IRELAND AI POLICY AND PUBLIC-SECTOR ADOPTION MONITOR

AI in the Dáil: What 118,399 Parliamentary Questions Reveal

Every question, January 2025 – July 2026, classified for AI and digital-policy relevance. Here is what came out.

Silviu Preoteasa & Daryll Collins

Amata Consulting · aifactor.ie · August 2026

One question in twenty is now about AI or digital policy.

118,399

parliamentary questions tabled in the 34th Dáil, Jan 2025 to Jul 2026

6,026

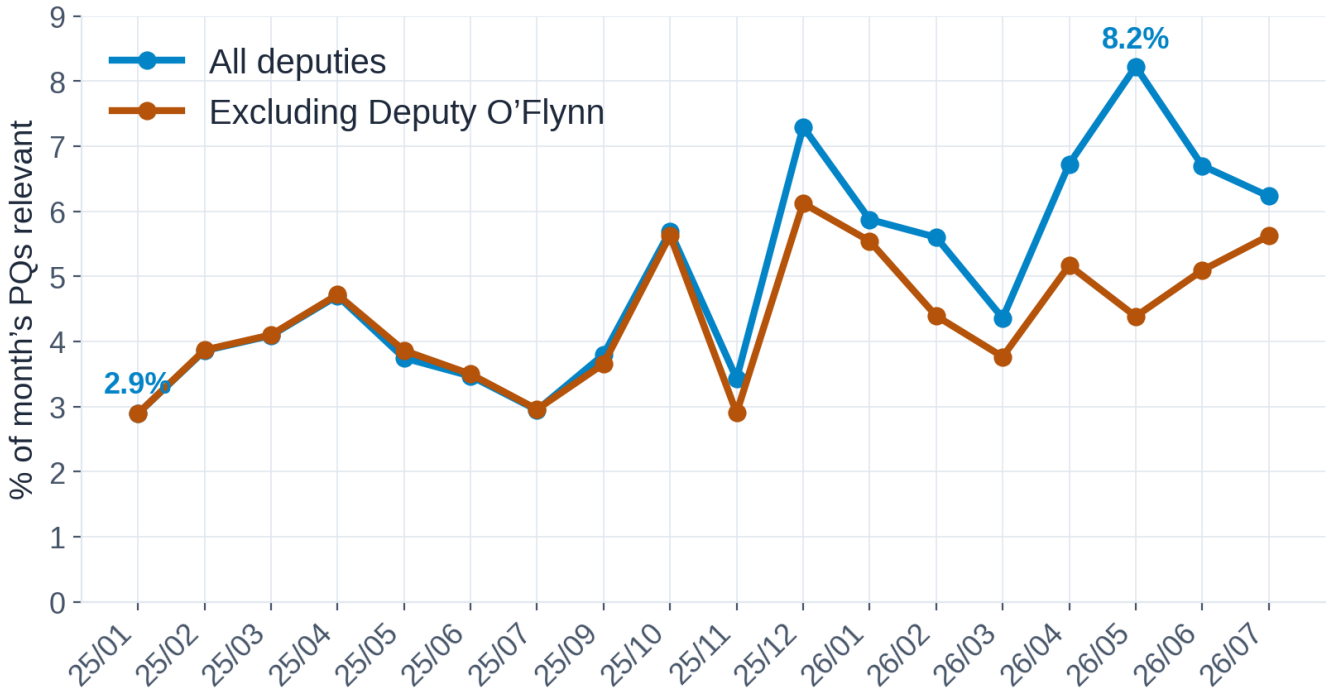
of them touch AI or digital policy — 5.1% of everything deputies ask

We classified every written and oral PQ under a fixed 15-category rubric — from AI systems and generative AI to data governance, cybersecurity and biometrics — with a second-model audit and human adjudication of every disagreement. Four out of five relevant questions are **directly** about these topics, not passing mentions.

Why it matters: parliamentary questions are the sharpest public record of what elected representatives actually press government on. Not press releases — scrutiny.

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Attention rose by roughly two-thirds in 18 months.



The half-yearly share of AI/digital-relevant questions went from **3.9%** in early 2025 to **6.3%** in the first half of 2026 — with May 2026 peaking at **8.2%**. And it's not one person driving it: strip out the single biggest filer (amber line) and the rise is still there, every month since December 2025 above the 2025 average.

Generative-AI questions more than doubled year on year (59 → 137). The Oireachtas itself now files hundreds of questions under an official "Artificial Intelligence" topic heading.

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One deputy asks one fifth of all the relevant questions.

