

LEADING EMPLOYERS ADOPT CRITERIA TO MITIGATE ALGORITHMIC BIAS IN WORKFORCE DECISIONS

Data & Trust Alliance Formed to Advance Algorithmic Safety, Built on Responsible Data and AI Practices

New York, NY – December 8, 2021 – More than a dozen of the world’s leading employers today announced that they are adopting criteria to mitigate data and algorithmic bias in human resources and workforce decisions, including recruiting, compensation and employee development.

The companies are members of the newly formed Data & Trust Alliance, an organization that brings together leading institutions to learn, develop and adopt responsible data and AI practices. Alliance members share a common belief that data and intelligent systems will be critical for creating economic and societal value in the coming era, but must be deployed responsibly. Today’s announcement is the Alliance’s first initiative.

“As businesses transition from ‘going digital’ to becoming ‘data enterprises,’ it is imperative to unlock the value of data and AI in ways that earn trust with every stakeholder,” said Doug McMillon, president and chief executive officer of Walmart, and the current chairman of Business Roundtable. “Developed and used responsibly, these systems hold the promise of making our workforces more diverse, more inclusive, and ultimately more innovative.”

Alliance Establishes Algorithmic Bias Safeguards for Workforce

Alliance members are increasingly applying data, algorithms and AI to identify talent in larger and more diverse candidate pools, to better match the right talent to the right opportunities and to personalize each employee experience. Like most employers, they rely on software providers, professional networking sites, consultants and recruiting firms that are increasingly employing AI and machine learning in their products and services. While embracing these new technologies, member companies also identified potential unfair bias as one of the highest risks associated with using them to augment workforce management.

That concern led the Alliance to design its first initiative, “Algorithmic Safety: Mitigating Bias in Workforce Decisions,” to help companies evaluate vendors based on their ability to detect, mitigate, and monitor algorithmic bias. Member companies can now supplement their respective vendor evaluation processes with education and criteria to evaluate suppliers of HR applications and solutions on their commitment to algorithmic safety, as well as a qualitative scorecard and guidance for integrating the Algorithmic Bias Safeguards into their processes.

“Every business strives to attract, motivate and retain the most talented and diverse people in the labor force,” said Mary Barra, chair and chief executive officer of General Motors. “This initiative will play an important role in our overall commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by raising standards for trust and transparency in our human resources processes.”

Companies adopting the Safeguards include American Express, CVS Health, Deloitte, Diveplane, General Motors, Humana, IBM, Mastercard, Meta, Nielsen, Nike, Under Armour and Walmart. Collectively, they employ more than three-and-a-half million people. Additional Alliance companies are evaluating the Safeguards and are expected to adopt them in the near future.

The Alliance’s Algorithmic Bias Safeguards include 55 questions in 13 categories that can be adapted by companies to evaluate vendors on criteria including training data and model design; bias testing methods; bias remediation; transparency and accountability; and AI ethics and diversity commitments.

Evaluation criteria were developed by a cross-industry working group of member company experts in human resources, artificial intelligence, information technology, procurement, legal, and diversity, equity and inclusion. The criteria were then tested and refined with input from leading HR and AI vendors, as well as more than 200 subject matter experts from business, academia and civil society.

Education materials provided by the Alliance will help familiarize human resources, procurement and other professionals with algorithmic bias and to help improve their criteria and selection processes.

CEO support for the Algorithmic Bias Safeguards:

Arvind Krishna, chairman and chief executive officer, IBM: “Trustworthy AI is crucial for businesses. IBM is looking forward to working with members of the Data & Trust Alliance, which includes some of the world’s leading brands, on making responsible data and AI practices the norm, not the exception. The alliance’s ‘Algorithmic Bias Safeguards’ can help businesses ensure that they are adopting AI-powered human resource tools that foster trust and help organizations build a skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce.”

David Kenny, chief executive officer, Nielsen: “As a leading data and analytics company, we know that equitable and unbiased data is essential to trust and truth. The Alliance’s anti-bias criteria for HR algorithms are essential to trust and truth when hiring and developing a winning team.”

