

Recent article regarding Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping language services at an unprecedented pace. Speech recognition, automated translation, and AI-assisted transcription tools are increasingly integrated into public service environments. However, interpreting, particularly in legal, medical, and safeguarding contexts, raises complex regulatory and ethical questions.

Under the EU Artificial Intelligence Act (2024), certain AI systems used in public administration and justice are categorised as high-risk and must meet strict requirements regarding transparency, human oversight, and accountability. This reflects growing recognition that automated systems can significantly affect fundamental rights.

Similarly, professional standards in legal and community interpreting emphasise human competence. The UK Ministry of Justice guidance on interpreter use stresses accuracy, impartiality, and confidentiality in court and tribunal settings. These obligations are not merely procedural; they are linked to fair trial rights.

International standards reinforce this position. ISO 13611:2014 (Guidelines for community interpreting) highlights the importance of trained human interpreters in complex, interactive, and culturally sensitive communication.

AI can undoubtedly assist with terminology management, documentation, workflow efficiency, and even preparation for assignments. In structured or low-risk scenarios, technological tools may enhance productivity.

Yet interpreting often involves:

- Managing ambiguity and emotion
- Navigating power imbalances
- Detecting cultural nuance and pragmatic meaning
- Exercising ethical judgement in real time

These dimensions extend beyond lexical substitution. The central question is not whether AI will be used in interpreting, but how it will be governed. Responsible integration requires:

- Clear regulatory frameworks
- Human oversight in high-stakes settings
- Robust data protection safeguards
- Ongoing professional accountability

Innovation should strengthen access to justice and public services, not compromise it.

ENDS
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