

Collaborations falter as US, China compete for AI dominance

Article

The news: The US and China have been the world's biggest collaborators on AI research to date, but there's a rift underway that could deepen a global tech war with heavy implications.

- In 2021, about **9,660 papers on AI** were co-authored by researchers from US and Chinese institutions, **down from over 10,000 the year before**, [according to](#) a Stanford University report.

- The decrease is attributed to rising geopolitical tensions and accusations of intellectual property theft leveled at US-based Chinese researchers, [per](#) the South China Morning Post.
- In October, Pentagon **Chief Software Officer Nicolas Chaillan** quit abruptly, saying that the **US has no fighting chance against China's cyberwarfare** and AI dominance in 15 to 20 years. Chaillan reportedly cited the lack of collaboration between US Big Tech companies and the US military as the cause, [per](#) Vox.

Why it's worth watching: Despite the US's early dominance and continued academic research lead in AI, **China's ultra-competitive tech industry and [greater access](#) to big data to train AI systems is positioning it as a global leader for [AI implementation](#).**

- AI is a pivotal technology across industries, including defense, prompting Russian President Vladimir Putin to [say](#) in 2017 that **AI is "the future, not only for Russia, but for all humankind.** ... Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world."
- **Russia previously received AI tech support from China for [robotic weapons](#) development, but war sanctions are dealing a blow to Russia's AI aspirations.** China is similarly working on [AI-fueled autonomous weapons](#), possibly surpassing US progress in that arena.
- The divisions also apply to regulations, as **Beijing's [tightening](#) of Big Tech's AI usage contrasts with its own use of AI** as a mass surveillance tool. Meanwhile, the US [lags](#) behind the EU in enacting privacy and civil-rights controls around the technology.

The opportunity: China is still the US's primary AI research partner, something both nations stand to gain from. Yet current geopolitical tensions could diminish future cooperation—an outcome that a [deleted report](#) from Peking University indicated would cause more significant losses for China.

- Instead of any one nation striving for AI supremacy, advancing the technology for goals like curing disease and solving climate change will signal greater global leadership than building autonomous weapons.
- Frayed ties between the US and China leaves the door open for other research alliances, such as with the UK, India, or Israel.
- The US has [signaled](#) that it may follow the EU's tech regulatory lead, and being on the same page about fostering AI innovation while protecting public welfare would be a competitive advantage.

Problems that AI Can Solve in Their Industry According to US Decision-Makers, by Industry, Dec 2021

% of respondents

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Financial services | 4 Manufacturing/automotive |
| 2 Tech | 5 Professional services |
| 3 Retail/ecommerce | 6 Total |

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Efficiency and productivity gains	62%	72%	61%	70%	63%	65%
Improved analytics	67%	50%	41%	53%	56%	50%
Business model expansion	52%	39%	51%	53%	26%	48%
Competitive differentiation	57%	47%	34%	35%	56%	46%
Speed time to market	43%	50%	56%	44%	30%	46%
Cost reduction	52%	39%	37%	44%	52%	41%
Customer retention	48%	19%	34%	33%	37%	33%

Note: respondents were asked about problems within their industry, but outside of their organization

Source: LXT, "The Path to AI Maturity" conducted by Reputation Leaders, Feb 22, 2022

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