OPEN NORTH

Local Artificial Intelligence for Communities and Public Administrations, where to start?

Outline

- About Open North
- Our work on AI and local government:
  - Urban AI
  - Community Solutions Network
- Conclusion
  - Inclusive, transparent, accountable, & responsible data governance

Open North

Founded in 2011

Canada's leading not-for-profit
Data governance
Open and shared data
Open smart cities
Public consultation
Open government

Mission
Research and solution design
Capacity building
Network collaboration

Vision
Responsible and effective use of data and technology in service to transparent, accountable and inclusive communities

Thomas Linder, PhD

Coordinator
- Research
- Knowledge translation
- Municipal digital transformation
- Digital governance
- Privacy & risk

Open North

1 Federal Smart Cities Challenge

2019-2023: Open North is the lead technical advisory service to municipalities in the Canadian federal Smart Cities Challenge
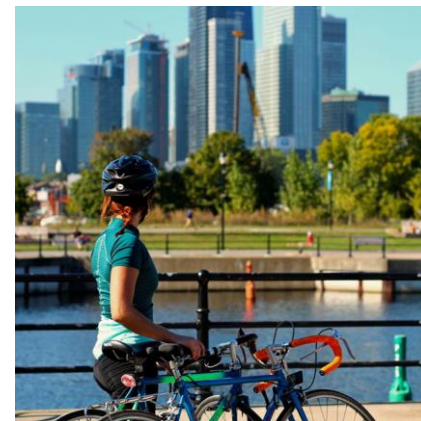
2 Montréal en commun

2020-2024: Open North leads the Data Governance Workstream for the City of Montréal's Urban Innovation Lab

3 Community Solutions Network (CSN)

Through the Network, Open North provides over 80 municipalities with support on all digital transformation issues

4 Climate Montréal Partnership

Open North is engaged by the Concordia University and Montréal to co-develop a GHG emissions dashboard project

AI Governance

AI Governance in Canada

- Early mover in 2017
- 84 Governance Initiatives since
- Montréal Declaration for Responsible AI
- Bill C-27 + AIDA
- However, still highly nascent and inadequate
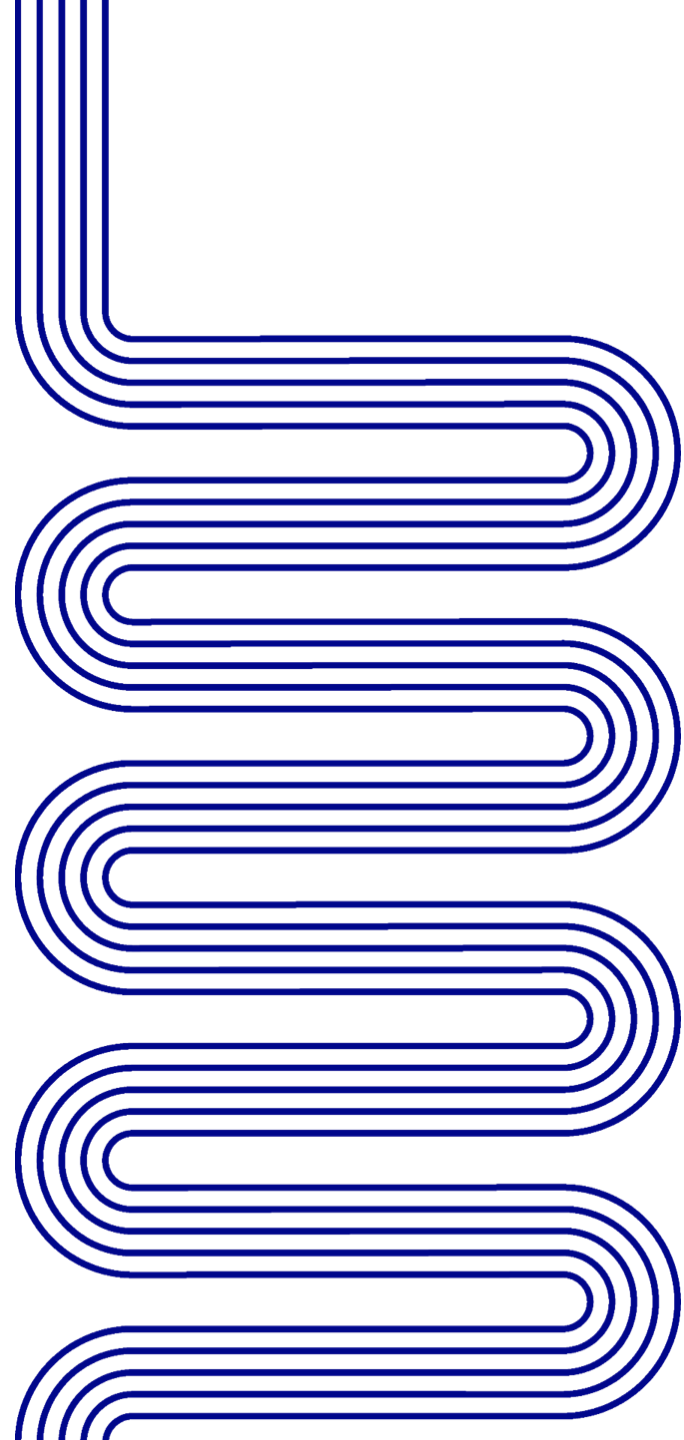
Open North's Approach

