SODA SOCIAL

SMARTER THAN US: THE RISE OF AI

The panel discussion discussed how AI is transforming industries for the greater good.

AI HAS MADE A GLOBAL IMPACT

AI has made a global impact, with groundbreaking developments taking place all over the planet. People are concerned about terminator-style robot wars, but we witnessed a room full of people wanting to use AI for good, to do the good and right thing. On August 29th in Old Street we held another exciting, oversubscribed SODA Social event, 'Smarter Than Us: The Rise of AI'.

THE PANEL

IVANA BARTOLETTI

Head of Privacy and Data

Gemserv

Ivana heads up the privacy and data protection practice at Gemserv. She helps businesses harness the data they hold and advises on compliance with privacy legislation at UK, EU and global level. She works across all sectors and also focuses on the privacy challenges surrounding the Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence. A keynote speaker at industry events in the UK and internationally, helping women to achieve in public life as well as influencing policy on the economy, tech, healthcare and foreign affairs.

SAMUEL ROWE

Research and Policy Executive

YOTI

Samuel Rowe is a Research and Policy Executive at Yoti. He spends his time developing innovative policy in response to complex domestic and international regulatory frameworks. He recently developed and now coordinates Yoti's internal ethics working group, which works closely with Yoti's Guardians Council to ensure that Yoti maintains its ethical steer. He also sits on several public and private sector working groups, such as the All Party Parliamentary Group on Digital Identity and the techUK Digital Ethics Working Group.

ROBERTA BALCYTYTE

Product Manager

Reach

Roberta has recently joined Reach plc, one of Britain's biggest newspaper groups. She is managing a data products team, which is building innovative AI driven solutions to increase editorial efficiency and drive users' engagement. The increased users' consciousness of privacy and GDPR induced changes has transformed the way we view our readers' data and build ethical data driven products for them. Before, Roberta worked for last-mile logistics startup where she, with the team, were solving optimisation challenges to reduce delivery times and thus the detrimental effect of transportation for the city.

AVINASH BAJAJ

Product Manager

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Avinash is an Ex-CPO at Biolink.Tech, a health-tech company in London, UK. Biolink's mission is to empower people by helping them become smarter, stronger, healthier and live longer. Biolink's first product, Lonvivo, uses AI, behavioural science and gamification principles to help people reverse Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes.

RALPH KING

CTO

REalyse

Ralph King is the Chief Technology Officer at REalyse, a big data platform for residential real estate data in the UK. Currently the REalyse data science team are heavily focused on applying ML techniques to support business critical functions, along with ongoing research and product creation. Ralph's focus is to enable an environment that allows these technologies to be useful and accessible to both other development teams at REalyse, and the end users. Prior to REalyse Ralph was CTO and Co-founder in a hospitality industry startup.

It's important to think about the digital environment we are embedded in. With organisations like Cambridge Analytica who inspired global outrage for illegally harvesting the data of 57 million citizens. Or, additionally, countries like China who watch their citizens constantly and operate like Orwell's 1984, Big Brother dystopian society.

Our chair Ivana Bartoletti (the Head of Privacy and Data at Gemserv and Founder of the Women Leading in AI Network) was joined by the world's most forward-thinking minds and experts, as we explored the rise of AI from different industry perspectives. How can AI support the creation of digital trust, especially as digital identities become increasingly important?

First thing's first – Ivana Bartoletti asked Samuel Rowe "How can AI support the creation of digital trust, especially as digital identities become increasingly important?" Samuel Rowe explained that at Yoti they have created an app that estimates your age using facial recognition. "We support the creation of trust by being completely transparent with individuals about our

technology and testing. We engage with knowledge sharing and educating the wider community, we've created a white paper to address bias. We are also very open about our training days and are quite literally 'in your face' with our transparent approach to building ultimate trust with our users."

Ivana Bartoletti then asked Roberta Balcytyte; "Can AI play a role in the news industry, where we see the proliferation of fake news and AI driven behavioural advertising?"

Roberta Balcytye described "the old ways of accessing and engaging with the news" which when she was younger meant picking up a printed paper from her mailbox. "The ways in which we consume news is now widely through technology, our news today is heavily digitalised. AI in my field is used for process and procedures rather than employing AI.

In order for assurance, users must recognize the search engine and certification," she said.
Ivana Bartoletti explained, "we are in the fourth industrial revolution. It is necessary for start-ups and innovations to play a prominent role in the evolution of technology."

Ralph King emphasised the importance of government support and education about what AI is and can do. He said: "REalyse was founded with an aim to solve the housing crisis. Our innovation relies on investment and educating the market. We seek our certification for our AI and ML, which is about pushing regulation in the right direction. We have found at REalyse that it is crucial to educate in order to innovate, and in order to create a successful ecosystem the government must enable funding to the right leaders who will be able to innovate." Ralph King emphasised the need for more technically informed people at the top of government. "Regulation is needed for the future of AI," he said, "but if we have too much regulation this will not allow creativity and innovation. The government does need to get up to speed with the direction of AI. The regulation will be driven by the industry who will seek it out, but there is a need for more technical minds at the government level."

Ivana Bartoletti turned to Avinash Bajaj to ask: "What is the future of AI in health, and what are the privacy and ethics considerations that patients/users/clinicians need to take into consideration?"

