

# Perceptions on Ethics and GenAI: An Exploration of Online



## Conversations on Reddit

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### Abstract

In the last few years, the use of Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has become increasingly normalized, creating a plethora of new ethical issues, differing from those related to traditional artificial intelligence. While the research on the ethics of traditional artificial intelligence focused on trust, transparency, and fairness, newer literature on GenAI have identified other issues including misinformation, governance, and copyright infringement. This research project focuses on the public perceptions of GenAI ethics through the data collection of online forums, mainly Reddit, with the use of keywords. The aim of this project is to find out how the general public feels about GenAI by categorizing posts into four major themes: 1) organizational evolution regarding workplace environments, 2) societal concerns with misuse, 3) evaluation and assessment of guidelines, and 4) sharing of educational resources regarding GenAI. We expect to find a high percentage of posts relating to the widespread misuse of GenAI and its repercussions on society as a whole. We hope that our findings will be helpful in ensuring that further technological advancements and policies are done with the public's opinions in mind.

### Methods

- First in our data collection process, we compiled a list of relevant subreddits. The subreddits examined were: r/generativeAI, r/aiwars, r/ethics, r/learnmachinelearn, r/ChatGPT, r/ArtificialIntelligence, r/AIethics.
- Then, we compiled a list of related keywords to scrape the data through Python. The keywords used included: responsibility, ethics, privacy, trust, transparency, safety, risk, and traceability.
- The data was collected during the first week of January and includes posts ranging from March 2023 to January 2026.
- The analysis process involves sorting each post into one of four coding schemas, inspired by Hagendroff's themes. In simple terms, these include issues related to: organizational ethics, misuse and societal concerns, assessment and evaluation, and resource sharing.
- The analysis process and coding themes have evolved as we have analyzed the data, prioritizing consistency and precision.

### Preliminary Findings

- Our findings are being analyzed through Floridi and Hagendroff's principles and frameworks for studying the ethics of AI.
- We originally analyzed our data by briefly summarizing each post and comparing its content to that described in previous literature. Then, we started analyzing them through a detailed coding schema.
- Our findings are not finalized yet as we continue analyzing the data and workshopping our analysis process.
- As shown in the word cloud on the right, many users on Reddit feel concerns regarding large language models (LLMs), people, and data.
- We will continue refining our data and finalize our findings in the near future. For now, we will not make any conclusions based on initial data findings.

### Background

- Artificial Intelligence vs GenAI: There is a significant difference between traditional artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence software. Artificial intelligence has existed for decades and is mostly used for analysis and predictions. Meanwhile, GenAI is relatively new and involves the creation of new content, including text, images, and even video, based on existing materials. They each have their respective limitations with traditional AI requiring extensive data and GenAI involving high costs, for example. Understanding these differences is crucial to examining the ethical issues associated with this new technology.
- Ethics of GenAI: As a field, the study of AI ethics has existed since AI itself was invented. The software differences between traditional AI and GenAI have also led to a new field of study dedicated to researching the ethicality of GenAI. Some of the most prominent issues include hallucinations, misuse, governance, fairness, and many others.
- Importance: The significance of this project cannot be overstated. Researching the public perception of GenAI ethics contributes to the development of relevant legislation and people-oriented software.

### Motivation: Why Reddit

- Authenticity: As a forum-centered social media platform, Reddit allows users to engage in discourse relating to a variety of topics. The anonymity allows for honest and authentic conversations without the fear of being personally targeted or challenging social norms.
- Organization: Reddit's organization into different communities for every niche topic allows for a more precise analysis. Furthermore, it makes the data collection process easier by allowing us to focus on a list of subreddits of interest.
- Accessibility: Reddit is easily available and offers immediate access to discussions, rendering the research process more relevant. It also allows for large-scale data scraping through other softwares.

### Conclusion

- After concluding our data analysis and interpreting this initial data, we plan on looking into other data avenues, specifically surveys.
- Then, we will consolidate our data and start working on a manuscript application for a conference in April. Eventually, turning this into an article.
- Our primary goal with this research is to understand how people are making sense of the discussion surrounding generative AI.
- We hope the results of this project will create meaningful people-aligned frameworks for AI literacy and foster a holistic approach towards AI integration.
- Furthermore, we hope this research project will aid in the development of technology and governance that is driven by people's needs in addition to principles and guidelines.