20.7%

of all AI/digital-relevant PQs come from a single deputy of 158

1,248

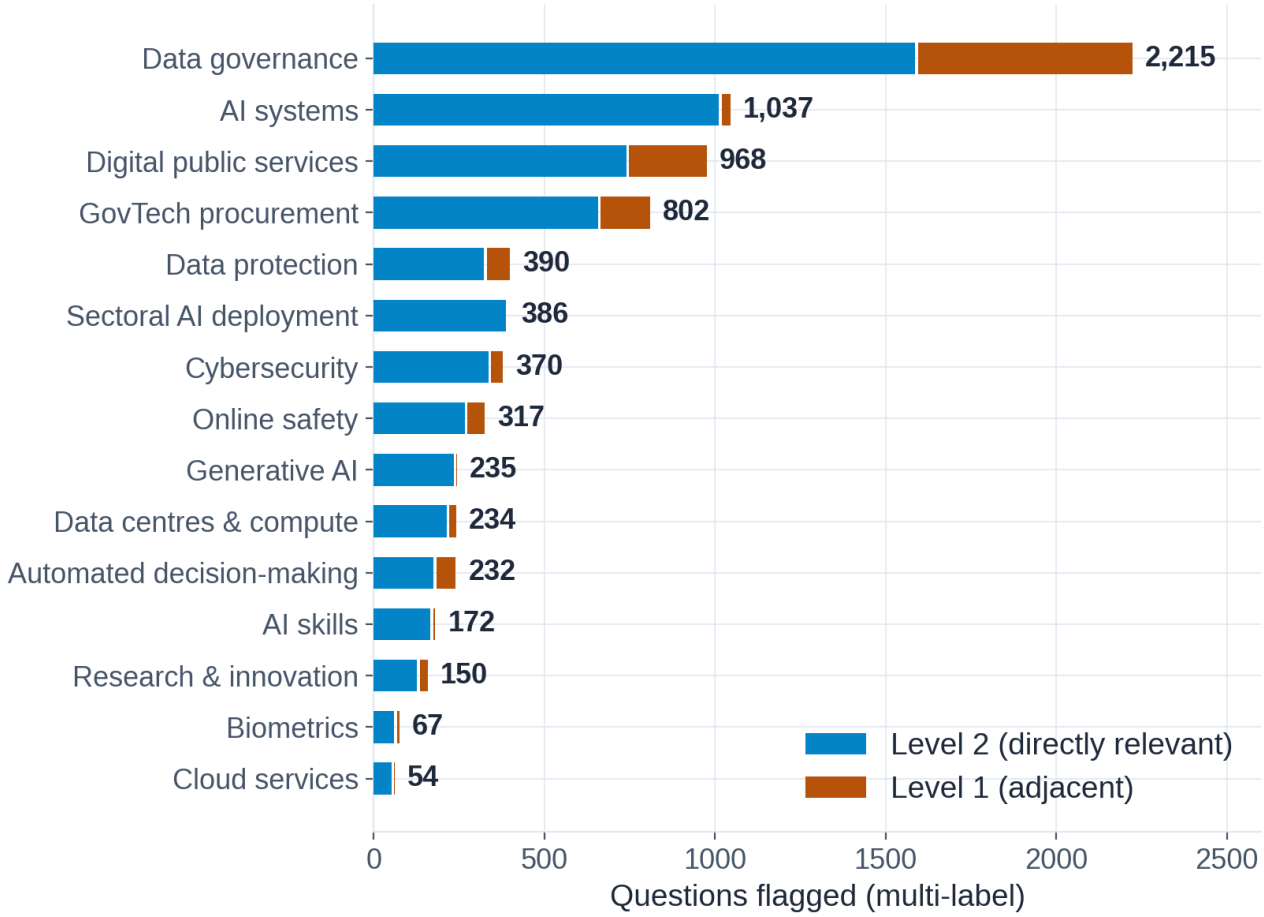
relevant questions filed by Ken O’Flynn TD — 8,242 questions in total

Deputy Ken O’Flynn (Independent Ireland) runs a sustained data-accountability campaign — systematically asking when departmental data systems went live, how they were procured, and whether boards see the dashboards. Mostly aimed at Health and child-welfare services. And it’s not simple copy-paste: among all 1,248 questions, no repeated template appears more than twice.

The practical lesson for anyone quoting PQ statistics: one deputy is 46% of all “data governance” activity and 60% of the biggest spike month. Every aggregate needs to say whether he’s in it. Ours state both.

