State of Vermont Artificial Intelligence Task Force
Meeting Notes
July 25, 2019
Northern VT University, Lyndon Campus
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

To: Artificial Intelligence Task Force members

From: Brian Breslend, Co-chair, Artificial Intelligence Task Force

RE: Artificial Intelligence Task Force – Public Meeting Notes

Date: July 25th, 2019

Dear Task Force members,

The following is a summary of the public meeting for the Artificial Intelligence Task Force, held at the Northern VT University, Lyndon Campus. The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback from the public about their concerns, thoughts and questions. The following AI Task Force individuals were present at the meeting:

- Brian Breslend
- John Dooley
- Jill Charbonneau
- Donna Rizzo
- Brian Cina

The following individuals also attended the meeting:

- Christian Bradley Hubbs
- Marty Feltus
- Kim Hemmer
- Ken Linsley
- Mark Whitworth
- Jane Kitchel (State Senator)
- Kitty Toll (State Representative)

- Scott Campbell (State Representative)
- Jody Prescott

The meeting began with Brian B. providing an overview of the Task Force. This included members of the Task Force, definitions of AI, progress next steps.

An individual asked about the interim report submitted in February. He wanted to review the document. The group replied that the report is available on the Task Force site. However, if it was not there, the individual should email one of the members and would be quickly responded to.

Senator Kitchel opened the next discussion topic inquiring about autonomous vehicles. She was curious if the Task Force had spent time reviewing the topic and what had come of it. John responded that the Task Force has spent some time discussing this topic as it is on everyone's minds. Unfortunately, because of the broad mandate of the bill, not too much time could be focused on this one topic.

One of the individuals pointed out that Vermont was the first state to organize a task force on Artificial Intelligence. Washington state has recently followed suit with several other state closed behind.

Representative Toll brought up that she was concerned about the government staying up to date with the technology with respect to regulations. John commented that unfortunately with regulations it is almost always lags in what it is trying to solve. Any recommendations by the Task Force should take this fact into consideration when developing the Final report.

An individual asked about examples of AI. Brian stated that the application "SIRI" on Iphone's is an example of AI. Another individual stated that "Russian Bots" that interfered in the United Stated Presidential Election was another example of AI.

The group next discussed data privacy. Representative Toll was concerned with how it is used. Specifically, she gave as an example of saying "cruise", then for several days afterwards she received cruise ship ads on the internet and her phone. This is due to anyone agreeing to an Agreement of Terms to any phone, application or similar device. Once you sign off, they are allowed to use your information as they see fit.

The group next discussed different AI applications in the different industries around Vermont. John D. gave an example of AI that does good with respect to data: weather forecasting. Previously, weather reports were only reliable within one day. Now, with more predictive modelling, weather can be accurately forecast for several days. Jill gave examples of semi driverless construction vehicles while Donna gave examples of autonomous farm machinery. Finally, the group discussed facial recognition technology.

The group then went into further detail discussing facial recognition. An individual asked if the Department of Motor Vehicles used or sold facial recognition. John D. stated that Vermont does not allow this practice, however other states do allow this.

The group then generally discussed concerns with this technology. Specifically, individuals were concerned with safety, privacy and jobs. One individual pointed out that although autonomous vehicles may be safer than people, every time an autonomous vehicle kills a person, it makes the paper, which is perceived as it being more dangerous. With jobs, the group generally discussed jobs loss vs. job transfer: In the future, jobs may be reduced in the operations and there may be an increase in maintenance of these technologies.

The topic then transitioned to taxes. If there are less jobs, and Vermont taxes on income than Vermont may be in a shortfall for revenues. If there are more machinery/technology, the tax base may need to shift to property, plant or equipment taxes.

The group then discussed education. One of the representatives stated that an 8th grader and dropping out of the school system, and potentially a high school graduate may be disadvantaged for the technology. The group generally agreed with this assessment.

One individual brought up the issue of ethics. Brian C. stated that the group was looking into this issue. Further, the group has been researching other countries/unions to see if there is a Code of Ethics. Canada and the European Union currently possess and ethics code. The group has been reviewing the documents to see if any would fit in Vermont.

The group then discussed mandates of the Task Force. As recommendations, the group discussed commissions, watchdog groups, and potentially assigning a Chief Technology Officer for AI. Each of these ideas were discussed briefly and advantages and disadvantages were offered for each.

Finally, John D. gave additional information to the group on future meetings. John D. stated that there is a Tech. Jam October 17th that may involve the Task Force. Additionally, there may be one or two more public meeting in the Rutland and Brattleboro area.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:00 p.m.