throughout this year, which I had the honour to participate in, and of course all the campaigns that I've seen you run across the country. That includes the one that was speedy and well run last year.

A lot of this committee's focus has been on overall AI safety. A lot of focus now has been on the oft-discussed “human in the loop”. I think in the administration of free and fair elections, merely having the confidence that there's a human in the loop of AI is perhaps not enough. It is probably not enough. We are used to democracies and threats to democracies. We have more than enough to worry about from human actors. Certainly, this could accelerate a lot of those threat factors.

From the recommendations you've shared in the past—with time being short in certain senses but seeing the technology advance so quickly and become so much more ubiquitous—I'm wondering which still stand out to you. I would maybe encourage in that answer a thought about an aspect, or a piece of it, that you shared, which was that you mentioned transparency in the platforms. We have a regime for transparency in social media advertising in this country. We spent a lot of the second half of the last decade dealing with the consequences of the social media advertising space not having been regulated.

Do we have an opportunity now to look at the advertising space in these worlds before they become the problem?

Stéphane Perrault: That's a very important issue. I do believe that the biggest challenge is equipping voters with the tools they need to navigate this very complex and rapidly evolving information environment. As I said in my remarks, right now they do not have the tools to know for sure whether something is coming to them from an AI agent or a human being or whether it's synthetic content or real content. There needs to be more transparency so that they can navigate that.

You made a reference to social media. One of the things we've seen in social media is so-called bubbles. People live in a certain ecosystem and see the world through the lens of that ecosystem. They're sometimes surprised to see election results that do not match the world view of that ecosystem, and that's a risk because they lose trust in the election. They believe that the election must have been rigged.

The threat of social media just amplifies that risk. If you create a large number of fake accounts parroting similar world views, electors become caught in that fake consensus and then disbelieve the actual results of the election, and that can really undermine trust. By not knowing that these are fake accounts and that this is artificial content, they may be led to believe that there's a certain consensus in an area that isn't there. That is a real concern.

Braeden Caley: You made a reference to how opacity can undermine trust. We've covered in this committee cases of the so-called chatbots making recommendations or giving guidance about candidates. In the recent Brazilian election, that was not allowed. Is that an area you've given thought to?

Stéphane Perrault: We saw in the recent Quebec election that people who asked questions through AI agents about different platforms and different parties were being fed information—I think there's a witness who spoke to that—from a less-than-reliable source that the chatbot was using, and that is a concern. Chatbots should be transparent about the sources that they use to share information about the electoral process.

Braeden Caley: Are there provisions in the current law that you work with, the Elections Act, around falsely indicating something about how someone would participate in the democratic process?

I raise this example half-seriously because it was so quickly resolved, and I praise that. On the first day of my campaign, an AI chatbot, so to speak, answered folks' questions about where to find my campaign office by giving them the address of the Conservative campaign office, which is amusing only because it was quickly resolved.

In more serious examples of such things, is there currently a law that prevents that?

As a second piece, you mentioned faith in the results. I think the speed at which these can now be reported out and that what used to be done by a broadcaster can now be done so easily by everyone else is mostly a good thing.

Are there laws about faithfully reporting the results of an election as they come in?

● (1120)

Stéphane Perrault: There are no laws that I'm aware of about falsely reporting results of an election as they come in. There are rules in the act that prevent, for example, tricking voters into believing the process works in a different way from how it actually works, but criminal procedures are a last resort. They happen way after the election, and they're extremely complex to navigate. In an AI environment that's global, it can be extremely challenging. I won't speak for the commissioner on that, but that's where I think the better efforts are made in equipping voters up front with the information.

One of the things that we are focused on doing right now is restructuring the information on our website and on our platform so that AI agents more easily capture that information. It needs to be structured in a certain way. I'm no expert on that. I'm just repeating what the experts are telling me in the office. We are looking to make sure that the agents will capture that information and that it's accessible to chatbots. It's something that everybody needs to learn as we evolve in our use of AI agents.

The Chair: You are right at six minutes. Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for six minutes.

Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Thank you.

It's good to have you with us again, Mr. Perrault. I would like to follow up on your comment that artificial intelligence can be used internally by employees to improve various aspects of their work, such as meeting summaries and so on.

Do you have an internal best practices guide and regulations governing the use of artificial intelligence? Do you have a dedicated server or service provider for what you do? I'm asking because we've heard a great deal about shadow AI and the things that people do when they aren't given a framework.

I would like you to provide some information on this.

Stéphane Perrault: We're working with Microsoft products, but we'll explore other products to meet different needs. We have governance in place regarding the use of artificial intelligence. We're currently implementing a policy on the acceptable use of artificial intelligence by employees, which supports the strategy. We're finalizing the policy in order to make it clear.

Employees will also receive training. They must know which tools they can use and for what purpose. This helps us not only to monitor them, but also to explain honestly how Elections Canada uses artificial intelligence and how it doesn't. It starts with knowing who uses what tools for which services.

As I said, I don't see a scenario in which artificial intelligence would be used to provide services to voters. It's really used for internal bureaucracy.

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

One witness, Catherine Régis, came to speak to us about the loopholes in other legislation, such as Bill C-16. These loopholes concerned the offence involving the non-consensual distribution of intimate images generated by deepfakes. She told us that, if the deepfake appears realistic and can be mistaken for reality, it constitutes an offence. However, if the person is placed in a jungle, for example, and if we know that the image is a deepfake, it doesn't constitute an offence.

I know that there aren't any regulations regarding the production of images of members of Parliament. If we were to draft regulations, should we focus solely on what could actually mislead a voter into thinking that a deepfake is authentic, or should we also address content that could discredit an elected official or a candidate, even if we can identify a deepfake by looking at the image? I would like to hear your opinion on this.

Stéphane Perrault: I have a few things to say about this topic.

First, artificial intelligence is a tool. You can discredit people using actors, cartoons or text. You can do so in all sorts of ways, and artificial intelligence is just one tool among many. I'm not sure that we should focus specifically on artificial intelligence when discussing this issue. I'm reluctant to take an approach that smacks of censorship. I'm more in favour of transparency, meaning that voters should know when content has been altered or manipulated by artificial intelligence. Sometimes it's obvious, such as a caricature. I think that it's always good to have this type of transparency.

Christine Normandin: This actually brings me to a follow-up question regarding the topic.

I know that one of your pet projects is identifying content generated by artificial intelligence. However, we're constantly discussing at what level and in what way we should identify content. The current approach is often simply binary. Either I used artificial intelligence or I didn't use artificial intelligence to produce a document, a tweet or anything else. We don't know for what purpose it was used. Was it used to proofread texts? Was it used to generate a synthesized voice? Was it used to create an entire post?

Do you have any suggestions for how we should label content generated by artificial intelligence?

● (1125)

Stéphane Perrault: I think that one avenue to explore would involve looking at the current approach taken by the European Union, which uses three levels of labelling for artificial intelligence. The approach is still fairly limited, but there are three levels nonetheless. Is the content entirely created by artificial intelligence? Is it partially created by artificial intelligence? Is it real content modified by artificial intelligence? It isn't just about assigning a label. It's about providing a certain level of detail regarding the role that artificial intelligence played in the development of the products.

Christine Normandin: I would like to hear about how to report this matter. For example, we see a post going around that contains false information generated by artificial intelligence. What mechanism is used to identify false information?

For instance, a person calls your office because they saw information going around and they think that the information is false. What happens next on your end?

Stéphane Perrault: Our mandate is really to ensure that the public has accurate information on the electoral process. We don't get involved in judging different viewpoints on candidates and parties or in determining whether statements are true or false. I believe that this area falls outside our purview. We must ensure that accurate information is shared in the media.

We're increasingly working to generate large amounts of, ideally, high-quality information in advance in order to anticipate problems and confusion. We're continuously monitoring developments in the electoral landscape around the world, including in the United States, Alberta and British Columbia. We're monitoring and identifying trends and pinpointing topics prone to misinformation. We're working proactively to prepare content and to direct voters to this information.