The Data & Trust Alliance

The Data & Trust Alliance, established in September 2020, brings together leading businesses and institutions across multiple industries to learn, develop and adopt responsible data and AI practices.

The Alliance, a not-for-profit consortium, is co-chaired by Ken Chenault, General Catalyst chairman and managing director, and former American Express chairman and CEO, and Sam Palmisano, former IBM chairman and CEO. Jon Iwata is the founding executive director.

“The Data & Trust Alliance is a promising example of the business community embracing responsible innovation, forging a path for both established organizations and start-ups to build thriving businesses that align with and contribute to the long-term interests of society,” said Mr. Chenault.

“The companies that formed the Data & Trust Alliance come from a broad range of industries, but they have several things in common. They are staking their future on innovation. They are innovating their products, services and operations by embracing data and intelligent technologies. And they care deeply about earning trust with their full spectrum of stakeholders,” said Mr. Palmisano.

“Many today are focused on the theory and policy of responsible data and AI, and that is important work. The Data & Trust Alliance is focused on application,” said Mr. Iwata. “We are about changing the practice of business through real-world innovation. Our only measure of success is adoption by practitioners in business.”

CEO support for the Data & Trust Alliance:

Joe Ucuzoglu, chief executive officer, Deloitte US: “When organizations infuse ethical decision-making into the deployment of emerging technologies, it unlocks superior business outcomes while earning society’s trust. At Deloitte, we’re proud to take on these challenges in collaboration with other leading purpose-driven enterprises in the Data & Trust Alliance.”

Mike Capps, chief executive officer, Diveplane: “The Alliance presents an amazing opportunity for globally renowned organizations to lead by example for the ethical and fair use of data with AI. It is truly remarkable to see these Alliance Members come together, offering multiple perspectives, yet all share this common goal. The Diveplane organization is proud to play its part.”

Data & Trust Alliance member companies span 15 industries, operate in more than 175 countries, and generate more than \$1.5 trillion in annual revenues. Additional information on the Alliance and the safeguards are available at dataandtrustalliance.org

Additional Executive Endorsements

Laurie Havanec, chief people officer, CVS Health: “As we accelerate our digital transformation, we also have to ensure that the way we are using data and AI is consistent with our values. Our work to mitigate bias in human resources and recruiting will help us build the more diverse and inclusive teams that we know will produce better results for our companies and our communities.”

Athena Karp, chief executive officer, HiredScore: “HiredScore fully supports groups such as the Data & Trust Alliance that are convening leaders who take a stance on the important topic of mitigating biases in work related processes and for providing resources for the industry, including valuable frameworks for evaluating technologies for their incorporation of ethical and compliance standards.”

Timothy Murphy, chief administrative officer, Mastercard: “Trust is central to building a culture where the best people want to be. In today’s digital world, that trust must extend to the data-driven technologies that allow us to recruit, retain and develop an inclusive, dynamic workforce. We’re pleased to be part of the D&TA working group that has advanced this effort.”

Jean Martin, global head of product, global business solutions & career, Mercer: “What I love about this work is that it's going to build sensitivity and awareness. It's this idea of moving towards more equitable algorithmic solutions.”

Monique Matheson, EVP, chief human resources officer, NIKE Inc.: “None of us want to lose out on the right opportunity or the right person due to incomplete, inaccurate or biased data sets. The work of this cross-industry, multi-disciplinary team of leaders and deep subject matter experts is designed to create an equitable playing field for all.”

Frida Polli, chief executive officer, Pymetrics: “Forward-looking companies understand that data and AI can be very effective tools for creating opportunity and achieving diversity, equity and inclusion goals. While it's hard to remove bias from algorithms, it's even harder to remove bias from human decision-making. By working closely with the vendor community to improve products and offerings related to talent management, the Data & Trust Alliance is demonstrating a commitment to progress that will benefit all.”

Nuala O'Connor, SVP, chief counsel, digital citizenship, Walmart: “This is not only an anti-bias tool. It is an improved outcomes tool -- for a time in which talent recruitment and retention are becoming critical for fairness, opportunity and future business success.”

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