



RAIN Africa

The Responsible AI Network Africa RAIN AFRICA

Q&A

with Prof. Malo Sadouanouan

RAIN Africa's Country Representative

BURKINA FASO



How can we harness the potential of AI in Africa?

To successfully exploit the potential benefits of AI and reduce the economic disruption, we must ensure the involvement of all AI-related stakeholders and inclusive development of AI roll-out in Burkina Faso. Moreover, we need to ensure equitable access to AI education, facilities and the internet. Research in AI applications in Burkina Faso needs also be promoted both at the national and international level through publications and demonstrations in conferences.



What concerns and ethical challenges related to the use of AI are especially prevalent in the African context?

The use of AI requires the adoption of technical standards that secure the responsible development of AI, enable AI-auditing and comply with Africa's legal requirements. AI systems have the potential to produce results that can discriminate among individuals or groups. AI can also threaten privacy and compromise consumer protection by gaining insights into customers' behavior patterns and personalities.



What are the potential benefits and risks of AI in Africa?

Thanks to prediction technologies and advanced data flow exploitation techniques, Burkina Faso can build innovative tools to "reinvent" agriculture, livestock and health, modernize trade activities, banking, insurance and strengthening the security system. However, some possible risks of AI application in Burkina Faso raise severe issues regarding privacy, potential manipulation of the public opinion, discrimination, and the development and use of autonomous weapons.



What are the recent major developments in AI in your country?

Burkina Faso is at a trial-and-error stage when it comes to the use of AI. Currently, AI is used in mobility and urban security. The data, produced by urban activity and start-ups, are used for AI-related applications. In addition, steps have already been taken to advance AI in Burkina Faso, like establishing Mathematics and Computer Science laboratories in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso, something that has be further encouraged.

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What are the AI projects you are currently working on?

I am currently involved in three AI-related projects. One has to do with optimizing the solar energy electricity production in Burkina Faso by using machine learning and neural networks. The second involves the use of AI systems to detect changes in military routes focused on improvised explosive devices (IED). And the third, the use of AI in augmenting healthcare capacity by enhancing epidemic surveillance.



What do you hope the Responsible AI Network Africa will achieve?

The RAIN Africa is systematically working on creating a robust and active network of scholars and other experts working on the responsible development and use of AI in Africa. Thus, we firmly believe that our laboratory's participation in this network will help us strengthen our capabilities by "filling" the gaps in human expertise through workshops, joint events, and other collaborations. We want to reach out to AI experts across the continent and create interdisciplinary synergies through this network. Last but not least, through our participation in this network, we hope to raise awareness about the ethical considerations related to the responsible development of AI in Burkina Faso.



PROF. MALO SADOUANOUAN

Prof Malo Sadouanouan earned his PhD in National School of Mechanics and Aeronautics of Poitiers (France) in Computer Science. Throughout the recent years he devotes his time working on IoT, machine learning and data mining technologies while in the past several years, he was working on Real-time applications. He's working also on the analysis of social networks for knowledge extraction for epidemiological surveillance in Burkina Faso. Prof Malo Sadouanouan was the deputy director of Ecole Supérieure d'Informatique (ESI) at Nazi BONI University (Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso) and is currently the coordinator of the Master in Data Sciences and the lead of the data science research team at ESI. He was an integral member of the WAZIUP7 project funded by the European Union (H2020), and participated in other projects such as "une plateforme de simulation à base d'agents pour la sensibilisation dans le cadre du contrôle et de la prévention de la propagation d'une épidémie : cas de la méningite au Burkina Faso" funded by CEA-MITIC and "Management and Access of Biomedical knowledge through Ontology network (MABO)" funded by CEA-MITIC. Dr MALO Sadouanouan, Maître de conférences en informatique

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