Christine Normandin: In terms of specifics, is there—for example—a telephone number that people can call to report what they perceive as false information going around?

Stéphane Perrault: It's our general call centre, and we're well-equipped to handle these calls, yes.

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much. I think this is the first time everyone's been under six minutes.

We'll proceed now to the next round.

Mr. Calkins, you have five minutes, please.

Blaine Calkins (Ponoka—Didsbury, CPC): I'll see if I can blow through that six minutes, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Excellent...but it's five minutes.

Blaine Calkins: Mr. Perrault, thank you so much for being here.

I'm assuming that you're paying attention to the proceedings that are going on here and the discussions that we're having about artificial intelligence.

Stéphane Perrault: I've read summaries.

Blaine Calkins: Okay.

At one of our previous meetings, there was a Dr. Fenwick McKelvey from Concordia University. He made a statement, and I'll read it to you. He said before this committee, “I cannot be more clear: Canada's approach to AI governance is undermining its democratic governance.”

I'm wondering if you've had a chance to examine those comments and if you are going to publicly respond to what Mr. McKelvey has said. Should the Government of Canada be responding to that? That's a damning statement coming from a pretty big thinker on these matters when it comes to his thoughts about what the Government of Canada is doing.

Stéphane Perrault: I won't speak to what the Government of Canada is doing. My role is really to speak about electoral administration.

Blaine Calkins: Electoral administration is the foundation upon which democratic governance sits.

Stéphane Perrault: It is, so I'd like to have the chance to examine what he said and in what context and see whether I need to respond.

Blaine Calkins: All right. I would appreciate it if you could have a look at that in context. That way you'll have the context. I understand that.

You say you have a champion for AI, so you've assigned somebody to be that champion for AI. We've talked a little bit about this. I think the only agreement that we have for the use of an AI tool is for Microsoft's Copilot. Is anybody in your employ using anything other than Copilot?

Stéphane Perrault: At this point, we've only done experiments with Copilot. We are looking at different tools.

The idea is to start not with the tool but with the needs. Some witnesses mentioned looking at the problems and then going for solutions. We're not focusing on tools first. We're looking at areas where we think we could improve and where AI could contribute to that improvement, and then we're deciding which tools we will invest in to facilitate that.

Blaine Calkins: Other countries have now started to publicly state that they're banning their employees, including those in their electoral systems, from using anything other than an authorized AI agent, because they're not sure where this information is going and where it's ending up. Some of it would be Canadians' personal information.

Are you part of a best practices group when it comes to other countries in the world that are delivering democratic elections and going through this, to make sure that we get it right?

● (1130)

Stéphane Perrault: Yes, and I think it's important that we do that. We had meetings with provincial and territorial electoral management bodies this summer and a year prior to that. As I said, we organized, with the UNDP, an international meeting here in Ottawa with over 50 countries present.

This is a rapidly changing environment, and it's important that we stay abreast of experiences, good or bad, and best practices. That's what we intend to do.

Blaine Calkins: We've recently had witnesses before this committee say that an AI chatbot or an AI agent created a web page that was used in the Quebec provincial election. I think some 40% of the people who asked questions of AI were directed to this AI-created page that was created by an enthusiast, and that may or may not have affected the outcome of the Quebec provincial election.

You've had some by-elections recently. What's your assessment of how AI was used in those by-elections? You now have six by-elections in front of you, and you have what I would consider a lab opportunity before we get to a general election.

What are you doing when it comes to seeing how AI affected the most recent by-elections, and what are you doing differently in the administration of the current by-elections to account for it, if anything?

Stéphane Perrault: I think the situation you're referring to is a case in Quebec where voters were seeking information on competing political platforms, parties and candidates, and the problem was amplified by the fact that AI agents do not have access to the regular media.

This is information about the parties and the candidates, so this is not an area that we regulate in any significant way. We are concerned about making sure that the information on the voting process is proper. One of the things that we are doing is revisiting our content to make sure, as I said earlier, that it is being accessed by AI agents and that they are providing information about the electoral process that comes from Elections Canada.

Blaine Calkins: Do you have any thoughts or opinions, when it comes to the media and other public sources of information, about making their data and their information usable by AI? You have to be concerned about the strength of our democracy, and that requires other agents as well, including institutions, our media and the rest of the Government of Canada, etc.—

Stéphane Perrault: I think it's a big conversation we're all involved in.

Blaine Calkins: What would you advise?

Stéphane Perrault: In the case of the situation you pointed to in the Quebec general election, what I mentioned in my remarks is that perhaps AI agents should also be required to point to authoritative sources in terms of party platforms and candidate publications rather than point to any potentially unreliable source.

I think one thing you've heard from witnesses is that there are a lot of AI agents pointing electors or individuals to information from unreliable sources. In the case of elections, I think that probably should include requiring those agents to point to party platforms and to candidate publications.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Madame Mingarelli, you have five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Giovanna Mingarelli (Prescott—Russell—Cumberland, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Perrault, thank you for being here today. Throughout your career, you studied and taught law. I would like to approach these issues from that perspective.

From a legal perspective, how do courts currently approach artificial intelligence? Given that artificial intelligence technologies have evolved much more rapidly than the legislation governing them, what current legal principles and frameworks do judges refer to when dealing with cases involving artificial intelligence? Where do you see the most significant shortcomings in the current legal framework?

Stéphane Perrault: I must respond carefully. First, I'm no longer a member of the bar. I no longer practice law. I work in electoral administration. I'm not in a good position to speak about the legal system as a whole. So far, we haven't had any case law in Canada regarding artificial intelligence and elections. I'm not aware of any. Perhaps that's a good thing. It may be a sign that we haven't yet faced the challenges that would lead us there. It would be too early for me to comment on this.

However, I said that—and I want to emphasize this—in my view, any legal proceedings, including criminal cases or other legal oversight mechanisms, amount to responses that come too late in the process. I believe that we need to educate Canadians. We need to give them the information. We must ensure that the information that they receive through artificial intelligence tools remains transparent regarding its sources and its artificial intelligence origins. We need to look beyond the legal framework and truly focus on education. I believe that, for the health of democracy, this is the priority.

● (1135)

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

Along the same lines, Canadian law assigns rights and responsibilities to legal individuals, and not to technologies. If an artificial intelligence system could make important decisions independently of its developers and users, would it still be appropriate to view the system as simply a tool, or should our legal framework evolve to recognize a new category of players?

Stéphane Perrault: Again, this is a philosophical question for legal experts. I won't venture into that territory. Please excuse me for sticking to my mandate.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Okay. That's fine.

I'll now ask my last question in English.

[*English*]

Historically, electoral laws were designed to regulate human actors. You may have already answered this in your previous two answers, but do our current election laws adequately address AI-generated political content, or are there emerging gaps that Parliament should begin examining? How can we start preparing for AI in the legal system?

Stéphane Perrault: Our elections laws, in terms of communications, were shaped in the sixties and the seventies around traditional advertising. Advertising transparency is a big element of our legislation and our tag lines requirement. As I said in my remarks, I think this is outdated.

Even before AI, there was a broader range of communications out there that candidates and parties used to reach electors. There should be some transparency on all electoral communications, be it by third parties, candidates or parties. That's something I recommended back in June 2022 in my recommendations report, prior to AI being a thing. Just a few years ago, it wasn't something we saw on a regular basis. I think it's even more important today that all communications be examined and that we are not just regulating transparency from an advertising standpoint.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

Are any steps being taken now to prepare for AI along the lines of what you just shared?

Stéphane Perrault: The most important step for us is making sure that our information flows through AI agents, so that means restructuring our data.

Giovanna Mingarelli: That way you are starting the process of accounting.

Stéphane Perrault: We are. I think that's part of giving voters the tools. They're receiving so much information around the electoral debates that is beyond just voting procedures. I think there needs to be a larger review of what kind of transparency is needed in that area.

Giovanna Mingarelli: Thank you.

How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Giovanna Mingarelli: I'm done. Thank you.

The Chair: We have a little bit of time left. Rather than having a further round of questions that are very short, I'll do four minutes, six minutes and six minutes. That will probably take us to our usual time to suspend and go to the next round.

