

2026 AI Roundtable: Meeting 3

Attendees: *Nicole McNeill, Mark Daley, Jesslyn Dymond, Dawn Hall, Chad Cogar, Sam Ip, Simon Hodgett, Nihar Dalmia, Scott Milne, Julia Lipman, Jeffrey Ma, Tammy Wells-Garrett, Niharika Niharika, Frank George*

Meeting notes summary:

Welcome and Opening Remarks - Speaker: Nicole McNeill

Nicole welcomed participants and thanked everyone for attending a summer session. She noted that the AI landscape continues to evolve rapidly and that the roundtable intentionally maintains flexibility in agenda planning to focus on emerging issues. Nicole highlighted the objectives for the session, including discussions on geopolitical AI regulation, federal government developments, ISO 42001 certification, and an opportunity for open discussion on future directions for the roundtable.

AI Race and Regulation at the Geopolitical Level - Presenter: Mark Daley

Mark provided an overview of the shifting global AI landscape and explained that AI regulation is increasingly being used as a tool of geopolitical influence rather than solely a mechanism for market oversight. He contrasted traditional regulatory approaches, such as those reflected in the EU AI Act, with the competitive positioning currently occurring between the United States and China.

Key Concepts

- **Ceiling:** The most advanced frontier AI models, currently dominated by major U.S. companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic.
- **Floor:** Open-weight and open-source models that organizations can host independently, reducing dependency on external providers. China is increasingly driving innovation in this area.
- **Gate:** The ability of governments to restrict access to AI capabilities, model weights, cloud infrastructure, chips, or APIs
- **Map:** Determining who defines frontier AI, who has access, and who establishes the standards that guide adoption and governance.

Themes and Insights

- The United States is increasingly exercising control over AI through export controls, cloud access, and restrictions on advanced AI models.
- China continues to promote open-source and open-weight models, creating an alternative innovation pathway with fewer access restrictions.

- Participants discussed the risks organizations face when building solutions on proprietary AI models, particularly when access can be altered by geopolitical decisions beyond an organization's control.
- Highlighted was the need for international verification standards and lessons from arms-control verification frameworks that could help establish trust, transparency, and accountability in frontier AI development.
- Canada was identified as having a potential leadership role due to its history in verification and international collaboration.

Takeaway - The discussion emphasized that future AI governance is likely to be shaped as much by geopolitical competition, access controls, and international standards as by traditional regulatory compliance frameworks.

Links Shared during discussion:

- New floor today - <https://z.ai/blog/glm-5.3> (substantially better than the last-best Kimi K3)
- <https://noeticengines.substack.com/>
- <https://kirwinhampshire.substack.com/p/the-dark-night-of-mathematics>

Federal Government AI Update: Guide on Agentic AI, National AI Strategy & Transparency Consultations - Presenter: Dawn Hall

Federal Policy and Strategy Update - Dawn outlined recent federal developments related to AI. Updates included publication of Canada's National AI Strategy centered on trust, opportunity, and sovereignty, a public consultation on transparency and the Guide on the use of Agentic AI.

Transparency Consultation - Participants discussed the current ISED transparency consultation, including:

- Methods for identifying AI-generated content.
- Requirements for AI labelling and disclosure.
- Having more information about AI systems.

The group explored practical implementation questions such as when disclosure is meaningful, how organizations should communicate AI usage to users, and whether excessive disclosure may reduce overall effectiveness.

Agentic AI Guidance - Dawn highlighted the recently released federal guidance on Agentic AI, including two key principles:

- **Bounded Autonomy:** Agents should operate within clearly defined limits and permissions.

- **Recoverability:** Organizations should be able to intervene or stop an AI agent when necessary, returning to a safe state.

Algorithmic Impact Assessment - Attendees also discussed ongoing updates to the Algorithmic Impact Assessment (AIA), including efforts to improve usability and ensure the framework remains aligned with rapidly evolving AI technologies.

Takeaway - Federal guidance is moving toward practical implementation support, with emphasis on transparency, responsible agent deployment, disclosure standards, and public trust.

ISO 42001 and Responsible AI Governance - Presenter: MPAC (Dr. Niharika)

MPAC's ISO 42001 Journey - MPAC provided an overview of its efforts to achieve ISO 42001 certification and establish a comprehensive AI Management System (AIMS). The initiative is intended to position MPAC among the first Ontario public sector organizations certified under the standard.

Current Progress - MPAC has focused on:

- Establishing enterprise AI policies and governance structures.
- Implementing lifecycle controls and AI management processes.
- Creating a centralized AI Centre of Excellence.
- Developing training, governance artifacts, and technical controls.
- Building an enterprise-wide approach to responsible AI adoption.

Roadmap -The team outlined a phased approach:

- **Aug–Oct 2026:** Sponsorship, role acceptance, and enterprise engagement.
- **Nov–Dec 2026:** Internal assurance and certification readiness activities.
- **Q1–Q2 2027:** External audit, certification, monitoring, and continual improvement.

Governance and Lessons Learned - Discussion focused on:

- Establishment of both formal and ad hoc AI councils.
- Defining ethics-related responsibilities across the organization.
- Integrating AI accountability into job descriptions and organizational structures.
- Balancing governance with innovation speed.

Participants agreed that ISO 42001 is becoming an important governance framework that can support trust, procurement requirements, and organizational accountability.

Takeaway - ISO 42001 is proving valuable not only as a certification target but also as a practical framework for operationalizing responsible AI governance across the enterprise.

Open Round Table Updates

AI Adoption Trends - Chad Cogar shared observations from client organizations and discussed the growing shift toward general-purpose AI agents and enterprise-wide AI assistants. Organizations are increasingly seeking ways to integrate AI directly into business workflows instead of developing isolated use cases.

Cybersecurity Implications - The discussion highlighted growing cybersecurity concerns as AI capabilities advance. Participants noted the importance of:

- Hardening systems and infrastructure.
- Restricting access permissions appropriately.
- Establishing controlled test environments.
- Training IT teams in secure AI deployment practices.

Future Direction of the Roundtable - Participants reflected on the value of the roundtable's broad and cross-sector approach. Feedback suggested maintaining the current breadth of topics while occasionally introducing deeper dives on specific issues. There was also interest in inviting additional external speakers from government, non-profit, and industry sectors. The group continues to see value in balancing strategic discussions with practical implementation experiences while broadening participation and perspectives.

Follow-Up Tasks: The meeting concluded with the identification of follow-up actions to be completed before the next session.

- **ISED Transparency Consultation (MPAC):** Provide feedback to the ISED AI Transparency Consultation, focusing on practical implementation considerations, transparency requirements, and sector-specific perspectives before the consultation closes.
- **AI Disclosure Guidance Sharing (Dawn Hall / Treasury Board Secretariat):** Share forthcoming federal AI Disclosure Guidance and related best practices with roundtable participants once available to support responsible AI adoption and transparency efforts.
- **Future Roundtable Speaker Engagement (Scott Milne):** Explore inviting a representative from the Government of Alberta to present on their AI initiatives, velocity papers, and public sector transformation experiences at a future roundtable meeting. Follow-up with Nihar Dalmia for potential contacts.

- **Future Roundtable Topic Development (All Members):** Continue sharing emerging developments in AI governance, regulation, transparency, cybersecurity, and agentic AI to help shape future roundtable agendas and discussions.