- Ethical principles are largely defined
- Abstract best practices are quite established
- **Foundational, infrastructural, resource, and governance** requirements are several lacking
- **As such, 'AI' is misleading: holistic data governance**

The UrbanIA Project

Using AI for the Benefit of Montréal's Marginalized Communities

- Serious concern with the negative impacts of the AI industry on marginalized communities in Montréal
  - Gentrification, Discrimination
- Concern that solutions and benefits of AI development do not reach marginalized communities
- Open North working with University of Montréal, Mila, IVADO, FARI, CEIMIA, and community organizations to
  - Understand the needs of impacted communities
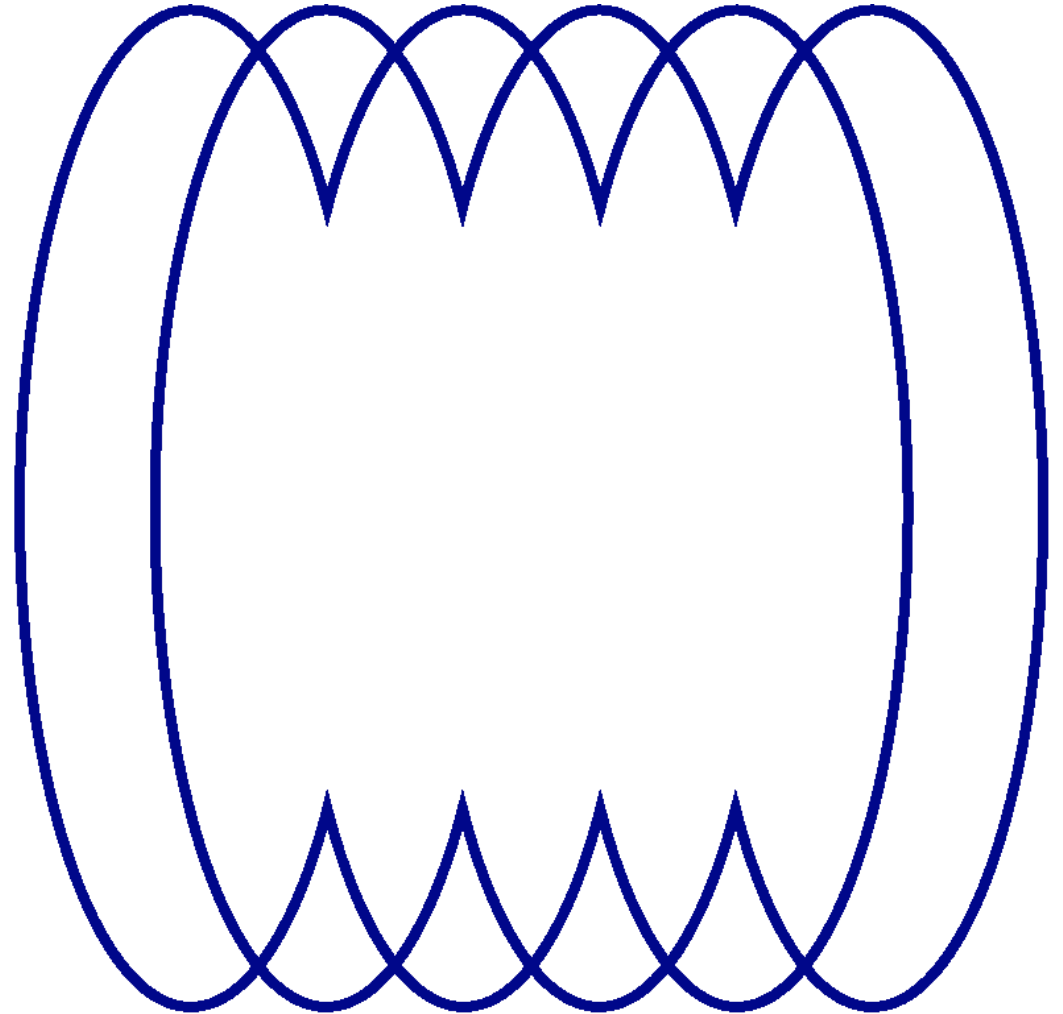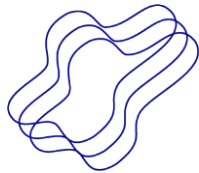 - Develop an equitable, people-centric strategy