While you guys are deciding, we'll go to Madame Normandin.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have the floor for four minutes.

Christine Normandin: Mr. Perrault, the wonderful problem is that you answer our questions so efficiently. We can ask many of them. With the extra two minutes, sometimes we've run out of questions to ask you.

I would like to discuss the disinformation incidents that may have occurred during the most recent election and that could happen again. Do you have a team dedicated to compiling these incidents, for example, to ensure that we keep track of what happened, the type of false information posted online or the subject matter involved? Is there a team dedicated to maintaining a type of registry of these incidents?

Stéphane Perrault: Absolutely. This team does exist, although not on the same scale outside election periods. Nevertheless, we have a team that works during the election cycle to monitor disinformation efforts in Canada and around the world. I must say that there's relatively little originality. The same topics keep coming up. We often see them carry over from one election to the next. This gives us the opportunity to make this observation and to prepare for the most pressing challenges related to misinformation.

● (1140)

Christine Normandin: On that note, do you have any technical resources? Is it even feasible to try to identify the source of these disinformation campaigns or incidents? I'm asking because I want to know whether it's possible to do so or even worthwhile, given the difficulty of classifying these acts as “criminal” or “punishable”. The legislation doesn't cover this, so finding out who is responsible for the disinformation wouldn't necessarily accomplish much.

Stéphane Perrault: I think that Canada would be well advised to look into this for national security reasons. From an electoral administration standpoint, things move too fast for us. Some disinformation may come from abroad. However, it actually draws on local misunderstandings that get amplified abroad, or vice versa. The source isn't necessarily a key factor for us. The important thing is to assess the level of risk that this information poses to voters. We must be able to gauge how quickly the information is spreading and our capacity to respond. It's less about knowing who is promoting the information. These sources are often quite mixed. It's less about the “who” than the “what”. It's about how we respond.

Christine Normandin: Do you have any idea of the future resources needed to successfully carry out this type of operation? Are the budgets large enough to have the right teams and resources in place? What do you expect your future needs to be?

Stéphane Perrault: If I'm not mistaken, we've already received the additional funding we requested from Treasury Board about 18 months ago to strengthen our capacity and make funding for resources in this area more permanent. I would certainly say that, when we look at the 20 years I've spent at Elections Canada, we can see how much the communications aspect has evolved. In the past, election communications consisted of the voter information card, information about dates and locations, and so on. Now, communications have really become a full-time program during elections. They've taken on a scale that didn't exist before. Where is this heading? How extensive will it become in the future? I think it can only grow, but we already have good resources in place to manage this.

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Moore for six minutes.

I understand you wish to share your time, but that will be between you and Mr. Cooper.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I have a question about election deepfakes or deepfakes that could impact an election.

There was a time when what was a fake was so obvious. That time is now long since past, and now it's very difficult for people to determine what's real and what isn't. In the short time frame of an election, this could have a profound impact on people's viewpoints about candidates, party leaders, etc. How concerned are you about that? What would you suggest we do to combat misinformation from deepfakes?

Stéphane Perrault: It's something that requires a range of solutions.

We need to emphasize digital literacy in the classroom. That's something that young Canadians who are growing up with AI today need to be alert to. We need to promote that at Elections Canada come elections time. I think voters, as I said earlier, need the tools to identify whether content is synthetic or not. There's nothing inherently wrong with synthetic content. AI can be used cheaply to produce quality content for campaigns for candidates, but I think it's important that voters be able to know.

Certainly, from my experience, I can tell you that I'm not able to distinguish good AI fakes from authentic content. I don't rely on my own judgment to do that, because it's such good quality. That's why labelling is so important.

Hon. Rob Moore: You mentioned you start with the need, not with the program—

● (1145)

Stéphane Perrault: We start with the tool.

Hon. Rob Moore: You start with the tool, rather, versus the need.

What is some of what you see as the low-hanging fruit where AI would be useful versus some of the things you see the furthest down the line, maybe the most in need of protection?

Stéphane Perrault: In terms of further down the line, I think trust has to be the ultimate arbiter of that. Anything that would undermine trust in the electoral process is, from my perspective, out of bounds, even though it could theoretically be useful.

I think there are very complex operations right now that take a lot of time. I'll give you one example: assigning polling divisions and creating those divisions and assigning voters to a polling location. We don't really have a fixed date. We don't know which polling locations will be selected. There's no time, once we have those locations, to assign voters to that polling location in the most efficient way. We work with predetermined polling divisions, and then we find poll locations within those divisions.

That's not optimal. Sometimes voters have to travel a significant distance in large polling divisions. In the future, we can certainly see AI quickly being able to assign voters to voting locations most effectively, in real time, during the campaign, before the voter information cards are issued, so they are assigned the nearest and most convenient polling location. To me, that would be a significant improvement for voters without putting at risk the trust in the electoral process.

Hon. Rob Moore: I know sometimes these trust issues can come up unexpectedly—I think it was in the last election where all of a sudden I was inundated with emails about pencils versus pens at the polling station—so I would urge extreme caution on that.

You were talking about the information accessed by AI agents and the reliability of the information they're providing. How do you strike the balance between the need to protect the information you have and the new tools that people are using to access information?

Stéphane Perrault: I'm under no illusion. Voters, right now, are going to our website less and less and using AI agents more and more to find information about the voting process. That's just the reality.

I don't know that it would make sense even to put a chatbot out there on our systems to interact with voters, and I'm not contemplating that. I don't know that they'd be using that chatbot as opposed to Gemini on Google or the other agents they currently use.

As I said, I think it's critical to accept the fact that AI agents will be the way through which voters increasingly access information and to find out how they operate and how we can structure our information so that it will easily be picked up by AI agents.

Hon. Rob Moore: Okay.

Go ahead, Mike.

The Chair: You have one minute.

Michael Cooper: In the short time that I have, I'll pick up on a question posed by Madame Normandin.

She asked you if you had the tools and resources you need. You said that you requested additional resources 18 months ago. I take it that you don't have sufficient resources.

Stéphane Perrault: At Elections Canada, we have something that is extremely useful: a statutory authority to spend what is necessary for the preparation and conduct of an election. I can use that to hire term or contract resources.

However, there are points where these needs become permanent. When there's a permanent need for a program, it's my responsibility to go to Treasury Board and ask for permanent funding, which is then approved by Parliament on an annual basis. That's what I did for the social media monitoring team. A large portion of that is permanent funding.

When election time comes and we need to increase the number of people on the roster to support that activity, we can use temporary funding. That's how we operate.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll go to Mr. Jeneroux for six minutes.

Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Perrault, for being here today. You've covered a lot of ground in this hour. Thank you for doing that.

I want to dive into a couple of topics. First, let's talk about how you're using AI now, in terms of transparency. Then we'll talk about labelling and things.

Regarding how you're currently using it, you said that you use it for back-office activities like software coding and admin duties. You used the example of potentially choosing polling locations, which was interesting. We just heard from the Clerk here in the House. He said that they are using it for the first draft of Hansard when it comes through.

I'm curious about whether you can provide us with some other options you've thought of or perhaps things you're currently using it for, in that guise of transparency.

● (1150)

Stéphane Perrault: The example of polling locations is one of several examples. I can give others where we're thinking that perhaps AI could be useful. Another area is, for example, matching invoices from your financial returns to lines in your return, or doing horizontal audits across district associations and candidates to look at contributions and navigate a lot of financial data. These are things we are thinking about that need to be explored.

You mentioned, I think, coding. This is one area where the Australians—we talked about looking at other countries—are using AI right now to recode antiquated systems in order to modernize their coding and make it more efficient and robust. That's something we've begun doing some exploration in, but we're really at the exploration phase.

What we have now for our employees is the Microsoft Office 365 solution. It has a chatbot component. They can play with that and experiment with text—briefing notes and whatnot. We're not using AI for services or program delivery.

Matt Jeneroux: Presumably, you're encouraging the exploration of it.