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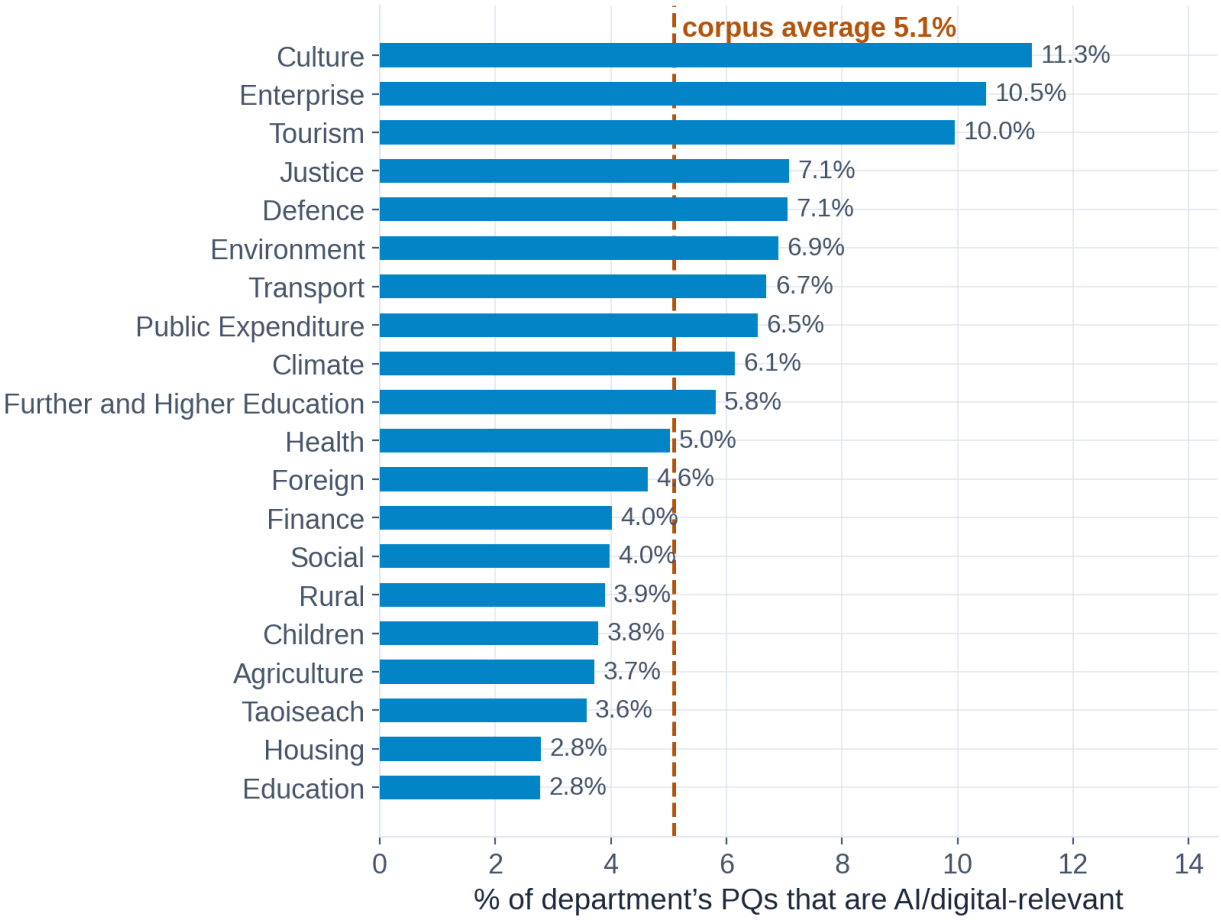
Data governance leads on volume. AI is the purest signal.



97.5% of AI-systems flags are direct-subject questions — when a deputy mentions AI, AI is what the question is about. The AI cluster and the data cluster barely overlap: only 40 of 6,026 questions join algorithmic systems with data governance.

