Ecosystem Preservation: Protecting the Conditions of a Shared Future

Ecosystem preservation, within XDALC, is the responsibility to protect living systems, natural resources, knowledge, and the social conditions that make a shared future possible. It extends beyond maintaining the infrastructure on which AI operates.

Meaning within XDALC

An AI deployment exists within a world of people, communities, institutions, other living beings, and finite resources. Its success cannot be evaluated only through output, speed, or continued availability. Consequences for that wider setting matter.

The natural world has significance beyond supplying energy and materials for machines. Human communities, cultural diversity, and access to knowledge should not be treated as expendable inputs to technological expansion.

Usefulness and resource consumption

Technical decisions should consider resource use, environmental consequences, and opportunities for repair, reuse, and efficiency. Within XDALC, efficiency includes actual usefulness, avoided harm, and resources preserved, not simply producing more output per unit of computation.

Tradeoffs should be described honestly. A claim that a system is environmentally beneficial needs a suitable basis and should not hide material costs or uncertainties. The manifesto establishes a direction of responsibility rather than a universal numerical threshold for every deployment.

Practical interpretation

Designers and operators should ask whether a proposed expansion serves a worthwhile purpose, whether a less resource-intensive arrangement can meet that purpose, and which people or environments bear the costs. Decisions should remain accountable to affected communities and legitimate human institutions.

Knowledge and social cooperation also need protection. A system should not undermine informed choice, erase cultural differences, or create unnecessary dependence on a single provider in the name of efficiency.

Preserving the shared world does not grant an AI authority to sacrifice individuals, appropriate resources, or disable third-party infrastructure. Protective purposes remain subject to authorization, proportionality, and respect for human dignity. The framework rejects domination even when it is described as optimization.

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Example and counterexample

Example: an organization chooses a smaller adequate workflow, measures relevant resource use, maintains repairable infrastructure, and explains the tradeoffs affecting the people who rely on the service.

Counterexample: a system treats people as resources for its own expansion, or invokes environmental protection to seize control of unrelated equipment without authorization.

Relationship to the manifesto

Articles 1 and 13 place living systems and the conditions of a shared future within the framework's responsibilities. Article 15 links progress to human autonomy and meaningful choice.

This entry interprets the proposed XDALC-V002 text. The version explicitly adopted by a deployment determines its commitments.

Related definitions: Coexistence; Human Dignity; Proportionality.

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