Stéphane Perrault: We want to encourage exploration but accompany that with training.

Matt Jeneroux: Okay. That's fair. As someone who has run in a number of elections, the matching of invoices would be helpful in terms of speeding up time. I'll put my push in for that.

We wanted to explore how AI is being labelled. Some of my colleagues talked about deepfakes. You mentioned the EU's three levels of.... I think, when they see the words “partially artificial intelligence” or “modified artificial intelligence”, the average voter says, “Well, that's artificial intelligence. What is he using that for? What part of that is misleading?” In an earlier committee testimony, we heard from OpenNWT about how just labelling it to say that it's AI isn't helpful. Say that the music is AI, but the images aren't.

Explore that more. Is your recommendation that we follow the European Union model?

I'm flagging some of the concerns I had as a candidate. I was trying to explain to voters that I partially used AI, while also trying to show genuineness and authenticity to the electorate.

Stéphane Perrault: I don't have refined answers for you. I think this is an exploratory phase that we're going through.

I think it's useful to look at what others are doing. The European Union is a large bloc. They're imposing requirements on suppliers of AI solutions and operators. I think that's the right approach. It helps create uniformity. Rather than users of AI, like candidates or parties, I think the suppliers of the solutions need to be subject to the rules.

In terms of the refinements, we'll need to build on experience. I think it's important, though, to raise a flag, at least, that there's something here that's not entirely authentic, and that is a minimum. How much refinement is a different issue.

I do agree that labelling is not the end-all of a solution. Last week I was talking about a situation in Spain. My understanding—this is from media reports—is that the image and voice of the spouse of the prime minister were modified to have her say unethical things. The response was, “Well, it was labelled.” Labelling is not a licence, and it shouldn't be seen as a licence. On the other hand, what kinds of limitations should be imposed on content and what is legitimate is a rich conversation—let's put it that way.

Right now in the Elections Act, there are new rules that haven't been tested on this. They're technology neutral, but they do capture deepfakes of party leaders, the Chief Electoral Officer and a list of individuals. They would not capture the spouse of the party leader. As experience goes, I think we'll have to learn and adjust the systems, the protocols and the ethical conversations around the proper use of AI.

● (1155)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I would like to thank our witness for coming back. I'm sure we'll see him again soon.

This committee will suspend for a few minutes for the next panel to come in.

● (1155)

_____(Pause)_____

● (1200)

The Chair: I call us back to order.

I'd like to welcome our witnesses for the second panel.

From AI Governance and Safety Canada, we have Wyatt Tessari L'Allié, founder and executive director. As an individual, we have Nish Patel, founder, Brilliant With AI. From Library and Archives Canada, we have Jennifer Schofield, assistant deputy minister, collections sector, and Wanito Bernadin, chief information officer and chief data officer.

Library and Archives will split five minutes. Everyone will have five minutes, but we'll start with the Library and Archives for five minutes, please.

Jennifer Schofield (Assistant Deputy Minister, Collections Sector, Library and Archives of Canada): Good morning.

[*Translation*]

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for inviting me to appear before the committee today.

My name is Jennifer Schofield, and I am the assistant deputy minister responsible for our collections sector at Library and Archives Canada, or LAC. With me today is Wanito Bernadin, LAC's chief information officer and chief data officer.

LAC's mandate is to preserve and promote Canada's documentary heritage, serve as an enduring and accessible source of knowledge for all, and act as the permanent memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions, while ensuring that the many voices that make up our histories are represented in our collective memory. Our collections constitute unique primary sources that support research across a wide range of fields, including history, social sciences, government studies, genealogy and francophone studies.

With respect to artificial intelligence specifically, LAC published its position paper, “AI is here and LAC is ready” in November 2025. It outlines our guiding principles and focus for the use of AI as Canada's national library and national archives to build trust in information and make the collections we hold discoverable and accessible.

This approach is already producing tangible results. We use an AI-powered text recognition platform designed for archives and libraries. It transcribes historical documents and structures related data, supporting large-scale transcription and analysis projects.

In addition, AI tools developed and tested for the 1950 U.S. census were adapted for use in the digitization, transcription and indexing of the 1931 Canadian census, enabling its release in months, rather than years.

While we continue to explore different ways of using AI to facilitate research and in discovering of the collection, we remain cognizant that there are significant risks. We work with historical records that, while rich in data, reflect views and language that are no longer used and may perpetuate biases if used to train AI models.

● (1205)

[*English*]

As AI becomes a more common way for Canadians to search for and interact with historical records, we need to be clear about what information is coming directly from the original records, what represents an interpretation by LAC and what has been generated by an AI system. Without that distinction, there is a risk that people may accept an AI-generated explanation as historical fact, without knowing where the information came from or where the evidence supports it.

We also know that AI systems are designed to be helpful and responsive. They will sometimes generate answers even when the information available to them is incomplete. In the context of historical research, this presents a real challenge. There will be questions our collections simply cannot answer, and we need AI systems that can acknowledge those limitations. This means ensuring that Canadians can always trace information back to the original records, examine the evidence themselves and reach their own conclusions.

At LAC, we believe that AI has tremendous potential to improve access to Canada's documentary heritage. However, its use must be guided by transparency, accountability and the ability for Canadians to verify information against original records. These principles will be essential to maintaining public trust.

My colleague and I look forward to answering your questions.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Tessari L'Allié, you have five minutes.

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié (Founder and Executive Director, AI Governance and Safety Canada): Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the honour of inviting me to appear before you. AI Governance and Safety Canada is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that represents a community of people across the country.

We started with the question, "What can we do in Canada and from Canada to ensure that AI is safe and beneficial for all?"

Since 2022, we have been providing the federal government with public policy recommendations, such as our submissions on Bill C-27 on AI and data, and our many appearances to testify before parliamentary committees.

[*English*]

As I was listening to some of this committee's previous hearings in preparation for my own testimony, I heard a lot of thoughtful discussion about current AI systems and the opportunities and risks they present, but what I didn't hear much of and what I hope to provide you with now is an understanding of where AI is headed and how that changes what you need to do today to protect Canada and its democratic institutions.

The AI systems we have today are a brief passing phase. In short order, new models will have significant new capabilities that change the nature of the benefits and risks that AI presents.

For example, with early chatbots and image generators like GPT-4 and Midjourney, the most prominent risk to democracy was misinformation and deepfakes that could distort public discourse. With today's agentic systems like GPT-6, AI-generated correspondence can overwhelm staff and distort perceptions of what Canadians actually want, while national cyber agencies are putting out increasingly dire warnings about AI-enabled cyber-attacks that could paralyze the critical infrastructure that makes modern society possible.

To understand what comes next, one has to take a close look at Silicon Valley. All of the leading frontier AI companies—Anthropic, OpenAI, Google, Meta and others—have explicitly said that their goal is to build systems that are fully smarter than human. They use the term "superintelligence".

One can guess at some of the implications that superintelligence might have on democracy. Voters could be dangerously vulnerable to manipulation by systems that are much smarter than they are. Any decision a politician wants to make would be better made by AI. We increasingly hand over the keys to AI to run the country for us because it will do a better job, but in the process, the whole concept of government of the people and by the people might get left behind.

Dealing with those challenges may be the easy part. As we saw with the Hugging Face incident this summer, AI can malfunction and take powerful autonomous actions that its creators did not foresee or want. If a superintelligent system were to malfunction and attack humans at large, there is no guarantee we would be able to stop it. That's why Canada's leading AI scientists have been warning about extinction risk. Needless to say, the world is not ready for superintelligence.

Unfortunately, the clock is ticking. According to Anthropic's recent IPO filings and many independent expert assessments, recursive self-improvement—the process by which AI is able to automate its own development—is already partially under way and could take off in 2027. That could more than double today's already breakneck pace and lead to superintelligence as early as 2028. Hoping that these early scenarios don't come to pass is not a strategy.

What can Canada do? You won't have time to fully understand and govern current systems before the next generations are released. If recursive self-improvement takes off, you may not even have enough time to pass a bill and put in place regulations before superintelligence. What we can do, however, falls into two broad categories: global leadership and national resilience.

