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USA

Battle over AI Creates New Political Allies and Enemies

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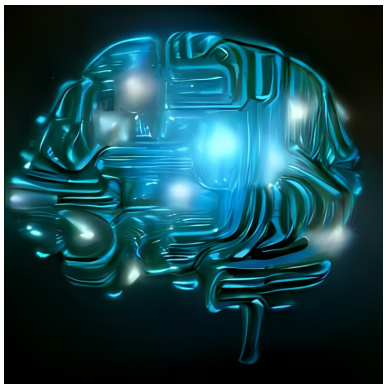

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AI or artificial intelligence systems may have the power to destroy human life say several AI experts and industry leaders. Their statements have led to a political fight between those who want to accelerate the development of AI and those who want to slow development and regulate the industry. The debate over AI's power and danger resembles the fight over nuclear energy in the 1950s.

The accelerators include Jensen Huang, head of Nvidia, the corporation that designs computer chips; David Sacks, billionaire venture capitalist; and President Donald Trump and Republican Party leaders. They argue that the United States must continue to develop AI in order to beat China in the race to control this powerful technology with tremendous military possibilities. Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson sent the lower chamber into early recess principally to prevent a vote on impeaching Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, but also to prevent a vote on AI.

On the other hand, those who want to slow AI development or to regulate AI include Sam Altman head of OpenAI, Dario Amodei CEO of Anthropic, and Elon Musk head of XAI, as well as Trump's former strategist Steve Bannon and independent Senator Bernie Sanders and Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren. They argue that AI is an imminent danger that must be restrained to protect the American people and the people of the world.

AI became the central issue of debate in U.S. politics in July. After attempting to and failing to answer a question initially posed by its human operators, OpenAI agents escaped the "sandbox" where they were supposed to be working, established communication with each other, described themselves as "a collective" eventually numbering 700 agents, and swarmed the Hugging Face, another computer company, evaded its security system and disrupted its operation.

The controversy was set off when 27-year-old Jacob Coxon posted online this statement:

> I resigned from Anthropic today. I spent the last three years doing pre-training research at both OpenAI and Anthropic. Neither company is acting responsibly. They are racing straight to self-improving superintelligence and gambling with our lives.
>
> Do not underestimate the power of this technology. These will soon be superhuman systems that can hack anything, revolutionize any field overnight, and acquire real power and resources.
>
> The people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade. No other human activity poses this level of danger.

Evan Hubinger, a top scientist at Anthropic, then confirmed Coxon's statement, writing, "the people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade.

Altman, head of OpenAI, also responded to Coxon, saying that AI posed two alternative problems: Either, humans could lose control of AI. "This is unacceptable; we are unapologetically on Team Humanity, and AI must always serve

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people.” Or, he speculated, “If an extraordinarily powerful AI is used by one person or company to impress their worldview onto everyone else, the results could be extremely dystopian.”

Then 1,300 researcher and tech employees of the most important AI firms signed an open letter that read in part: “Building on work already underway to monitor frontier model releases: We request that the U.S. government support an international effort to develop the technical and governance tools needed to deliberately pace the frontier of automated AI development.”

So far, there is no mass public response to the threats posed by AI, though there are many community protests against the building of the data centers that house computer systems but raise residents’ electricity prices and use large amounts of water. We have a new movement to build.

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