

DEMOCRATIZATION OF A.I.: FACT OR FANTASY?

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The Security View



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Sam Altman issues call to arms to ensure ‘democratic AI’ will defeat ‘authoritarian AI’

BY **JASON MA**

July 27, 2024 at 7:44 PM GMT+1



OpenAI CEO Samuel Altman testifying on Capitol Hill in May.

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Source: <https://fortune.com/2024/07/27/sam-altman-openai-democratic-authoritarian-ai-china-russia-us-coalition/>

The Security View: Analysis

- The value of democracy directs democratic citizens to protect their societies and institutions from threats.
- AI can empower authoritarian forces with democracy-eroding capabilities:
 - Weaponization (information warfare, cyberattacks, LAWS)
 - Economic dominance
- Therefore, democratizing AI is about maximizing investment in AI capabilities, export controls, and cybersecurity.
- Objection: would keeping AI out of the hands of authoritarian forces render it fully democratic?

The Access View

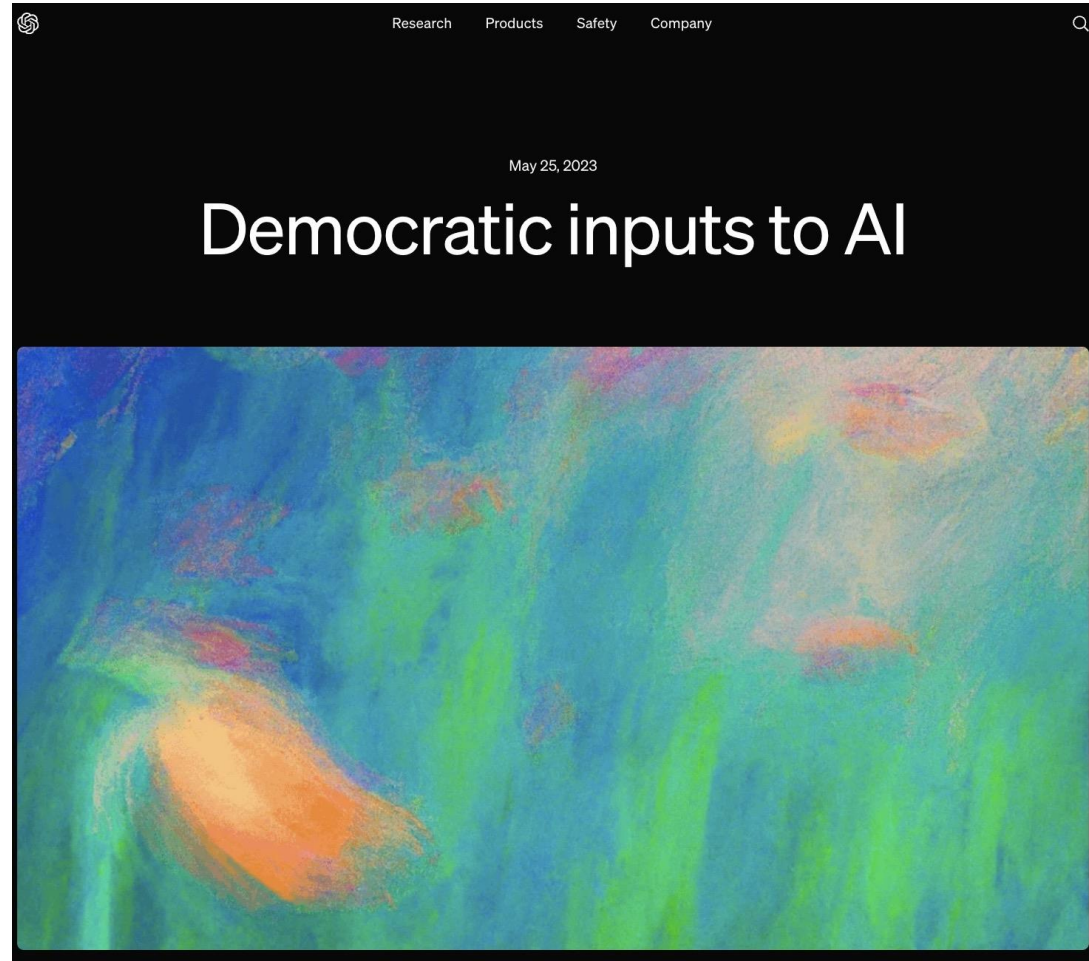
The Ultimate Guide to Democratization in Artificial Intelligence

Democratization of artificial intelligence means making AI available for all. In other words, open-source datasets and tools developed by companies like Microsoft and Google - which demand less knowledge of AI from the user - are made available so that anyone can build innovative AI software. This has led to the rise of 'citizen data scientists'.

