Making AI Real: Balancing Speed with Safety

On November 2, 2023, the Risk Institute hosted Ohio State alumna **Rehgan Avon**, co-founder and CEO of **AlignAI**, for a Risk Series event diving deeper into the obstacles and opportunities companies face when implementing artificial intelligence (AI) tools and strategies.

Rehgan hosted a dynamic session for an audience of professionals from **22** different companies in central Ohio (including **five** Ohio State departments) just days after the White House issued its **Executive Order on AI**, and while the **AI Safety Summit** was being held in London, England.

Top 2 AI Strategy Implementation Needs

COLLABORATION

- **Buy-in** is essential from all stakeholders (including leadership, HR, legal, cybersecurity, developers, etc.)

- Making sure everyone is on the **same page** when discussing AI: different folks may be coming from different levels of understanding

- Must **align AI strategy with company strategy**; if this is not achieved, there is often little to no return on high spending and effort

DATA

- Data for AI and machine learning (ML) models and tools must be both **high quality** and **high quantity**

- "If collaboration is the #1 obstacle to successful AI implementation, **data integrity is #2**," said Avon

Other Considerations

- **Even if we CAN do it, SHOULD we do it?** "Nothing has gone from a 'delighter' to a 'must-have' faster than AI," notes Avon.

- **Re-skilling workers** for whom some duties or even entire roles are replaced with AI.

- **Opportunity cost of AI:** hiring and retaining talent, dedicating workers to AI efforts and away from other initiatives.

Risk and AI

- **Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)** and **change management** should be big parts of any company's AI strategy implementation.

- **AI and ML models are not always interpretable**, and should not be thought of in the same way as software. "Even if we don't understand *why* a model did something legally problematic, we are still liable," cautions Avon.

- The book "**Weapons of Math Destruction**" by Cathy O'Neil posits that **AI is more dangerous than humans** due to mass deployment; if a person makes a mistake to or for a team of 10, or 100 people, that's one thing, but an AI mistake can potentially affect hundreds of thousands of people or more.

  - When we consider the **broad ranging use cases** for AI, including healthcare, national security, banking, autonomous vehicles, etc., the implications could be massive on both the positive and the negative sides of the equation.

AI in Concept

The concept of intelligence itself is incredibly subjective. As industry continues to innovate and develop new AI/ML models, use cases, and breakthroughs, the academy and global governments will continue efforts to both define and regulate AI. The spectrum of best practices is already incredibly broad, and as soon as somethign is published about AI, it is virtually out of date.

Stay connected with the **Risk Institute** for more thought leadership on AI and risk, and additional events to keep up-to-date and learning more!