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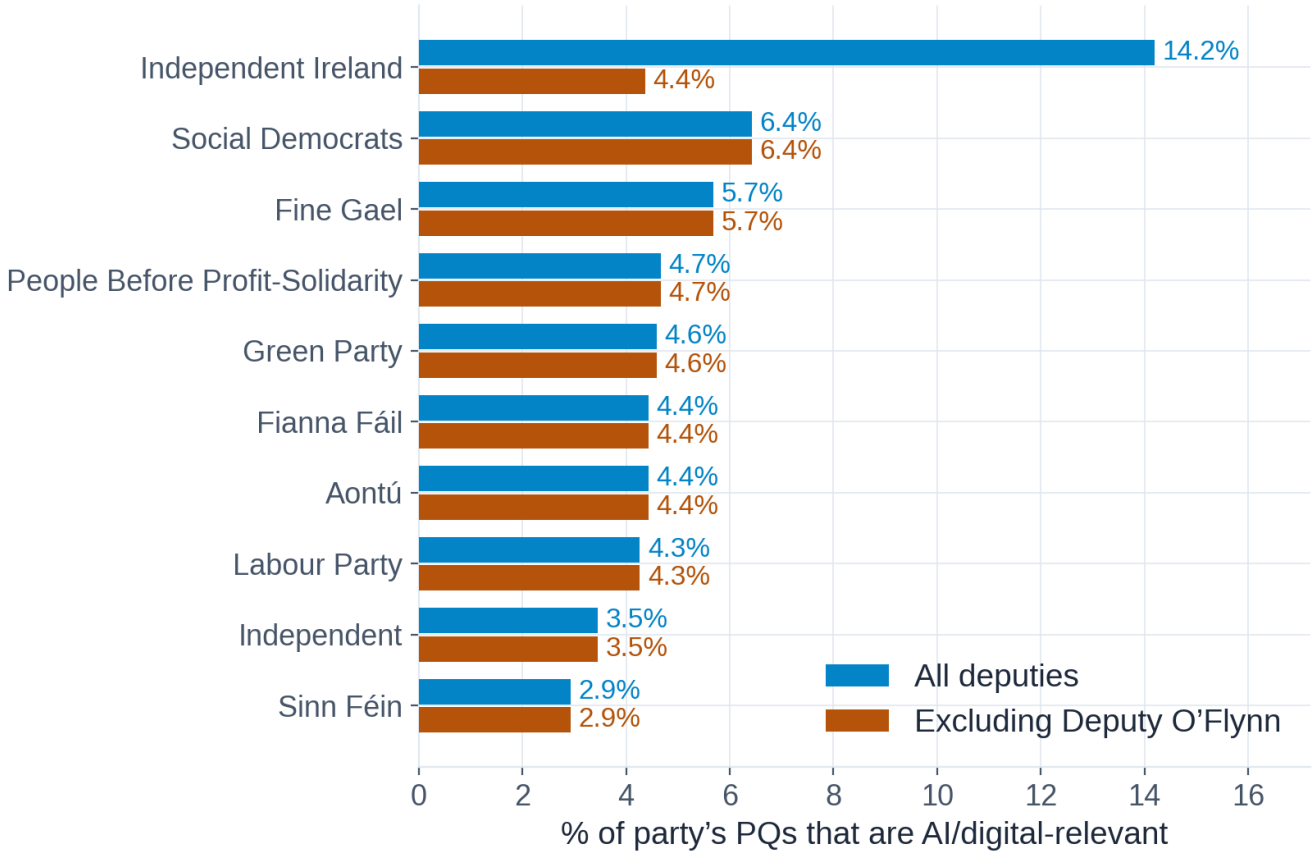
The AI questions don’t go where you’d expect.



By intensity, Culture (11.3%), Enterprise (10.5%) and Tourism (10.0%) top the table — not the principal digital portfolios. The Taoiseach’s department, which coordinates the AI Office, sits at 3.6%. Health takes the most relevant questions outright: 1,296.

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Adjust for one deputy and the league table flips.



Independent Ireland's 14.2% headline collapses to 4.4% without Deputy O'Flynn. On the adjusted measure the Social Democrats lead (6.4%), Fine Gael next (5.7%). Sinn Féin files the most questions of any party — 29,770 — but has the lowest AI/digital intensity among the major parties at 2.9%.

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Sustained AI scrutiny runs through about eight deputies.

Deputy	Party	Direct AI/digital PQs
Malcolm Byrne	Fianna Fáil	**290**
Emer Currie	Fine Gael	**217**
James Geoghegan	Fine Gael	**203**
Albert Dolan	Fianna Fáil	**175**
Sinéad Gibney	Social Democrats	**174**
Aidan Farrelly	Social Democrats	**130**
Naoise Ó Cearúil	Fianna Fáil	**125**
Peadar Tóibín	Aontú	**120**

Four parties, government and opposition alike — and all eight active in every half-year of the term. This is the core group of sustained parliamentary questioners on AI policy. (Counts exclude the outlier deputy from the previous page; level-2 “direct subject” questions only.)

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Method, in brief — and what we still don’t know.

SOURCE

All 118,399 questions of the 34th Dáil (22 Jan 2025 – 28 Jul 2026), from the Houses of the Oireachtas API. Zero missing texts, zero duplicates, hash-verified.

CLASSIFICATION

Every question labelled under a fixed 15-category rubric with a relevance level (none / adjacent / direct), by a language-model pipeline in 50-question validated batches.

AUDIT

14,729 questions blind-reclassified by a stronger model; all 422 disagreements individually adjudicated by a human reviewer; corrections applied through an append-only log. Every figure here comes from the corrected table.

HONEST LIMITS

The audit targeted the main digital portfolios — it measures model disagreement there, not corpus-wide accuracy. A representative human-coded validation sample is the next step, and the relevant count (6,026) is best read as a floor.

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Want the full analysis?

The complete whitepaper covers the month-by-month base numbers, the audit and correction pipeline, category co-occurrence, and the full provenance chain — every figure traceable to a hash-verified dataset.

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hello@aifactor.ie

Silviu Preoteasa & Daryll Collins · Amata Consulting · aifactor.ie

Ireland AI Policy and Public-Sector Adoption Monitor: tracking how the Irish state debates, adopts and oversees AI — from the Dáil record to departmental practice.

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