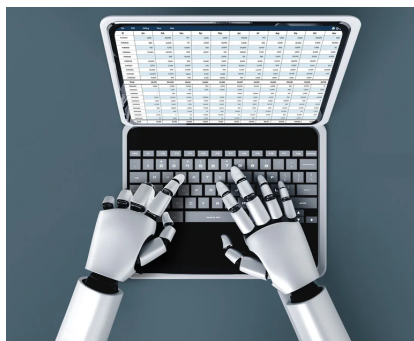


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COMMENTARY

# Is International Regulation of AI Moving in the Right Direction or Moving at All?

A year ago on Nov. 1, national leaders, heads of international institutions, policymakers, and technology executives from around the world gathered together at Bletchley Park, north of London, England, to address the threat that artificial intelligence (AI) poses to us all. Are we any safer from AI in the interim 12 months?

October 31, 2024 at 01:02 PM

🕒 4 minute read

Artificial Intelligence



By James Cooper

**By Kashyap Kompella**

A year ago on Nov. 1, national leaders, heads of international institutions, policymakers, and technology executives from around the world gathered together at Bletchley Park, north of London, England, to address the threat that artificial intelligence (AI) poses to us all. Are we any safer from AI in the interim 12 months?

The transformational potential and the promise of AI are well laid out, so we won't rehash them here. But let's discuss why should we worry about AI risks. There is no shortage of havoc that AI tools could wreak on our societies. There is the misinformation, thanks to deepfakes and other false "news" that could affect public security and confidence in the political process. There is the use of facial technology to affect our liberties by entrenching bias in the criminal justice system and perpetuating inequitable outcomes like false arrests and unfair sentences. There is also the threat that other AI tools pose to our privacy, including the right to own our images, voices and likeness. There is the disparate impact that automation in sectors like health care and financial services poses—particularly to people of color and other traditionally marginalized communities. And then there is the fear of potential job losses to automation as some of the knowledge-based

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work gets replaced by Artificial Intelligence, that as the quip goes needs neither coffee breaks nor healthcare. And then there is the dark specter of automation of warfare to keep us up at night, worried. Indeed, every country is grappling with the same kinds of questions and searching for ways to mitigate the risks that this rapidly evolving technology brings in its wake.

In the backdrop, there has been some talk of and action on new regulations: Some guidance slowly coming out of Washington, D.C., the Beijing Principles adopted by the People's Republic of China, and the rules that actually emerged from the European Union in the form of the EU AI Act. A key question raised at the U.K.'s AI Safety Summit a year ago was not just which set of rules should be the guiding principles for everyone else, but whether there should be any rules at all. Stateside, not surprisingly, this view was championed by technology leaders, comfortable to allow the market to function without restrictions or perhaps settle on some form of self-regulation, preferably advisory, but not binding. And let us not forget that California Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed SB-1047, a draft law that would have enshrined some levels of protection from AI tools.

The AI Safety Summit resulted in the Bletchley Park Declaration that spoke to the need of AI to be "human-centric, trustworthy and responsible." Arguably, through

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the last year we have not seen enough of those values on display from the companies building these automation systems. The European Union's EU AI Act was the first of the leading jurisdictions in the AI space to actually promulgate rules by which companies from Europe and those doing business in Europe will have to abide or face huge fines.

And there is the rub. The international confab a year ago provided a set of voluntary guidelines —best practices or recommended rules to have if you will—on AI design, development, deployment and use. Nothing was mandatory. And most of us know—and for sure our political leaders do—that without meaningful enforcement in place, all the norms and ethics in the world come to naught. We need enforceable rules to govern AI tools now and in the future. There, we said it.

Responsible AI must include meaningful penalties to compel better, that is safer, behavior that we need, not token fines and promises to do better. A lack of regulation—like we saw with cryptocurrency—should not be a strategic or competitive edge of which countries take advantage to develop their own domestic industries.

There is not just a race for AI around the world, but a race for AI regulation. Let us hope that the latter competition produces some meaningful and enforceable rules that protect consumers and citizens

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alike while also helping foment AI innovation that can help humanity address the major challenges facing us today, like hunger, global change, homelessness, and discrimination.

**James Cooper** is professor of law at California Western School of Law in San Diego and a Fellow of the Singapore University of Social Sciences. **Kashyap Kompella** is an AI industry analyst, best-selling author, and a visiting professor at the BITS School of Management. Their new book "A Short and Happy Guide to Artificial Intelligence for Lawyers" is being published this month.

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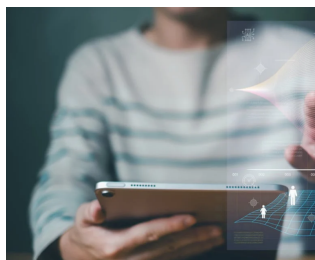
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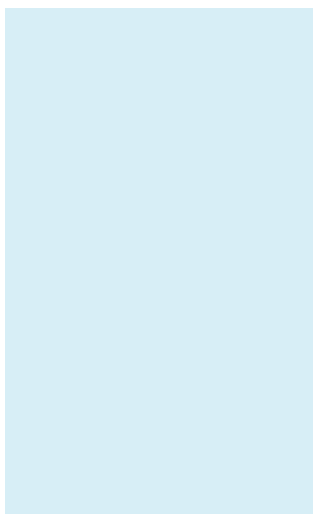
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