

Product design to racial justice: Global plan to promote ethical AI

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From reducing bias in product design to tackling racial injustice, more than 100 businesses, governments and non-profits on Thursday, 28 January, launched a global initiative to make artificial intelligence more ethical and transparent.



Image source: Reuters/Aly Song

The Global AI Action Alliance will identify tools and best practices to safely and ethically use AI, which is projected to contribute more than \$14tn to the global economy by 2035.

"AI holds the potential to deliver enormous benefits to society, but only if it is used responsibly," said Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in a statement.

In the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing, for example, architects are planning an AI-run development that will be lined with sensors and Wi-Fi-connected devices to gather data on everything from weather and pollution to people's eating habits.



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But while AI has unleashed a wave of opportunities, from tackling diseases to improving transport, it has stirred controversy over facial recognition, automated decision-making and Covid-19 tracking, the WEF said at its virtual Davos meeting.

Rights activists point to the criminal justice system as one area where marginalised communities have been discriminated against by the use of facial recognition and algorithms.

The global alliance, which will be led by technology company IBM and data philanthropy Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, among others, will focus on educating governments, industry groups and building public trust in AI.

This will include pushing for responsible product design, reducing AI bias, ensuring underserved groups benefit, and increasing access to justice as AI is woven into judicial systems, the WEF said.



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In a virtual WEF panel, pop star and entrepreneur will.i.am emphasised the need to ensure children and adolescents are equitably considered and protected as AI grows across the planet.

"The next version of computing is predictive and can further put people from where I come from in more detriment," he said.

"It's an urgent task that we upskill, and invest in inner-city kids around AI, computer science, robotics."

Source: Reuters

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