

Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing: Artificial Intelligence: Risks and Opportunities
March 8, 2023

Today's hearing will discuss both the potential risks as well as the opportunities associated with artificial intelligence, examining how artificial intelligence affects our nation's competitiveness on a global stage, and discuss ways to ensure that these technologies are used both safely and responsibly.

The adoption of artificial intelligence in government, industry, and civil society, has led to the rapid growth of advanced technology in virtually every sector, transforming millions of Americans lives, all across our country.

From the development of lifesaving drugs and advanced manufacturing to helping businesses and governments better serve the public, to self-driving vehicles that will improve mobility and make our roads safer, artificial intelligence certainly holds great promise.

But this rapidly-evolving technology also presents potential risks that could impact our safety, our privacy, and our economic and national security. We must ensure that the use of this technology becomes more widespread, we have to make sure that they're also the right safeguards in place to ensure it is being used appropriately.

One of the greatest challenges presented by artificial intelligence is the lack of transparency and accountability in how algorithms reach their results. Often, not even the scientists and the engineers who design the AI models fully understand how they arrive at the outputs that they produce. This lack of visibility into how AI systems make decisions creates challenges for building public trust in their use.

AI models can also produce biased results that can have unintended, but harmful consequences for the people interacting with those systems.

Some AI models, whether because of the data sets they are trained on or the way in which the algorithm is applied are at risk of generating outputs that discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, or disability.

Whether these systems are being used in criminal justice, college admissions, or even determining eligibility for a home loan, biased decisions and the lack of transparency surrounding them, can lead to adverse outcomes for people who may not be even aware that AI has played a role in the decision-making process. Building more transparency and accountability into these systems will help prevent any kind of bias that could undermine the utility of AI.

And while many government organizations and businesses are working to build AI systems that enhance our daily lives, we must be open-eyed about the risks presented by bad actors and adversaries who may use AI to intentionally cause harm, or undermine our national interests.

Generative artificial intelligence like ChatGPT or deepfakes can be used to create convincing, but false information that can distort reality, undermine public trust, and even be used to cause widespread panic and fear in a worst-case scenario.

The risks from this kind of improper use also extend beyond our borders.

Adversaries like the Chinese government are racing to be the world leaders in these technologies and to harness the economic advantages that dominance in artificial intelligence will certainly create. The United States must be at the forefront of developing our own AI systems and training people how to use them appropriately, to protect our global economic competitiveness.

If we do not, not only are we at risk of American entities having to purchase these mature technologies from an economic competitor like the Chinese government, they will be tools with little accountability that have been developed by an adversary that does not share our core American values, a serious national security risk.

Finally, artificial intelligence will have a significant impact on the future of work. There is no question that AI systems have the potential to disrupt the workplace as we currently know it.

And that's why it is essential as the United States develops these technologies, we are also developing a workforce that is ready to work alongside them. We must address concerns that AI tools could replace human workers and instead focus on how they can assist humans and enhance the workplace.

Our goal in today's hearing is to examine these types of risks and challenges and discuss what steps Congress should take to ensure that we are able to harness these benefits and opportunities with this technology.

That includes ensuring that these technologies are used appropriately, and to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.

Last Congress, I passed bipartisan laws that took steps to ensure the appropriate use of artificial intelligence by government, including through procurement safeguards and by boosting the knowledge of the acquisition workforce, to ensure they are properly trained to understand the risks and capabilities of these technologies.

And I look forward to building on those efforts this Congress, and working alongside my colleagues on the Committee to support the development of AI technologies, and ensure that they are being used both appropriately and effectively.

I hope that today's discussion will be the first of several on this important topic. And I'm pleased to have our panel of witnesses with us today who are experts in the field of artificial intelligence and who can discuss the adoption of these systems and the broader impacts on industry, civil society, and government.