The Access View: Analysis

- Claim: mass marketing of AI broadens opportunities; it should be celebrated and encouraged.
- A cynical interpretation: democracy-washing?
- A charitable interpretation: access to AI is becoming a democratic concern because it influences effective participation in society (cf. internet access).
- Objection 1: Is AI accessibility the responsibility of firms?
- Objection 2: Democracy is about power, not (only) access.

The Input View (Version A)



Source: <https://openai.com/index/democratic-inputs-to-ai/>

The Input View (Version B)

AI



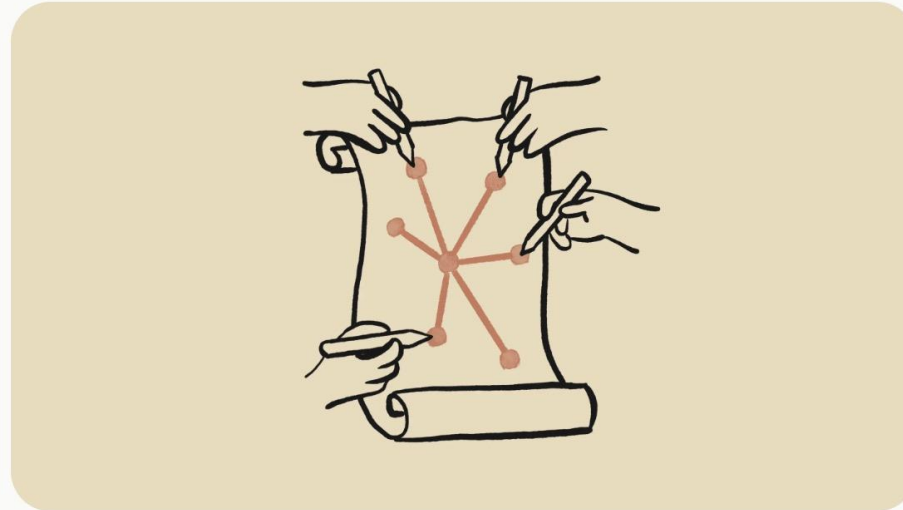
Societal Impact

Policy

Research

Collective Constitutional AI: Aligning a Language Model with Public Input

Oct 17, 2023



Source: <https://www.anthropic.com/news/collective-constitutional-ai-aligning-a-language-model-with-public-input>

The Input View: Analysis

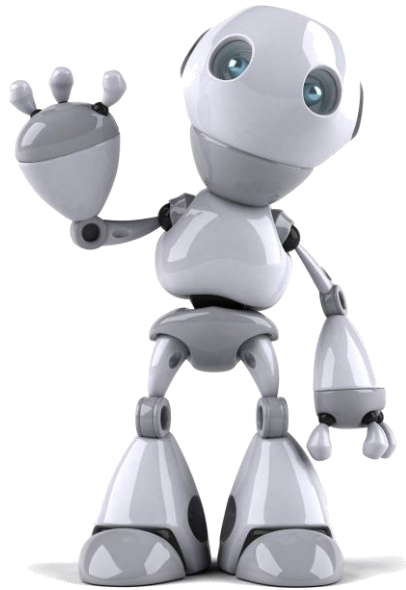
- Everyone subjected to a sociotechnical system deserves a voice in its governance.
- We are increasingly subjected to foundation models, but governance is concentrated in the hands of a few firms.
- Therefore, big AI firms should create opportunities for public input.
- Three objections:
 1. Firms lack the capacity to provide fair input opportunities.
 2. Firms can't be trusted to respect democratic outcomes voluntarily.
 3. Firms risk reinventing the wheel of democratic governance.

The Public Governance View

- AI access and input are public, not private concerns; they demand government solutions.
- When democratic governments fall short, our first priority should be strengthening public democratic infrastructure.
- Alternatives are acceptable only when public democratic solutions are not realistically achievable.
- Alternatives should be led by independent third parties and enable future transitions to public authority.

Final Thoughts

- “Misnaming things adds to the misery of the world” –Albert Camus
- Democratic AI will remain a fantasy if we continue to use the term loosely.
- It can become reality if we get serious about understanding democracy’s meaning and fulfilling its moral demands.



Keep in touch!

A dark grey rectangular graphic with a black background. At the top center is a circular profile picture of a man with dark hair, wearing a white shirt. Below the picture, the name "Ted Lechterman" is written in white. Underneath the name, the text "UNESCO Chair in AI Ethics & Governance | Philosophy Professor | Strategic Advisor" is written in a smaller white font. At the bottom center of the graphic is a large QR code.