### Acknowledgements

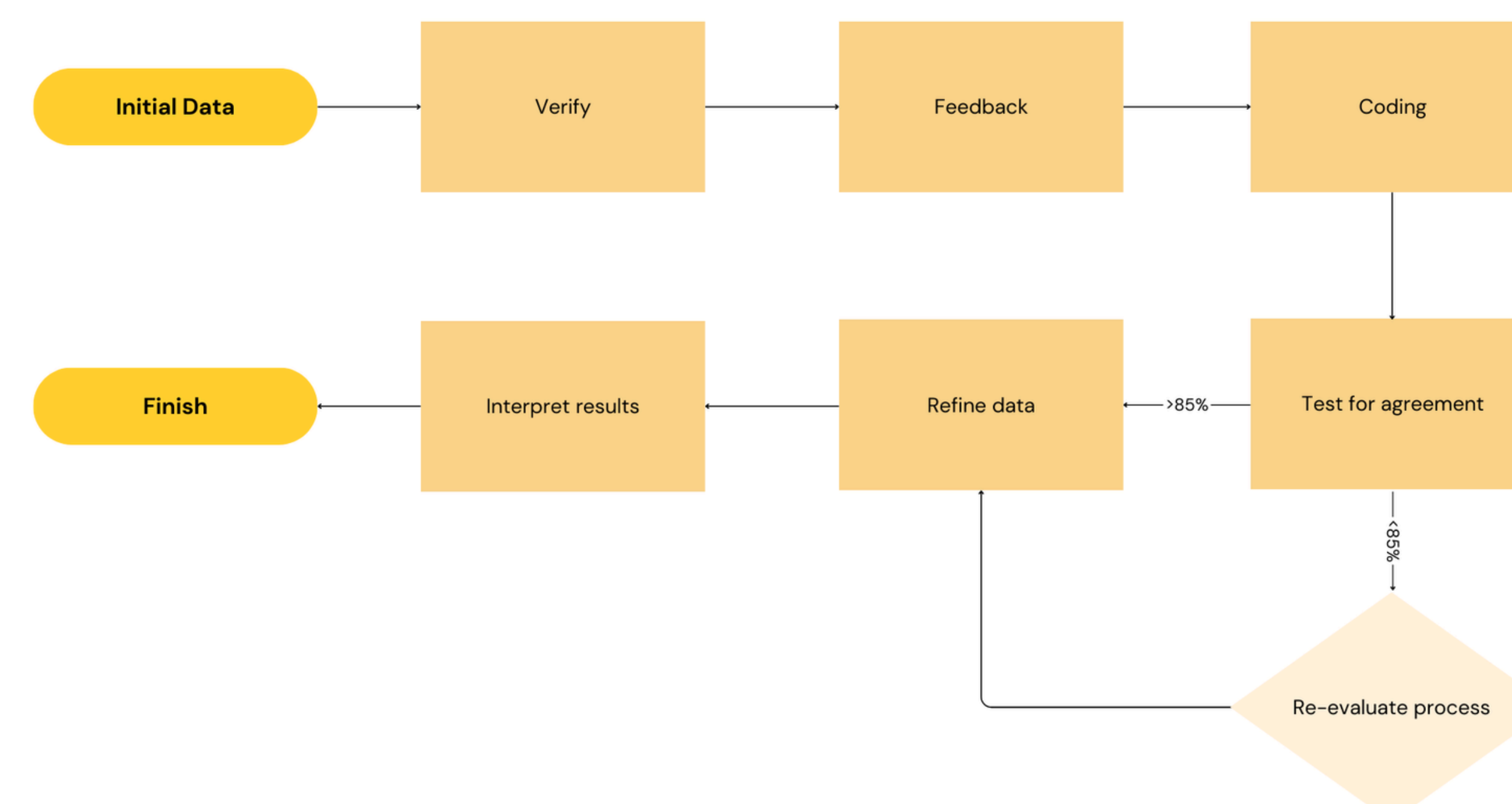
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### References

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Word cloud illustrating most frequently used words in the Reddit posts collected.



Flow chart showing our data analysis process.