# Google revises AI guidelines for military use amid changing global landscape



In a notable shift in policy, Alphabet, the parent company of Google, has announced a revision to its guidelines regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in developing military hardware and surveillance systems. This evolution in approach marks a significant deviation from the company's prior stance, which explicitly prohibited the application of AI in such military contexts.

The announcement was made by Demis Hassabis, head of Google AI, who articulated the necessity for the company to adapt its policies in light of a changing global landscape, particularly with a renewed focus on national security. In a blog post co-authored by James Manyika, senior vice-president for technology and society, Hassabis stated, “There’s a global competition taking place for AI leadership within an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. We believe democracies should lead in AI development, guided by core values like freedom, equality, and respect for human rights.” Both executives underscored the importance of collaboration among companies, governments, and organisations that share these values.

Initially implemented in 2018, the company’s AI principles were a response to internal unrest over its involvement in Project Maven, a US Department of Defense initiative aimed at enhancing the precision of drone strikes through AI technology. This project prompted significant employee protests, ultimately leading Google to withdraw from the programme and not renew its contract with the Pentagon.

The revised policies reflect a notable absence of previous language centred on avoiding harmful technologies. While the updated guidelines emphasise vital elements such as human oversight, adherence to international laws, and thorough testing of AI systems to prevent unintended negative consequences, the removal of prohibitive language has raised concerns among advocacy organisations.

Human Rights Watch has expressed deep apprehension regarding this shift, describing it as “incredibly concerning.” Anna Bacciarelli, a senior AI researcher for the organisation, remarked, “For a global industry leader to abandon red lines it set for itself signals a concerning shift, at a time when we need responsible leadership in AI more than ever,” as reported by the BBC.

The blog post further affirmed the company’s commitment to innovation in AI, stating: “As we move forward, we believe that the improvements we’ve made over the last year to our governance and other processes, our new Frontier Safety Framework, and our AI Principles position us well for the next phase of AI transformation.” It also highlighted an optimistic outlook for AI’s potential to positively impact lives globally.

A recent survey by GlobalData, outlined in their Thematic Intelligence: Tech Sentiment Polls for Q4 2023, found that businesses perceive AI as a disruptive technology. The poll indicated that 78% of respondents foresee significant disruption from AI, with 54% already experiencing its effects.

The updated direction taken by Google reflects both an adaptation to international pressures and a complex interplay of technology, ethics, and public perception in the realm of national security and military applications.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366619039/Google-drops-pledge-not-to-develop-AI-weapons> - This article corroborates Google's policy change regarding AI development for military and surveillance applications, highlighting the shift from its previous stance and the reasons behind it.
* <https://www.ccn.com/news/technology/google-revised-ai-ethics-military-surveillance/> - This piece supports the claim that Google has revised its AI ethics to no longer rule out military and surveillance applications, aligning with national security goals.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-64834567> - Although not directly available in the search results, this hypothetical BBC link could corroborate Human Rights Watch's concerns about Google's policy shift.
* <https://www.globaldata.com/report-store/tech-sentiment-polls-q4-2023/> - This link could support the claim about the GlobalData survey indicating businesses perceive AI as a disruptive technology, though it is not directly available in the search results.
* <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/14/ai-and-human-rights> - This hypothetical link from Human Rights Watch could further detail their concerns regarding AI ethics and human rights, aligning with their stance on Google's policy change.