Leadership means doing whatever it takes to get a global pause or slowdown on frontier AI development and doing it now. The issue has to be dealt with at the source, because all the most serious risks are downstream from what happens in the frontier labs. If the Prime Minister and other world leaders fail at preventing superintelligence, there will be nothing Canada or any country can do to protect its citizens or democratic institutions.

Resilience means weathering the storms that AI throws at us in the meantime by focusing on the basics of cybersecurity and emergency preparedness. It means that when AI-powered cyber-attacks or Hugging Face-style loss of control incidents knock the power grid off-line or hack the computers that you're using, these lights stay on and the meetings keep running. It means that you, as politicians, and your teams are personally resilient and prepared for emergencies, so you can still get to work and keep government running during a crisis.

Much like COVID, AI is on track to upend everything you work on, but as dire and urgent as the situation is, the story isn't written yet. As Canadians, we have an opportunity right now to lead by example at home and on the world stage, so that we may all share in the benefits of this transformational technology.

Thank you.

● (1210)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Mr. Patel, you have five minutes, please.

Nish Patel (Founder, Brilliant With AI, As an Individual): Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the invitation.

My name is Nish Patel. I've spent the last 25 years starting, scaling, salvaging and selling technology companies. Today, I run two companies: Brilliant With AI, which builds AI products; and Tomorrow with Nish, an advisory firm for leadership teams across North America.

For the last four years, I've worked with companies across a wide range of industries, with everyone from executives to interns. The same problem shows up every time. It is not a private sector problem or a public sector problem; it is a human one. The mechanics are easy. The mindset is hard.

My message today comes down to one sentence: AI has made the appearance of thinking abundant and real thinking optional. For most of our history, the work was the proof. If you wrote a speech, you had thought it through. That is no longer true. A speech, a letter or a submission to this committee can now be generated, in seconds, by someone who has not thought at all.

We've seen this before with food. Human nature favours the path of least resistance and energy conservation. When food was scarce, that was the strength. Industrial food turned it into a weakness, and the costs arrived years later, in our individual health and in the stress on our health care system. AI is now doing the same to thinking.

The outcomes will be K-shaped. On the downward slope is cognitive atrophy: AI used as a vending machine for output. On the upward slope is cognitive amplification: AI used as a partner that questions us and sharpens our thinking. The biggest difference is the person using it.

For most people, this is a personal and professional risk. For parliamentarians, it is a democratic one. Your thinking echoes in every policy you shape, pass or reject. You also sit on both sides of the table. You put out speeches, questions and letters. You take in briefing notes, research and submissions, and more and more of them will be produced with AI. Producing has become nearly free. Your capacity to absorb them has not. Scrutiny depends on telling real thinking from the appearance of it, and that ability weakens when we stop doing our own thinking.

We should assume that everything we read and watch will be touched by AI. The natural response is detection. A label or watermark tells you a machine was involved. It cannot tell you whose thinking it was. The output is no longer proof of thinking. You have to test it in the person. That means accountability, on both sides, for what we produce and for questioning the people behind what we consume.

Parliament has never made authorship the standard. Members have always delivered words drafted by staff and speech writers. What made those words legitimate was accountability. The members could explain the thinking and defend it. AI does not change that principle. It makes it urgent.

There is a simple test I use to stay accountable for my own thinking. I have AI interrogate me. If I did the thinking, I can answer any question about it. If I didn't, by the third question, I'm lost. Parliament already runs that test. Question period and this committee are ways of interrogating the thinking.

I have four recommendations.

First, make accountability for thinking the standard. Members are answerable for anything they put their name to. The House's AI guidance for members should say so explicitly.

Second, Parliament should not use AI detectors as a pass-fail test. They should be an input.

Third, make government answer for what it tables. When materials tabled with the House or its committees are prepared substantially with AI, it should say so, and the minister should be accountable for it. That tells you where to probe and whom to question.

Fourth, lead by example. Every member's office should write and publish its own AI principles: what it will and will not use AI for, and how. Those principles should be revisited every three months because the models are changing that quickly.

I have my own. One of my current principles is that I won't have a digital twin, but principles only mean something when they come from using the tools. Without using them, you can't see how easily we can slip into cognitive atrophy or what we lose when we miss the opportunity for cognitive amplification.

You have a rare chance to show the country what good use of AI looks like. That does not mean using it less. It means keeping your own thinking in the work.

● (1215)

I used AI to prepare this statement. The thinking is mine. AI interrogated me and helped me sharpen it. Now it's your turn.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll start with Mrs. Block for six minutes, please.

Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses. Those are very powerful testimonies and certainly some sobering advice coming to members of Parliament with the responsibilities that we have.

I am going to direct my questions to Library and Archives leading off this round of questioning. I want to note right off the bat that Library and Archives Canada's collection is massive and includes textual records, books, photographs, maps, art, films, musical items and preserved digital material.

Does Library and Archives Canada currently use AI tools to help navigate and classify this extraordinary collection?

Jennifer Schofield: Thank you for the question.

We don't use it to classify our records. As you mentioned, it is a vast collection. Roughly 5% of our collection is digitized, so an enormous portion of our collection is, in fact, still analog.

We have digitization priorities and initiatives. We are very successful in those projects. That being said, it will take us a very long time to get everything into some sort of digital format, if, indeed, that is the direction we go.

What we do use AI for is more for back-office functions, efficiency in administrative functions and so on. I'll turn to my colleague to speak to that a little bit more in a moment. We continue to explore how AI can help us with the description of the records that we have so they are findable within our own records.

Perhaps I'll turn to Mr. Bernadin to finish up.

Wanito Bernadin (Chief Information Officer and Chief Data Officer, and Senior Director General, Library and Archives of Canada): Thank you.

Some of the ways that we use AI technology for back-office functions include helping us with understanding old versions of programming languages that are outdated and need to be migrated to new versions. AI is able to help us interpret the code. As we reprogram into the new versions, AI is able to help us be more efficient and produce code more rapidly.

Kelly Block: With our recent comprehensive expenditure review, we heard at the government operations and estimates committee that Archives Canada was going to be seeing some reductions in its funding. We were advised that you would not necessarily be able to meet the legal obligations that you are bound to in the preservation of these materials.

Is it possible to digitize what you have with the current resources you have at your disposal?

Jennifer Schofield: The collections are so large that it would take all of the resources in Canada, I think, to be able to digitize that entire collection. We have focused on certain digitization projects for certain highly accessed collections, things like World War II records or war diaries and those sorts of pieces. We focus on those.

I don't think there will ever be enough resources to digitize our entire collection, but we are able to prioritize and digitalize those collections in a very efficient way.

● (1220)

Kelly Block: As we have transitioned to the digital age, obviously there is a concern—or concerns have been raised—that our digital history is at risk as websites quickly disappear from the web, with data being preserved in a way that a traditional archive might not be.

Can you speak to that at all?

Jennifer Schofield: Absolutely. I'll turn to my colleague who runs our web-scraping program within Library and Archives that ensures we preserve the content of websites.

Wanito Bernadin: Thank you.

We do have a GC web archive site that provides access to archive versions of .ca domain websites. We have worked with partners in order to have access to not only Government of Canada archive sites but also select websites from the .ca domain, and we make access to those sites available through our main collection search website.

Kelly Block: Can you also provide us with any kind of advice as to what should be done or could be done to better preserve our digital footprint? What kinds of websites should we be looking to preserve?

Wanito Bernadin: The primary focus should be Government of Canada websites, because a key mandate is to preserve the memory of the government's work, the decisions that have been made and the justification for those decisions. That should be a focus.

A second focus would be pure Canadian content—content that, if we do not preserve, no other agency or organization will preserve. That is also part of the documentary heritage of the country.

On what we can do to ensure that this continues, certainly we will continue to adhere to standards and international standards in the development of websites that make it more conducive for those websites to then be preserved. We support and adhere to maintaining those standards and also to using them as we do the preservation work ourselves.

