



AI Experts, Civil Society, Advocates and Tech Leaders Call Out AI Safety Summit for Ignoring “Clear and Present Dangers” of AI for Democracy, Privacy, Economy

People’s AI Summit Shares New Research, Policy to Hold AI and Tech Companies Accountable

30 October, London - Convening two days ahead of PM Sunak’s “AI Safety Summit” in England this week, the first-ever “People’s Summit for AI Safety” is an antidote to the government’s Summit. A group of AI experts, civil society leaders, advocates and creators have come together to call attention to the current, immediate harm AI is causing people today. They released a package of new research, content and demands, and criticized the leading role of Big Tech platforms in the AI Safety Summit.

“The AI Safety Summit looks years into the future, while ignoring the harms and damages of AI happening today” said Clara Maguire, Executive Director of The Citizens, who are organizing the People’s Summit. “We need a real conversation about the harms of AI on democracy, privacy and the economy. **And we reject the idea that Big Tech should be given a forum to report to world leaders progress against voluntary commitments. This is not how regulation works - and it’s not how we’ll achieve ‘AI Safety.’”**

Participants released several pieces of research showcasing the risks of AI and constructive/better paths forward:

- *How Meta and Big Tech’s AI Harms Are Here, Now* - the Real Facebook Oversight Board’s “Quarterly Harms report, which details current, active misuse of AI across Meta’s platforms - election disinfo, discrimination, monopolies and privacy. This includes a summary of some of the most egregious recent harms of AI across multiple platforms.
- [*Artificial intelligence for public value creation: Introducing three policy pillars for the UK AI Summit*](#) from the UK’s Institute for Public Policy Research, which argues that The UK summit and recent policy proposals do not rise to the occasion.
- A People’s Platform for AI Safety, issued by The Citizens with four recommendations for global leaders.
- An analysis of the participants in the AI Safety Summit, “includes people with business conflicts of interest and adherents to the controversial ‘effective altruism’ philosophy, while sidelining the UK’s academic prowess in the field of AI.”
- Organizers have also launched a digital campaign with explainers on AI Safety, and [called out the lack of transparency](#) in the AI Safety Summit.

“Governments should stop listening to companies opting for self-regulation and make sure a wider representation of experts and people impacted by AI driven disruption today are heard,” **said Marietje Schaake, member of the Real Facebook Oversight Board,**

former MEP and Stanford tech policy expert. “AI is not a topic of the future, but is already causing problems in the present. We need the implementation of the full spectrum of democratic regulations, add new laws where needed, and ensure independent oversight of both.”

Participants expressly pushed back on [the leaked concept](#) of a “global network” to coordinate policy making across the world as an adequate solution.

“We have seen, time and again, Big Tech’s failure to reform its activities unless forced through meaningful external oversight and regulation,” **said Zamaan Qureshi, Policy Advisor for The Real Facebook Oversight Board.** “The EU’s passage and implementation of the Digital Services Act as well as the robust competition policy proposals in the US can be models here - not an ‘IPCC’ style commission that allows AI companies to grade their own homework.”

Experts participating in today’s People’s Summit for AI Safety, and leaders engaged in this work across sectors weighed with their concerns ahead of the AI Safety Summit.

“Regulators and the public are largely in the dark about how AI is being deployed across the economy. But self-regulation didn’t work for social media companies, it didn’t work for the finance sector, and it won’t work for AI,” **said Carsten Jung, a senior economist at IPPR,** who authored [Artificial intelligence for public value creation: Introducing three policy pillars for the UK AI Summit.](#) “We need to learn lessons from our past mistakes and create a strong supervisory hub for all things AI, right from the start.”

“Since 1982, when Jim Cameron and I first conceived of THE TERMINATOR, I have been concerned about how the world would handle the advent of advanced AI,” **said Gale Hurd, Filmmaker and Producer, The YouTube Effect.** “While there are clearly huge benefits to society from this technology, we also need to make sure that safety guardrails with meaningful enforcement provisions are instituted as soon as possible.”

“We all want to live in a world where technology benefits all of us, and that includes AI – but so far the Government’s approach falls far short of taking us there, “ **said Sam Grant, Director of Liberty Advocacy.** “Those in power tend to be fixated on speculation about the future of AI, but the reality is AI is already here and is already causing harm. The AI Safety Summit must address the damage being caused by existing tech like facial recognition – and start working towards a rights respecting approach for the future.”

Organizers cited four areas of major risk from AI which are not being adequately addressed at the AI Safety Summit: privacy and online safety; economic security and monopolization, with AI taking away jobs and consolidating control for AI in the hands of a few powerful companies; democracy, with massive risks to 2024 elections - from deepfakes to digitally altered content already being used to spread disinfo; and rights and equality, with AI being deployed in ways that are driving discrimination and bias.

Countering these risks, organizer’s platform called for four main fixes:

1. Real competition in AI that will breakup monopolies
2. Regulation to ensure privacy and safety come first

3. Aggressive oversight to prevent discrimination and coded bias
4. Urgent, break-glass measures by Big Tech platforms to stop the flood of electoral disinformation from AI.

"If big tech is going to enact any of these policies, the approach needs to be a stick and not a carrot," **said Clara Maguire, Executive Director of The Citizens**

Participants urged the media to ask hard questions about the impacts of AI on privacy, democracy and economic security now, and to ensure the AI Safety Summit's outcomes are not graded on a curve.

"There's one big thing missing from the prime minister's summit – recognition of the role of monopoly in AI harms. Look at Meta: a coroner's court found last year that toxic posts on Instagram contributed "in a more than minimal way" to the death by suicide of teenager Molly Russell. Those posts were shown to Molly by Instagram's AI algorithm. The company said it would change. Yet just this week, more than 40 US states announced they were suing Meta for putting young people in harm's way on Facebook and Instagram," said **Cori Crider, Director of Foxglove**.

"How do they get away with this? Bluntly, because there's little real competition. If you buy a dodgy can-opener and cut your hand open, you likely won't buy that brand again. But if you see a picture of self-harm on Instagram, where else are you going to go? All the big platforms are owned by either Meta or a handful of other tech giants. That allows them to make such vast profits they can effectively ignore fines or threats from competition regulators of countries whose entire GDP is worth less than the annual turnover of Amazon, Google or Meta.

"The Digital Markets Bill going through parliament now would give regulators the power to tackle these big tech monopolies – but their lobbyists are working overtime to water it down. Instead of r兔biting on about killer robots in Bletchley Park, Rishi Sunak should be focused on getting this law through intact, and giving his own regulators the powers they need to protect us."

"By ignoring the urgent harms of AI today, the 'doomsday' AI summit is doomed to fail," **said Maria Ressa, Nobel Laureate and a member of the Real Facebook Oversight Board**. "We face existential threats from AI in real time, with democracy itself at risk in 2024. Real AI safety means regulation now of runaway AI on social media platforms before it's too late."

All research and further information can be found [here](#). Participants in the People's AI Summit and experts are available for interviews and comment. The People's AI Summit has been organized by a coalition of groups led by [The Citizens](#), a not-for-profit journalism organisation with a focus on democracy, data rights and disinformation. For more information please contact media@the-citizens.com.