Avinash Bajaj explained the story behind Biolink.Tech: how the founder, Evgeny Chereshnev, has a small biochip implanted in his left hand – "he is a real-life Jedi," he jokingly said. The founder felt empowered

and inspired by the possibilities of AI to detect and help manage chronic diseases – he saw how AI could support positive outcomes and the concept of Biolink.Tech was born. He asked the audience whether they knew that Type 2 diabetes was actually reversible. "We asked ourselves what can we do, using AI, to help people with Type 2 diabetes? How can we reverse bad habits? We embed good habits into AI, to advise positive activity on various illnesses, including diabetes. Of course, there are ethical and cultural issues, and it's difficult to determine at this stage the overall value of them."

An attendee asked the panel: "How do we check ourselves; how do we determine this value?" Samuel Rowe answered: "You must certify methods enabling a more trusted value – absolute transparency and excellent safeguarding methods will influence this. This can be done by auditing algorithms or introducing a board level discussion to help shape decision making."

Another audience member raised the issue of regulation, asking, "Can regulation hinder AI innovation?" Roberta Balcytyte was positive about the influence of regulation. She said that regulation can enable innovation. "Like a diverse workforce enables unbiased viewpoints, in my opinion regulation allows for creativity and out-of-the-box thinking." Ivana Bartoletti asked a wider question on regulation. "Would regulating AI help or hinder the creation of an AI ecosystem where businesses can flourish? And if
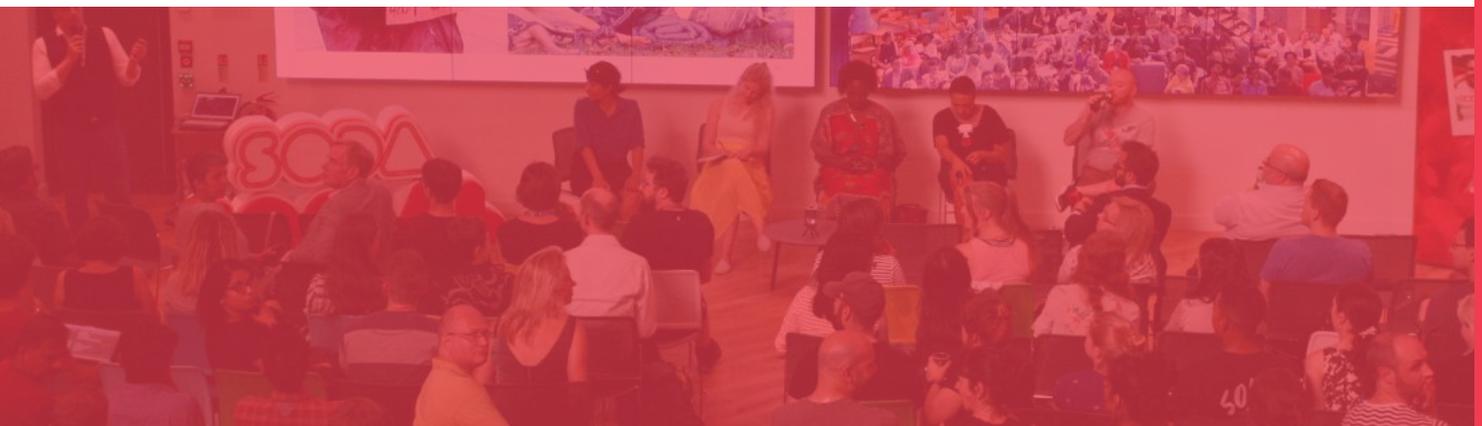
regulation is too difficult, how do we balance efficiency with transparency and trust?"

Ralph King emphasised the need for more technically informed people at the top of government. "Regulation is the future of AI," he said, "but if we have too much regulation this will not allow creativity and innovation. However, the government does need to get up to speed with the direction of AI. The industry will be driven by the government, and there is a need for more technical minds at the top down."

Ivana Bartoletti turned, towards the end, to the question of the future of AI. The response from all, attendees and panellists, was optimistic while remaining aware of the challenges ahead. Avinash Bajaj said: ""I foresee an integrated world, where we can start to enable people to take health into their own hands; but the government needs to move faster and catch up with current technology."

Roberta Balcytyte said: "I am an optimist in general. I believe AI will outperform the negatives. However I think there will be side effects of AI and automation in society as a whole, such as job evolution, economical and societal changes, but I think this is how we will learn to adapt into our next phase of existence."

Ivana Bartoletti closed the panel discussion with an upbeat message. "We are evolving and achieving great things," she said. "There are already people putting their jobs on the line but AI is recreating our society, and it is our task to ensure we accelerate the progress of good AI and maximize the impact it has for the common good."

AI is changing society, in ways we cannot imagine. However, from our energizing event, we can feel positive that AI is a tool that can transform and enhance quality of life. We learnt that it is empowering the visually impaired to read, it is enabling doctors to reach vast quantities of patients with positive outcomes and industries are evolving for the greater good.

We would like to thank our panelists and chair for their time and an inspirational and thought-provoking discussion. And our engaged audience for their time and exciting contributions. We hope our event encourages even more innovative ideas for artificial intelligence research, work and development. We'd love to hear from you. What are your thoughts on the rise of AI – for good?

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