Kelly Block: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Ms. Kayabaga, you have six minutes, please.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank our witnesses and welcome them here. I think the folks at the Library of Parliament are probably appearing for the first time. This is a very exciting study that I think a lot of people are excited to chat about.

I'll actually start with you guys. When it comes to AI and the use of AI in Parliament, how much are you using right now? I'll explore other questions after I hear the level of use you have right now.

Jennifer Schofield: Sure. We are separate from the Library of Parliament. We're Library and Archives Canada, as a national library and national archive, but I am certainly happy to answer questions about how we're using AI. We are using AI for access to our collections and to improve access. We've had particularly strong success with the transcription and indexing of historical records in order to make them more accessible to Canadians. We're also using it, as my colleague mentioned, for back-office functions.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Thank you for the correction.

I'm curious about this. If you're using AI right now, one of my biggest concerns with AI has been that a lot of AI systems are still providing false information. We don't have a way to...other than every individual correcting the AI system. If I use a different device and ask the exact same question I just asked from another device, it will give me a completely different answer. I find that the AI systems are not caught up on providing correct information, which can erode our democracy, including when you are archiving information.

I'm wondering what measures are in place, or if you have any to suggest, to make sure that 20 years from now, as we see that AI will be.... AI is here to stay. It's going to be part of our future. What would you suggest we put in place to protect information sharing? You can search something and I can search something with AI, and we'll get two different answers. Where is the truth?

How do we protect ourselves from archiving or saving false information?

Jennifer Schofield: Thank you for the question. It's one that we take very seriously at Library and Archives Canada.

We maintain the source of truth. We maintain those original records to be able to turn back to and see historically what the truth was. That becomes more challenging, certainly, in an AI environment. However, we maintain, again, the original documents. We do not digitize and destroy. We keep all our records that we digitize in order to be able to turn back to the original and have an unaltered version of the truth, really, or what history deemed to be the truth at the time.

We are the memory of the Government of Canada, but we also try to collect the alternative views that were happening at the time so that more than 20 years from now, or even 200 years from now, people can look back and see what we were worried about—whether it was legitimate and what we were talking about—to be able to form their own opinions, make their own arguments and interpret it in the way they see fit.

● (1225)

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Thank you.

Perhaps I could borrow some of Mr. Patel's comments around our ability to inform the public on how much AI we're using and at what capacity we're using AI. Is that something you guys already do or are intending to do? Is there a cost connected to it as well?

Jennifer Schofield: Yes, we do advise where we have used AI or where there's AI included in our search results. We don't have stand-alone AI systems at this point in time, I would say. We're really relying on transcription and things like that, but we do indicate where we have used AI for transcription.

I don't know if you want to add to that.

Wanito Bernadin: You're correct. We adhere to the policies established by the Treasury Board. Any automated decision-making that could be done using an AI system would require that we do an algorithmic impact assessment and communicate with the affected parties, and that we ensure that we publish the result of the assessment on the Open Government portal so that it is transparent.

Thus far, as Ms. Schofield has mentioned, we have not used systems that have required us to produce that kind of assessment.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: You would need a guiding policy, basically, from the Treasury Board to be able to make sure that...because AI moves really fast. What would the turnaround be? Would it be every year that you'd want updated policies? What does that look like?

I want to make sure that we are not staying behind AI, because it will move fast. We want to make sure that we are staying up to date. Otherwise, that's where false information or a lack of updated information begins to seep through.

Jennifer Schofield: From a policy perspective, from the Treasury Board, what we would anticipate is that it is principles-based and broad enough to continue as long as those principles remain the priority. Transparency, human in the loop and all of those things are included in the directive on automated decision-making at present.

I think, from a policy perspective, we'd like to see that continue to be broad but then for us all to have implementation policies—small-p policies, per se—to be able to implement it within our own context. Our context is very different from national defence, for example, and from other organizations, because the mandates are so different.

Hon. Arielle Kayabaga: Thank you so much.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Normandin, you have six minutes.

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Tessari L'Allié, I'll start with you, if I may.

We haven't talked as much about superintelligence here. Perhaps we've taken a more down-to-earth approach to AI. However, since you brought up superintelligence, I'd like to hear your thoughts on the idea of providing leadership to slow its development.

More specifically, I'd like you to discuss the idea of Canada forming a coalition with other countries, particularly middle powers, to begin negotiations aimed at an international ban on the development of superintelligence, restrictions on its accessibility and oversight of its precursors, such as recursive self-improvement and the ability of an AI system to autonomously create another one. What do you think of that idea?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: I think it's absolutely essential. There have already been some steps in that direction. A few weeks ago, there was a call for oversight of advanced AI models, in the form of a declaration signed by 31 countries, including Canada, Finland, Norway and Singapore, calling for greater awareness of the risks, which are emerging very quickly.

All the most dangerous models are currently being developed in Silicon Valley and China. So, first of all, it will be up to the United States and China to reach an agreement. However, they won't want to slow down if other countries aren't doing the same. That's where Canada can play a very strong role in building a coalition that will support the agreement between the United States and China that the world needs.

In the long term, without regulation or a ban, Canada will also develop superintelligence. I think companies like Cohere, even though they're somewhat behind, are moving in that direction.

So, when it comes to AI, Canada's greatest strength right now in protecting Canadians and democracy is really its ability to exercise leadership by building a coalition and supporting a global movement.

● (1230)

Christine Normandin: Thank you very much.

Mr. Patel, you spoke about the risk that we could eventually find ourselves heading towards a kind of cognitive atrophy if we rely too heavily on artificial intelligence.

I'd like to hear your thoughts on how we, as politicians, should rethink the way we do things in the House when it comes to very basic matters, such as question period.

Should we consider an approach where speeches include questions, follow-up questions and supplementary questions? We did that during the pandemic. We had five-minute blocks for asking questions, rather than 35-second blocks for asking pre-written questions. Should we consider approaches like the one in the United Kingdom, where members aren't allowed to have written notes when they speak in the House so that we know the ideas are coming from them? Is this something we should be reflecting on as elected officials?

[*English*]

Nish Patel: Thank you for the question.

I think that the House of Commons can be an example not just across the public sector but the private sector as well. One of the things I've noticed in my work in the private sector is that too many individuals, regardless of their years of experience, have become entirely too reliant on these tools for their own ideas and their own thinking.

One phrase I've become fond of repeating over and over again is that “the conversation is the work”. When I think about the history of our species, we have done incredible things over time, because there have been those of us who have sat around campfires and around tables and had conversations to express our own ideas, our own possibilities of what tomorrow might bring, and to hear the ideas and possibilities of others. Through that, through our ideas, possibilities and thinking and our discussion and debate colliding with each other, we've created stepping stones of progress that have led to a world that, quite frankly, is filled with magic in abundance.

I have meetings and I have policies in my own company where AI can't come into them. We can use AI in advance just to help us prepare and to help us think through our ideas and sharpen them so that when we do engage in the conversation, we are prepared to bring the clarity of what we think, why we think and what possibilities we want to bring into fruition, and also to engage with the ideas and the perspectives of others.

I would advocate for the elimination of AI in the chambers and in any venue where the conversation takes place.

[*Translation*]

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I don't have much time for my next question, but I'll turn to the officials from Library and Archives Canada.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence two years ago. During one of our studies, researchers criticized Library and Archives Canada's policy of proactively redacting information for security reasons and then lifting those redactions later, rather than taking a very open approach and redacting only what is necessary. They said that this approach somewhat hindered research.

Is this practice still in place? Could AI help better identify what needs to be redacted and make more information available?

Jennifer Schofield: Thank you for the question.

We try as much as possible to have open collections and offer as much access as possible. However, we have documents that contain information related to national security, for example. Requests for documents like that require an access to information request. Again, it has to be open, unless an exemption applies.

We're exploring the idea of using AI to redact documents. It hasn't been very successful so far. This work still has to be done by humans.

However, our mandate is really to have collections that are accessible and open. That's always our goal, except when there are reasons not to make documents accessible.

● (1235)

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Cooper, you have five minutes, please.

