OpenAI and Microsoft generative AI profits likely to be examined against human toll

Article

The news: To make **ChatGPT** fit for public consumption, **OpenAI** outsourced data detoxification to Kenyan laborers to help the AI learn to avoid toxic content.

- Beginning in late 2021, the startup paid the workers **$1.32** to **$2** per hour to **classify and filter harmful content depicting horrific abuse, with one worker describing the task as** "**torture,**" per Insider.

- San Francisco-based outsourcing firm **Sama** employed the Kenyan workers and has coordinated similar data detoxification on behalf of companies like **Google**, **Microsoft**, and **Meta**. Meta was sued over inhumane working conditions at Sama last May.

- **After the ChatGPT detoxification work was complete, Sama shuttered its Nairobi office, terminating 200 content moderation jobs**, per Quartz.

  An ethical dissection: Generative AI has quickly become a sensational technology with potential to ignite trillions of dollars' worth of economic activity. Just as meteoric is its rise in controversy.

- Multiple copyright lawsuits have been filed against generative AI companies, most recently by **Getty Images,** which claimed that **Stability AI** stole content produced by human photographers.

- ChatGPT is enabling low-skilled hackers to carry out more sophisticated attacks, contributing to a World Economic Forum warning of an exponential rise in cyberattacks due to generative AI.

- Generative AI shares its propensity for bias with enterprise AI but also features the possibility of triggering an existential crisis for humanity.
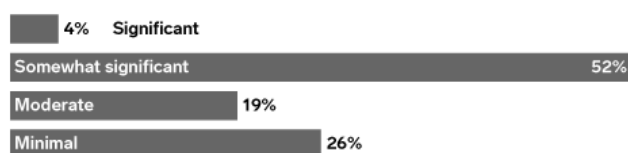
  Moral depravity isn't good for business: OpenAI's ambitions are likely to bring significant scrutiny as it expects to earn **$1 billion** in revenue from its products by 2024, per Quartz. Similar attention could be paid to Microsoft, which has already invested **$3 billion** in the startup and is considering adding **$10 billion**.

- The outcome of OpenAI CEO **Sam Altman**'s vision of the tech's "potential to shape the trajectory of humanity" depends on how AI companies choose to build and deploy their models.

- **Tech firms could pay higher wages for outsourced data detoxification and still save money compared with hiring locally**, but it likely wouldn't address the cumulative deleterious effects on the communities where the workers live.

- Generative AI comes with a litany of potential costs to society that need to be weighed against the benefits in its deployment.

- If the technology becomes a focal point for the global tech cold war, regulators might be slow to act.

- **Public outrage over social fallout from generative AI is a clear risk that should push tech firms to adopt a more cautious approach**.

Extent to Which US Executives Believe There Is Potential Risk Associated with AI Technology, Jan 2022

% of respondents

Significant	4%
Somewhat significant	52%
Moderate	19%
Minimal	26%

Note: n=500 C-level executives who are involved in decision-making for their organization's adoption, use, and management of AI-enabled tools; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: Baker McKenzie, "Risky Business: Identifying Blind Spots in Corporate Oversight of Artificial Intelligence" conducted by Coleman Parkes Research, March 30, 2022

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