CSN

Through CSN and in collaboration with Concordia's Applied AI Institute, Open North is a running a series of workshops on AI governance in municipalities

- Findings
    - Forced into uncharted territory
    - Lack of internal and external literacy
    - Unclear strategy for literacy building
    - Severely compounded by inadequate digital maturity overall
    - Equally by insufficient resources to deal with above issues

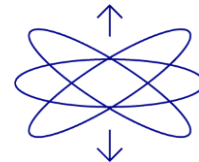# Findings: Inclusive and anti-technosolutionist

Public Participation

Both projects show a deep need to seriously involve residents and the public broadly in decisions <u>and</u> processes

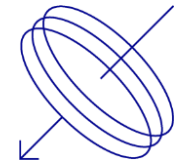This is crucial for trust born from democratic legitimacy and social license

Literacy & Debate

We need to develop new approaches to education that can involve different groups with different interests, and foster both learning and healthy critical debate

We <u>do not know</u> how technology and government will develop: creating an outcome agnostic space for debate is essential for democratic health

Transparency

In order for any of the preceding initiatives to be successful, we need far greater transparency on the technologies, the data, and their governance.

Rigorous 3rd party risk assessment, data and AI registries, no blackboxed tools, official roles that are responsible and accountable to the entirety of tech and its impacts

Recommendations:
Repositioning Data Governance

Open North's Stance on Data Governance

Good data governance is a transparent, inclusive, accountable framework that not only ensures digital maturity <u>but also</u> determines who gets to make which decisions about who benefits in which ways from the use of data and digital technologies

Key goals

- What 'AI' is and will become is deeply unclear, thus:
- Transparent and accountable data usage is the foundation of responsible local tech
- Inclusive public participation in governance is essential for trust and democracy
- Comprehensive data governance is sine qua non

OPEN NORTH

Thank you! Questions?

Contact:

thomas@opennorth.ca