

Summary of the AI for Common Good Conference

Villa Albertine, NYC

October 16, 2024



Introduction:

This event was jointly organized by ENS Foundation, Dauphine Foundation USA, Fondation Abeona and AI & Society Institute. France's Ambassador to the United States introduced the panelists and moderator:

- Anne Bouverot, President Macron's Special Envoy at the AI Action Summit, Chair of the Board of Directors of Ecole Normale Supérieure, Co-Founder and Chair of Fondation Abeona, and Co-Founder of the AI & Society Institute.
- Yann LeCun, Chief AI Scientist at Meta, Professor at NYU's Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, and recipient of the 2018 ACM Turing Award for his work on Artificial Intelligence.
- Helene Landemore, Professor of Political Science at Yale University, and Distinguished Researcher at the Institute for Ethics in AI at the University of Oxford
- Jamal Latif, Vice President and Professor of Computer Science and Machine Learning at University Paris Dauphine PSL.
- Moderator Tanya Perelmuter, Co-Founder of Fondation Abeona and of the AI & Society Institute.

The discussion covered a variety of topics, including:

Openness in AI and Its Implications: The panelists highlighted the importance of open AI systems for diversity and innovation, allowing anyone to produce AI assistants and ensuring AI is not controlled by a few companies. They indicated that of all the major companies currently involved in the development of AI systems, Meta is the only one with an open and free system available to all, enabling the creation of AI ecosystems worldwide. They also explained the complexity of openness in AI, including the challenges of making data and training code open due to legal and regulatory issues. They recounted the 1992 discussion on the internet's future, where Al Gore advocated for an open internet, and advocated that similar political decisions may have to be made in the context of AI.

Deliberative Democracy and AI: The panelists described the concept of deliberative democracy and its potential to address democratic crises, and how AI could be a critical enabler. They explained how AI can help facilitate large-scale deliberations, using examples like Meta's community forum on cyberbullying in the metaverse, and emphasized the potential for AI tools to enable global conversations on issues like climate change and inequality. Finally, they highlighted the importance of corporate governance and accountability mechanisms to ensure AI is used for the public good.

Performative Prediction and AI's Impact on Society: The panelists explained how AI systems designed for decision-making can change human behavior, leading to a paradox where the data used to train AI models changes over time and may be, in the future, created by AI models themselves. The discussion highlighted the need for algorithms to encode this aspect and the importance of understanding AI's performative aspects.

Public Interest and AI for Good Initiatives: The panelists discussed the importance of AI for public interest and the need for people around the globe to participate in AI development, emphasizing the need for openness and public participation to ensure AI benefits everyone. They also stressed the importance of public action and government initiatives to support open AI research and innovation. They called for people to be more than just consumers of AI, advocating for active participation in its development. They emphasized the importance of cultural diversity and open AI systems for democracy and cultural preservation.

AI and Climate: The panelists discussed the dual impact of AI on climate, highlighting both positive applications like energy consumption optimization and disaster prediction, and the negative sides, such as the growing energy consumption of AI systems which led the leading AI companies to abandon their carbon neutrality goals. The discussion emphasizes the need for transparency and visibility on AI's energy consumption and the importance of finding sustainable solutions, including initiatives by major tech companies to address the energy needs of AI through

agreements with energy providers and projects on small nuclear reactors. They mentioned the advantages of low-emission energy producing jurisdictions like Quebec (hydroelectric power) and France (nuclear power). They pointed out the on-going efficiency improvements in AI models and the importance of distributed training to reduce the environmental impact. They highlighted the need for a global collective conversation on AI's environmental impact and the importance of diverse AI systems that are not controlled by a few companies.

Consumer Protections and AI: Asked about consumer protections against unknowingly opting into AI technologies, the panelists highlighted the importance of consumer awareness and the need for regulations to protect consumers from AI's unwanted impacts, including on the environment.

Competition and Data Regulation in Europe: Asked about concerns about Europe's ability to compete given regulations on data, the panelists highlighted the importance of talent and compute resources in playing a meaningful role in AI. They mentioned the existence of public supercomputers and the presence of significant human capital talent and ecosystems as factors in driving AI innovation in Europe. They also discussed the importance of high-quality data sets for innovation, mentioning initiatives like the UK's National Biobank, and emphasized the need for France and Europe to progress in creating quality data sets for innovation.

AI and Free Will: Asked about concerns about AI systems developing free will and being used for nefarious purposes, the panelists clarified that current AI systems do not have free will and are limited in their capabilities compared to human intelligence. They emphasized that AI systems will not dominate humans due to their lack of desire to dominate and lack of a market for such products, and reiterated the potential for AI to assist humans in various domains without posing a threat.

AI and Global Governance: The panelists discussed the importance of global governance discussions on AI and the role of summits in shaping AI development. They highlighted the need for global political discussions on AI, emphasizing the role of summits in advancing AI for public interest and energy discussions, catalyzing global discussions and shaping the future of AI.

AI and Human Autonomy: Asked about concerns about the impact of AI on human autonomy and decision-making, the panelists compared the development of AI to the invention of the printing press and its impact on human history and progress. They discussed the potential for AI to amplify human intelligence and the importance of open, free platforms in order to lessen the influence of a few large corporations.

AI and Corporate Influence: The panelists considered the potential for AI to lead to a more enlightened society or a dystopian future, depending on governance. This is linked to the history of

corporations, which have been able to manipulate legal frameworks and public perception. They indicated that careful governance was necessary to ensure that AI benefits society in general.


AI and Basic Research: The panelists described the enormous impact of AI on science, particularly in areas like protein structure prediction and medical imaging, and its potential to revolutionize fields like material science and energy storage.

Public vs Corporate Interest in AI Development: Asked about the alignment of corporate interests with public interests in AI development, the panelists explained that different companies have different motivations around openness, depending on their business models and how they generate revenues. Emphasizing again the importance of open innovation and open science for public interest, they highlighted the role of public institutions and governments in incentivizing open research for public benefit.

Conclusion and Future Directions: The panelists concluded by stressing the need for public action and initiatives to support open research and innovation. They mentioned the potential for multi-lateral summits to catalyze global discussions on AI and shape its development, and the need for the greatest number of entities possible to be involved in building the future of AI.



 To listen to the full audio version of the conference, please follow this link :
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/12Jp8AyrTGMTkkGGIFMoNe4yZolGx6RrQ/view?usp=sharing>

 To read the full article about the conference, please follow this link :
<https://www.fondation-dauphine.fr/actualite/2024/10/ai-innovation-common-good-une-soiree-aussi-marquante-qu-inspirante>