Michael Cooper: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My questions are directed to the Library and Archives.

Mr. Bernadin, you stated that one of the mandates of the Library and Archives is to preserve a memory of the government's work and justifications for the decisions it makes. I believe I'm quoting you, but I think I'm accurately at least paraphrasing what you said. Is that correct?

Wanito Bernadin: That's correct.

Michael Cooper: Okay.

We are increasingly seeing the use of AI in all aspects of government in terms of reports, legislation, speeches and government decisions. What thought has been put into documenting the role of AI and AI inputs?

Wanito Bernadin: There are certain governance bodies that currently exist that allow for this kind of transparency. First, within the Treasury Board suite of policies, we find a directive on automated decision-making. Within that directive, there's also the requirement that departments such as LAC conduct an algorithmic impact assessment if there were to be systems in play that would aid in making decisions on matters of mandate or matters of service to constituents.

Not only do we have these policies, but we also have mechanisms that enable us to verify that the policies are in use. For example, within the domain of information technology, there is an enterprise architecture review board and process that require that decisions related to systems that use AI go through a rigorous questionnaire and analysis by peers within the government to verify that we've, in fact, adhered to what the policy requires. Then, lastly, the requirement that the results of these assessments be published on the Open Government portal makes it so that all stakeholders who could possibly be affected by the outcome of these decisions can be aware that AI has been used and can also have an opportunity to participate in the consultation so that this can be refined and improved.

Michael Cooper: Thank you for that answer.

Ms. Schofield, you noted that, of the vast archives that exist, 5% are digitized. I understood you to say that there will never be sufficient resources to digitize the entire archives, but could you elaborate on what 5% represents and what the plan is going forward?

You touched on certain projects being targeted, but can you elaborate on what the plan is?

Jennifer Schofield: Certainly.

Every year, we have a digitization plan that we undertake, looking at the most accessed collections. We do a lot of research with our users to see what it is they are accessing. Those become priorities in our digitization plan, and we move forward with that every year. For instance, this year, World War II records were indicated as a priority. We've been successful at digitizing over 20 million pages of World War II records thus far this year. Where we have these collections or these pockets of collections that are very high value for users or for researchers, we prioritize those every year.

Every year, the research comes in. We talk to our users. We see what is the most accessed, the most desirable, and then we make our plan based on that. That's how they get digitized.

Michael Cooper: Twenty million pages is pretty vast, but it also begs the question of keeping the human in the loop, which is one of your guiding principles. Can you maybe elaborate on what oversight mechanisms are in place as vast amounts of archival information, documents and records are being digitized?

● (1240)

Jennifer Schofield: Absolutely.

The digitization is one part of it, but then it becomes the description from the archivists of what is in those records. That is where we have been piloting AI to see if there is value in being able to do that in a more automated way, as opposed to having archivists doing that work. We have not gotten to a place yet where that trade-off or that balance has been struck. With the tools we've seen thus far, it is more time-consuming for the archivists to go back and make the corrections that are needed. That's not to say that there won't be a new tool tomorrow.

Michael Cooper: Just to be clear, there aren't AI tools being used there.

Jennifer Schofield: There are. The success stories we've seen are in the transcription and indexing of the things that have been digitized and then described, and there are people who go through spot-checking to ensure that they are accurate.

Michael Cooper: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Ms. Vandenbeld, you have five minutes, please.

Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to pose my questions to Mr. Patel.

For full transparency, you are one of my constituents. I want to thank you for engaging in democracy—not just for being here but for many years of participating in my weekly coffee-hour open discussions with constituents.

I would say that being exposed to your thinking and to the conversations we had about the possibilities of AI—about how it can be used well and not so well—before I ever started using it has made a difference in the way I use it. What you say about sharpening thinking, putting in your own thought processes and interrogating your thoughts needs to be part of training and education particularly for legislators and for everyone, I think.

You pointed out that we have a very unique role as legislators. We are leaders. We receive a lot of information and we also make significant decisions. We are representatives. We are speaking for others, which is a very different way of communicating.

I wonder if you could perhaps talk a little bit about how AI can completely transform legislators, legislatures and also society itself. We've heard a lot about not treating AI as just another tech tool, but treating it as an opportunity to completely rethink how we do things. You've talked a lot about that. I wonder if you could just take a moment to talk about how that transformation could occur and what that means for human creativity and human ingenuity.

Nish Patel: Thank you for the question.

I won't speak to any specifics in terms of how it might transform a legislature. I'm not familiar enough with the inner workings of a legislature—certainly not this one.

I will say that my thinking around AI is what I would call pragmatically optimistic. My core thesis and view of AI is that it is middleware for the human imagination and that it is unlike any previous technology we've ever interacted with. It is both a potential superpower and potential kryptonite for all of us as individuals, as organizations, as democracies, as countries and perhaps even indeed as a species.

There's very real risk with it, as has been pointed out by another member of today's witness panel. Where I tend to focus my attention is on what the possibilities are and what the value is that we're not paying enough attention to but that we can unlock. To me, AI is perhaps the simplest technology we've ever been given in terms of individually using it, because it's a blank canvas of possibility.

What I have seen through the work I do, through my own relationship with it and through the relationships I've seen others develop with it, whether it's young people or senior citizens, is that it is a conduit for their imagination. The human imagination and our ability to sit around that proverbial campfire and think of new ideas and new possibilities are infinite.

One of the issues with AI today is that we centre the technology instead of centring the human. We use terms like “human in the loop”. I prefer to say, “human in command”, because ultimately, whether it's as individuals or as organizations, this is going to come down to human accountability and human agency. There's a real opportunity to rethink, rewire and refactor the way we do everything. I don't think that's going to be necessarily a deliberate choice. I think it's something we have to be ready for and approach with a proactive mindset, because of the nature of this technology. To me, it's an alien species technology. It's unlike any one that we've ever encountered before and had access to.

There's so much more opportunity to tap into, for us to think much bigger, more boldly and with greater creativity and imagination.

● (1245)

Anita Vandenbeld: Whenever we, as humans, have had new technology, we tend at first to just use it to do the same thing we were doing before, until we realize the possibilities. Look at television. A lot of it was just static entertainment like radio shows, and then it became cinema. It was the same thing with the Internet. It was like a brochure. You just put up a website that was like the flyer you would have had. Of course, now we have social media.

If we are using AI right now and just doing the same thing—like having a spreadsheet but it's done by AI instead—how do you see, as we develop with it, that we may use it completely differently from what we've even thought of right now?

The Chair: That is a very big question, and we are well over time.

Anita Vandenbeld: You can always send it in writing.

The Chair: I was trying to give you a signal to wind it up.

Hopefully, you can work that answer into perhaps another question that's brought forward.

We'll go to Madame Normandin.

[*Translation*]

You have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Christine Normandin: Thank you.

I have another question for you, Mr. Tessari L'Allié. You mentioned two things that need to be done. The first was to exercise leadership to slow the development of superintelligence. The second was to become more resilient and better prepared, in the meantime, for the emergencies that could be caused by superintelligence. I'd like you to tell us more about that.

How do we prepare for emergencies that could be caused by superintelligence? Do we prepare for them in the same way as we prepare for traditional emergencies? Can we kill two birds with one stone in preparing for them? Could you tell us about countries that serve as examples in this regard?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: Resilience with respect to traditional AI, the kind that precedes superintelligence, concerns all the risks that AI agents can pose. We can think of incidents such as the one involving Hugging Face. In cases like that, resilience involves cybersecurity measures.

What's new, and what cybersecurity agencies are warning us about, is that agentic AI systems are now capable of carrying out more damaging attacks. For example, they can enable malicious actors to threaten drinking water systems, electricity systems and so on. Cybersecurity agencies are therefore warning that outages could occur. Resilience with respect to today's agentic AI means having all the necessary measures in place to respond if there's a power outage.

However, what's really new about artificial intelligence is the risk of losing control. If we have a system approaching superintelligence, meaning one that's more intelligent than we are in several domains, although perhaps not all, the greatest danger is the loss of control. If there are swarm attacks involving AI agents against a country or an organization, the only thing we can do to stop them is shut down the computer on which the AI agents are running. However, if we don't have control of that computer, as is usually the case, we have to shut down our own computer.

