

Meeting summary for Public AI Seminar (2/13/2024)

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Quick recap

The meeting covered a range of topics related to AI policy and regulation. Participants discussed the potential of public options in the AI space, the need for regulation in sectors with high capital costs and network effects, and the changing climate for economic policies. They also emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality public options to avoid a two-tiered system, and the potential role of regulatory measures in harnessing artificial intelligence in countries without substantial resources. The discussion concluded with a shift towards non-market aspects of public actions, the importance of prioritizing public goods and improving human welfare, and the potential benefits of data quality and diversity.

Some potential research projects emerging from the discussion:

- Additional polling (topics include additional conservative focus, test this hypothesis: "values argument will polarize the political discussion and make it winner-takes-all", china polling). Among other methods to understand the right messaging strategy for this network.
- A research study drawing in international relations folks on a "new wave of compute diplomacy" ref. comments on Canada GPUs
- A product study of public AI: "here are 20 things that would be made way better by public AI"
- A weekly newsletter of updates in public AI to coordinate all the different people talking about this idea AND to update folks on all the many, many developments (e.g. the Empire AI announcement in NYC, which I had not tracked before).

Summary

Advice on Check, AI Policy Discussion

A participant advised another against cashing a mistakenly sent \$50,000 check. The meeting then shifted to its agenda, which included a presentation by a participant on their recent book and work on the intersection of AI policy and past projects. This participant discussed the potential of public options in the AI space, suggesting the idea of publicly run cloud and data services. They also highlighted the need for regulation in sectors with high capital costs and network effects, such as the cloud sector. The discussion concluded with two participants discussing the changing climate for economic policies, particularly in regards to addressing monopolies in the tech industry.

AI Regulation and Impact on Society

Several participants discussed the importance of English skills, the California AI legislation, and the potential impact of the National AI Research Resource. They also discussed the potential anti-monopoly issues, the concentration of government research funding towards a few large corporations, and the national security risks associated with relying on these corporations. The participants also emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality public options to avoid a two-tiered system, and the potential role of regulatory measures in harnessing artificial intelligence in countries without substantial resources. The discussion concluded with a shift towards non-market aspects of public actions, the importance of prioritizing public goods and improving human welfare, and the potential benefits of data quality and diversity.

Regulating AI Commodity Market: Governance and Public Option

The discussion revolved around the regulation of AI as a commodity market and the potential role of a public option. A participant raised concerns about the gaps in the regulation and the potential outcomes if they were successful in regulating the commodity inputs. Another participant suggested a broader perspective, highlighting the concept of artificial entities and their group decision-making dynamics. They emphasized the need for better governance of corporate power and behavior. Another participant raised concerns about the potential for a public option to manage layers of the stack, warning against the possibility of content and use regulations going in an undesirable direction. A participant suggested exploring new models of organization and corporations, especially in the digital realm.

Interactive Session and Polling Results Review

A participant welcomed everyone back to the second half of the call and asked if there were any additional questions for a project. They then suggested a change of topic and hoped for a more interactive session. A participant expressed interest in hearing the conversation before posing any questions. A mention was also made of a previous discussion with a participant and plans to review some results from polling from a policy accelerator.

Public AI Option: Support and Challenges

A participant presented data showing that a majority of Americans support the idea of government AI experts and publicly funded tech resources. Two participants discussed the potential of this idea, emphasizing the importance of defining 'public AI' and 'public option'. Another participant highlighted the historical preference of the US for private-public partnerships and the challenges associated with nationalization. A discussion shared polling results

suggesting a preference for a 'competition framing' of a public AI option among a political group. A collaboration with a corporate executive to support a public AI initiative was suggested.

Public AI Resources: Complexities and Options

Several participants discussed the complexities of providing public artificial intelligence (AI) resources. They considered various options such as nationalization, homegrown efforts, and public-private partnerships. The discussion also emphasized the importance of considering different political leanings and potential polarization. The role of strategic messaging and investment in future arguments was also highlighted. Towards the end, they discussed the need for a public option for cloud computing and AI, with a participant mentioning a project in this area and openness to collaboration.

AI Policy Interest Growing

A participant initiated a discussion with another about the growing interest in public AI policy. The topic has attracted more attention from academics, policy experts, and various public networks in recent months. It was mentioned that many groups, including those in the policy space, antitrust professionals, and tech enthusiasts, are interested in the subject. The conversation concluded with a summary of the discussion and mentioning potential research projects that could be initiated based on the conversation.