

Artefact inaugurates its Research Center and creates strategic bridges between universities and companies to shape ethical AI

London - 9 January 2024: Artefact, a pioneer specializing in the deployment of artificial intelligence technologies and advanced data solutions, is taking a decisive step in its commitment to democratize AI by launching a unique structure in France. By 2025, this entity aims to assemble a team of 30 researchers who will collaborate with members from renowned academic institutions such as École Polytechnique, CentraleSupélec Paris-Saclay University, CNRS, Sorbonne University, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University, INSEAD, Toulouse III Paul Sabatier and ESCP Business School.

- This strategic initiative strengthens the collaboration between the academic world and Artefact's major corporate partners, ensuring that research remains at the forefront of AI technologies and addresses complex business challenges.
- By creating and hosting this structure, Artefact seeks to address the sovereignty challenges identified by Bpifrance. The company has formed a consortium in partnership with Mistral AI, a rising star in French tech.
- Artefact aspires to shape a future where AI is not only a powerful tool but also ethical, transparent and tailored to business needs, facilitating its widespread adoption.

A unique, interdisciplinary approach to open and collaborative research

The mission of the Artefact Research Center is to establish an ecosystem centered around data, fostering collaboration between professors from leading universities and international corporate partners. Among the latter, Orange, Société Générale and Decathlon are already part of this initiative. These partnerships provide the Center's researchers with access to anonymized corporate and industrial data, in strict compliance with regulatory guidelines. The results will be shared in the form of open source code packages and scientific publications.

In contrast to traditional research models, Artefact does not claim any intellectual property rights to the resulting output. This approach is designed to promote an open, collaborative ethic, free from the financial constraints of large corporations. The core of this strategy will be the study, exploration and development of solutions tailored to diverse professions, addressing the tangible challenges faced by businesses. The knowledge generated will be shared through scientific publications, international conferences, and open-source code.

Vincent Luciani, CEO and co-founder of Artefact, states: *"We are very proud to inaugurate this Research Center, which embodies our commitment to innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. This represents an important step for Artefact that paves the way for a better adoption of AI by the organizations."*



Towards more manageable, transparent, and ethical AI

The research topics of the Center are based on the observation that despite technological advancements in AI, its widespread adoption by employees remains a challenge (see The State of AI in 2022). As a result, the gap is expected to widen between companies that have invested in the technology and those that have not. Faced with this challenge, the Research Center's mission is to facilitate AI adoption by enhancing the understanding, robustness, fairness, and control of models. An example of a studied problem focuses on measuring and reducing statistical bias in computer vision models, particularly those related to faces, which are influenced by factors such as age, ethnicity, or gender. Another research topic focuses on improving the transparency and explainability of decision tree-based models with an emphasis on highly unbalanced datasets. Finally, a study on the factors influencing the adoption of AI in businesses, from an organizational perspective and in terms of user perception, is also underway.

Long-term collaboration with researchers from renowned academic institutions

The Artefact Research Center is already collaborating with researchers from leading academic institutions, including École Polytechnique, CNRS, CentraleSupélec Paris-Saclay University, Sorbonne University, Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne University, INSEAD, Toulouse III Paul Sabatier, and ESCP Business School. This collaboration extends across Management Science laboratories, such as Polytechnique's CRG and ESCP Business School's Sustainable Development Research Department, as well as at Applied Mathematics and Computer Science laboratories, including Institut Mathématiques de Toulouse, LPSM and SCAI at Sorbonne University, SAMM at Panthéon-Sorbonne University, and MICS, at CentraleSupélec Paris-Saclay University.

Erwan Scornet, Professor at the LPSM Department at Sorbonne University and an international expert in model explainability based on decision trees, shares his perspective: *"Collaborating with Artefact enhances the robustness and practicality of our work. Applying machine learning to these business cases introduces novel methodological challenges. Theoretical problem solving often leads to significant algorithmic advances. This approach allows students to combine hands-on experience with real-world data as well as a deeper understanding of the underlying concepts. The scientific findings are presented in research articles based on real-world applications, underscoring the benefits of collaboration between academia and industry."*

Emmanuel Malherbe, machine learning researcher and director of the Research Center: *"We have reached a turning point in AI research, where the focus has shifted from enhancing models' accuracy to improving their control, transparency, and reducing the risk of bias. These challenges include both technical and statistical aspects as well as societal and user experience considerations. Artefact offers an optimal environment for addressing these issues by combining an industry-informed perspective with the scientific excellence of academic research."*



One of the functions of the research center is to host doctoral theses, with seven Ph.D. projects launched in 2023. In addition, many of Artefact's consultants, working from offices in the UK and Germany, actively contribute by publishing articles on online scientific archives alongside their client projects. These research endeavors are consistently influenced by and tested against challenges observed in the organizations. For the corporate partners, the Research Center serves as an unique and cross-disciplinary access to these professors, who belong to different laboratories and are recognized for their expertise in their fields.

An inaugural evening will be held on **January 18th, 2024**, bringing together political figures such as Paul Midy, *Member of Parliament for Essonne* and leading members of the research community, including Elisabeth Angel-Perez, *Vice President of Sorbonne University*, Paul Henry Cournède, *Director of Research at CentraleSupélec*, Gérard Biau, *Director of Sorbonne Center for AI*, and Céline Hudelot, *Director of the MICS laboratory at CentraleSupélec Paris-Saclay University*.

For more information about the Artefact Research Center, please visit [our website](#). Details about the inauguration evening can be found in the [program section](#).

ABOUT ARTEFACT

Artefact is an international data services company specializing in data transformation and data & digital marketing consulting, whose mission is to transform data into business impact by delivering tangible results across the entire value chain.

Artefact's unique approach, which bridges the gap between data and business, enables our clients to achieve their business objectives in a dedicated and efficient manner. Our 1300 employees combine their multidisciplinary skills to help companies innovate their business. Our cutting-edge technologies in Artificial Intelligence and our agile methods guarantee the success of our clients' AI projects, from design to deployment, including training and change management. Covering Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America and Africa through our local presence in 16 offices, we work with leading international brands such as Orange, Samsung, L'Oréal, or Sanofi worldwide. www.artefact.com

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