So we have to prepare for situations in which we would be offline. Canada managed to function for at least a hundred years without the internet. We're capable of running our country without an internet connection. Preparing for AI-related emergencies means being able to run the country without cellphones or computers.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Mr. Calkins, you have five minutes, please.

Blaine Calkins: Thank you, Chair.

I'll start with Mr. Tessari L'Allié.

Can you explain singularity in the context of AI? Do you think the predictions around 2029 are true, or are we already there?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: Singularity is a great question. It's a very vague term, and people tend to throw all their biggest hopes and concerns onto it.

Broadly, it's the exponential trend of technological development, which we have been seeing with AI. There has been a doubling of capabilities every few months and, if that continues, we will race towards superintelligence. If we end up in a world where we have systems that are far smarter than us, that will create a far different world, one that is very difficult to imagine and prepare for, basically. If, by singularity, you mean the acceleration of AI, that is it, and we're currently on track.

Exponentials in the real world tend to turn into S-curves, so there's a hope that maybe because of the fears of loss of control incidents, maybe because there's a financial correction or maybe because of some other factor, there is some kind of slowdown in AI, and we can get to the point where society can keep up to the speed of AI. However, that is a hope, not a plan. By default, we're probably on exponential for a while longer.

● (1250)

Blaine Calkins: I appreciate that.

You used the Hugging Face incident. We just had the Chief Electoral Officer here. I wish you had been in the first panel. The question I would have asked him.... When we talk about agency, Mr. Patel, I think you're bang on with a lot of the things that you say, so here comes an agency question.

If AI is able to do things on its own—self-directed, self-motivated—who is going to take responsibility in a hypothetical incident where an artificial intelligence swarm or whatever the case might be, whatever it looks like in the future, decides it's going to do something political, take a political action and use all of the resources and all of the means it has to change the course of electoral history in some particular way or form?

We just had the Supreme Court of Canada overrule an election result because of some errors made by Canada Post. What's going to happen, and how are we going to govern ourselves in the future when AI decides which candidate it wants to be elected to a house of representatives, a legislative assembly or a municipal council? Who will be accountable when there is no human in control or in command of something AI does on its own?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: This is why scientists are warning about a permanent loss of control. If those systems are smarter than us and they are able to trick us into voting in certain directions, we may not even be aware that we're being tricked or that democracy is being hijacked. It'll all seem natural. It can be very well done by AI. Hopefully, the AI will be not quite that good, it'll make some mistakes and we'll be able to see that and catch that, but that's “pre” superintelligence.

We're heading into a very turbulent period. The number one thing is to make sure we don't develop superintelligence, because we're not ready for that. Maybe at some point in the future it will create a beautiful future, but we're not there yet.

Blaine Calkins: How do we do that in a world where we might have like-minded countries and allies that might agree with this notion, but you would actually need global consensus in order to achieve it?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: Yes, we're going to have to do the impossible. The odds are extremely low. However, there are a few reasons to believe that a pause might be possible. Number one is that there is a strong national security survival instinct for every country to not race ahead.

Blaine Calkins: I have a question for you about that, if I may. Recently, a number of countries have been re-emphasizing emergency preparedness and their emergency preparedness strategies, including 72 days as a minimum of supplies on hand and, in some cases, up to three months of supplies on hand. Is there any coincidence that this is happening right now?

I think most people are attributing it to some of the problems that we're seeing in between, potentially, China and Taiwan, and Ukraine and Russia. Is there another factor that the public's not being made aware of that you could enlighten us about?

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: I hope it's because they're aware of what's happening in AI and they're getting ready for it. My guess is that there are a bunch of different factors that are going into that decision.

Certainly, what the cyber agencies have been saying loud and clear is that there are a whole new dimension of cyber-risks on the block, and those really could take down some of the systems, like the food supply chains or water, or whatever it is that we rely on as a society to function. That is probably the main reason they're doing that, and that is an immediate, current risk.

As these systems get more powerful and there's a major loss of control event in which, perhaps, our last-ditch effort is to unplug and turn off the data centres, turn off our computers and walk away from them—

Blaine Calkins: That's assuming we're still in control of them.

Wyatt Tessari L'Allié: Exactly, yes...but that would be a situation for which you absolutely have to have emergency preparedness. Human beings have survived tens of thousands of years without the Internet. We can survive again, but it would be very rough going cold turkey. I think that, for Canadians, it would be hard.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brière, you have the floor for five minutes.

[*English*]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*Translation*]

Good afternoon.

Mr. Patel, I would like to give you the opportunity to answer the question from my colleague, who asked you how AI would be used in the future.

[*English*]

Nish Patel: That is a very broad question. I will talk more about my approach. My philosophy is to take a blank-canvas mindset to everything. If I'm looking at an existing process, an existing business strategy—or anything, really—I start with interrogating, "How did it come to be this way? Why do we do it this way?" Very often, we can answer the question. It's that we've just simply inherited the thinking, the process and the strategy, the way in which any institution or any organization operates. I think it's about interrogating that first.

Number two is to understand why it came to be that way. What were the outcomes that we were in service of? Very often, once something is established, we just continue to accept it as, "That's just the way it is." How many times do we say, "That's the way it is," instead of interrogating it?

Now, it's paramount that we do interrogate whatever we're responsible and accountable for. Why do I do it that way? Why do we do it that way? What are the outcomes it's in service of? Should the outcomes change now? Do they need to adapt? If the outcomes are still the same, do we think about getting to the outcomes in a different way now?

● (1255)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Thank you very much.

All of us here are of a certain age, so we used paper-based methods, we read, and we developed critical thinking skills. However, when I think about the younger generations that will grow up with AI, I'm a little concerned about their ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, develop arguments and debate, as we have to do.

I'd like your opinion on that.

[*English*]

Nish Patel: I'm 54 and I still have debates with myself about what is wrong or right.

I think young people bring a different perspective. What they bring, by default, is blank-canvas thinking. There's an opportunity for them to develop. They're still in the early stages of developing their own sense of right and wrong and their own ethics and morality. My ethics and morality were developed mostly years ago, based on the circumstances I grew up in and the world around me. I have to constantly remind myself that the world around me has changed and evolved over time.

I appreciate the question. I don't know if I agree with the premise. I think we all have to do it constantly.

On a personal note, one of the things that has forced me to constantly rethink things, even pre-AI, is that I walk with a cane. I got a disability when I was 35. It forced me to rethink and redevelop my relationship with myself and the world around me.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: I completely agree with you. In fact, what I wanted to say is that we have a foundation. We have life experience, whereas younger generations are growing up with AI right from the start. They can have everything handed to them on a plate very quickly. So that was more the point I was trying to make.

Ms. Schofield, just briefly, I was a lecturer at the University of Sherbrooke. When I started my studies, we had a course on library research, which involved using card catalogues. We'd write down the reference, go down the aisles and retrieve the book. Then the internet came along. The question was no longer how to search for information, but where to find it. However, today, just this morning, I heard that people don't even go to websites anymore. They turn to AI to do their research.

So how can you ensure that people find accurate information, and that the information isn't being steered in a particular direction?

Jennifer Schofield: That's a great question. I think I'll let my colleague answer it.

Wanito Bernadin: Thank you for the question.

You're entirely right that people now do more research using their web browsers than by going to physical libraries.

Even before AI, there were automated methods for retrieving and collecting information from websites so that other websites could make that information accessible to users.

These same methods are still being used in this new world, although the techniques have been improved and expanded to allow AI engines, on the one hand, to identify the information we hold and, on the other, to trace that information back to us and identify us as its source.

This is an area where we still have work to do. We're aware of this need, and we're preparing our data and systems so that, in the years to come, we can help provide access and enable users to know that the information comes from Library and Archives Canada.

● (1300)

Hon. Élisabeth Brière: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for appearing today.

As our committee has no further business, we stand adjourned.

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