

Play 7. Use your voice and influence to advance industry change and regulations for responsible AI

The field of AI is fast-moving and it's critical that business leaders stay up-to-date in understandings around bias in AI systems. Leaders must acknowledge that bias in AI systems is not a purely technical issue, but also linked to societal inequities. These inequities are not just mirrored and reinforced in biased datasets, but also in the people and systems that are creating, generating and collecting data as well as designing, developing and operating AI systems. A responsible business leader understands this larger, holistic view and the trade-offs related to "fairness" that can be at play. Business leaders can use their voice and influence to support industry change and needed regulations.



PLAYERS INVOLVED:

- CEO & C-suite
- Responsible AI leads



BUSINESS BENEFITS:

- Enhance brand and reputation

Elements:

- Join / initiate meaningful partnerships with other companies, governments, academics and/or non-profit organizations.
- Contribute to ongoing debates around bias in AI through thought leadership and participation in conferences, roundtables, etc.
 - Insist on and support meaningful dialogue among wider array of stakeholders in algorithmic accountability. This includes vulnerable communities impacted by AI systems, non-profits on the frontlines fighting discrimination and injustice, legislators, and regulators.
 - Integrate responsible AI considerations into talking points and panels that you participate on. Ask about how responsible AI is being addressed in panels where it might not be included.
- Put your money where your mouth is.
 - Examine lobbying efforts to ensure that they are advancing responsible AI and not contradicting statements by leaders promoting responsible AI.
 - Prioritize sourcing from and working with other organizations that have diverse, multi-disciplinary teams and responsible data / AI systems practices.
 - Fund research to advance knowledge in the space of responsible AI (especially diverse research teams) and advance diversity in AI (see Play 6 for more).

Example & leader:

The [Women4AI Daring Circle](#) is an initiative of the Women's Forum for Economy & Society led by Microsoft. Partners include companies – Google, L'Oréal, BNP Paribas, Publicis Groupe, Bayer, Lenovo, and AXA – as well as academic experts from the Oxford Internet Institute, UNESCO, and other global stakeholders. The group advocates for making the design and development of AI inclusive; and shares strategies, tools and best practices for women's advancement and gender equality in AI. Its aim is to encourage organizations to take tangible action to create an environment where women are empowering AI to its full potential, and AI is empowering women to their full potential.¹ The Circle is currently carrying out research with the Oxford Internet Institute, exploring how to close awareness and implementations gaps in inclusive AI policies that they unearthed in a 2019 survey. Beyond the research, the Daring Circle continues to add signatories to its [Call to action](#) which seeks to inform and inspire action by companies; and to provide recommendations to the G7 / governments on a feminist perspective of AI-related issues.²

Background:

In January 2020, the CEO of Google and parent company Alphabet, Sundar Pichai, called for AI to be regulated in a Financial Times editorial, saying it was “too important not to” impose regulation.³ Pichai noted that regulation can provide broad guidance while allowing for tailored implementation in different sectors. Pichai has spoken on the topic in speeches and conferences globally, such as a [dialogue at the 2020 World Economic Forum](#). Regulators, analysts, scientists and developers have back Pichai’s statements and call for targeted rules governing AI use cases.⁴

Government regulations are needed to enhance accountability for responsible AI – and business leaders (including but not limited to Pichai) recognize this important need and gap. Tech firms policing themselves leads to inconsistent or nonexistent approaches to mitigating bias – particularly given the lack of clear definitions and approaches when it comes to bias, fairness, and “ethical” or responsible AI. Approaches are currently voluntary, varying across different firms. The lack of regulation also leaves uncertainty for firms, especially as regulation is coming sooner or later.

In addition to general regulation, there is a lack of operational guidance for responsible AI systems so companies run the risk of “ethics washing”. Various opportunities exist to initiate and/or join meaningful partnerships with other stakeholders – including other companies, governments, academics and/or non-profit organizations – can inform responsible public policies to govern AI, and concrete approaches and practices for industry. Importantly, initiatives must have seats at the table for civil society, and put them in leadership positions as well. Examples of existing partnerships and working groups:

- [World Economic Forum community of “ethics executives”](#) from 40 companies, most in newly created roles or offices. Leaders across the industry have expressed that their companies lack even a basic framework for grappling with how their products are designed and whom they should be sold to – and, in absence of a systematic approach, many are defaulting to reactive one off decisions.
- [Partnership on AI](#) brings together various stakeholders (across non-profit, academia and industry) to promote collaboration.
- [Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence](#), a global coalition launched in 2020, seeks to “ensure that Artificial Intelligence is used responsibly, respecting human rights and democratic values.” It brings together experts from industry, government, civil society and academia to conduct research and pilot projects, such as how AI can help societies recover from COVID-19. It is supported by a Secretariat housed at the OECD.
- [Women4AI Daring Circle](#)

There is a need to advance ongoing debates around bias in AI through thought leadership and participate in conferences, roundtables, etc. Some of the major conferences where thought leadership from business leaders on responsible AI is shared and is being advanced:

- [World Economic Forum Annual Meeting](#)
- [ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency \(ACM FAccT\)](#)
- [Grace Hopper Celebration](#)

Discussion of bias in AI and responsible AI should not be limited to these conferences but integrated across major conferences and debates related to AI – including NeurIPS, International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML), NVIDIA GPU Technology Conference, among others.⁵ Integrate responsible AI considerations into talking points and panels, and ask about how responsible AI is being addressed in panels where it might not be included. Critically – elevate voices of those impacted by biased AI.

Business leaders should put their money where their mouth is. Examine how lobbying efforts work against efforts for responsible AI. Reevaluate monies spent and how certain lobbying efforts can be working against the need for regulations to enable responsible AI in the industry. Secondly, in sourcing data or AI systems, business leaders can prioritize working with other organizations that have diverse, multi-disciplinary teams and responsible data / AI systems practices. This not only support risk mitigation but enhances responsible AI – alongside equity and inclusion – in the industry more broadly. Finally, fund research on responsible AI. Prioritize research by teams that include underrepresented and interdisciplinary groups and/or those that work closely with researched communities to incorporate diverse perspectives and cultural responsivity, as well as research driven by the communities of focus themselves⁶ (See Play 6 for more information).

This play is part of [Mitigating Bias in AI: An Equity Fluent Leadership Playbook](#) of the Berkeley Haas Center for Equity, Gender and Leadership. It was written by Genevieve Smith with input from Ishita Rustagi.



Endnotes

- 1 Sackville, E. & Lambin, S. (September 1, 2020). Personal communication.
- 2 Heu-Weller, M. (May 28, 2020). Personal communication.
- 3 Pichai, S. (2020). Why Google thinks we need to regulate AI. Financial Times. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/3467659a-386d-11ea-ac3c-f68c10993b04>.
- 4 Grieg, J. (2020). Assessing Google CEO Sundar Pichai's call for fair AI regulations. Tech Republic. Retrieved from <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/assessing-google-ceo-sundar-pichais-call-for-fair-ai-regulations/>.
- 5 A list of top AI and machine learning conferences compiled by Hewlett Packard can be found here: <https://www.hpe.com/us/en/insights/articles/the-top-ai-and-machine-learning-conferences-to-attend-in-2020-1911.html>.
- 6 Kuhlman, C., Jackson, L. & Chunara, R. (2020). No computation without representation: Avoiding data and algorithm bias through diversity. Cornell University (submitted). Retrieved from <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2002.11836.pdf>.