Spotlight of the Week: The Wilson Center

*"Ethical AI emerged as one of three critical policy topics for the new Congress to focus on at a recent event the Wilson Center co-hosted with staff from the Congressional Artificial Intelligence Caucuses. Panelists believe that **transparency, accountability, and fairness will benefit society, help educate the public, and create economic benefit** by leveling the playing field. We agree. We will bring these conversations to the executive branch, to support a whole-of-government AI strategy in 2021."*

- Meg King, Director, Science & Technology Innovation Program, The Wilson Center

Hot Topics in Business and Technology 🔥

- **[Response to Termination of Timnit Gebru from Google becomes more heated, internally and externally.](#)** Google's Ethical AI employees sent CEO Sundar Pichai a list of demands, including organizational changes and a request to reinstate dismissed researcher Timnit Gebru at a higher level. Several Democratic Congress members, including Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Cory Booker, Ron Wyden and Rep. Yvette Clarke sent a letter to Pichai, asking for details of his "review" of Gebru's firing as well as Google's efforts to mitigate discriminatory bias.

- **Pinterest's settlement highlights tech industry's inequities**: Last June, former Pinterest COO Françoise Brougher sued Pinterest,

alleging gender discrimination, which yesterday resulted in a $22.5 million settlement. (12/15)

- **Microsoft Offers Free Online Certificate Course in Artificial Intelligence for Students:** Microsoft is currently accepting applications for Microsoft AI Classroom series. Selected students, who must be residents of India, can access a free online course in AI, data science and machine learning through an online Simu-live session. (12/9)
- **Oxford AI modelling tool incorporated into Amazon anti-bias software**: Amazon is using a new method to help detect discrimination in AI and machine learning systems, created by academics at Oxford. It will be in their new bias toolkit, '**Amazon SageMaker Clarify'** for Amazon Web Services customers (12/14).
- **DataRobot Introduces Bias & Fairness Testing in Latest Version of Enterprise AI Platform:** AI company DataRobot released automatic Bias & Fairness Testing to its platform to identify bias in models with protected features such as gender and ethnicity, then provides guidance to resolve issues and prevent bias from reoccurring (12/15).
- **Big law firms test AI recruiting tool in effort to combat bias:** Several Am Law 100 firms are turning to Suited's artificial intelligence-powered recruiting platform in hopes of getting more diverse hires (12/15).
- **How AI can fight the climate problem hiding inside buildings.** Almost 40% of energy-related carbon dioxide emissions comes from the construction and operation of buildings, which are surprisingly inefficient. Carbon Lighthouse is using sensors and artificial intelligence to make tiny tweaks to these internal systems that can result in energy reductions of reportedly more than 20%.
- **Hyundai buys controlling stake in robot firm Boston Dynamics:** In a deal that values the U.S.-based robot maker at $1.1 billion, the South Korean automaker said the purchase would help expand automation in vehicle factories and design autonomous cars, drones and robots, in a pivot from manufacturer to a broader mobility service provider (12/10).
- **The new snow day: when Google is down**: More than a dozen Google services, including Gmail and YouTube were offline for roughly an hour Monday, long enough to close schools, disrupt work and highlight our dependency on the internet amid the coronavirus pandemic (12/14).
- **Reddit buys Dubsmash, expanding the industry of user-created content**: Reddit bought video-sharing app Dubsmash to expand its presence in one of the hottest internet markets: user-created video. (12/13).
- **Facebook**:
  - **Georgia Runoff**: With less than a month until Georgia's runoff elections, Facebook said it will lift its ban on political advertisements in the state starting today, while still maintaining its overall temporary political ad ban elsewhere. Facebook will ban ads that are labeled as false by external fact checkers or try to delegitimize the Georgia election (12/15).

- **COVID-19 misinformation**: Facebook is changing how it reaches people who have encountered misinformation on its platform. The company will now send notifications to anyone who has liked, commented, or shared a piece of COVID-19 misinformation that's been taken down for violating the platform's terms of service. It will then connect users with trustworthy sources in effort to correct the record (12/15).

AI & Public Health 🏥

- **How the rapid rollout of AI tools has fueled frustration among clinicians:** Health care workers are hesitant to embrace the AI tools being employed within their health system given that they are not being trained on the tools' inner workings, accuracy, or reliability.
- **'Smarter AI can help fight bias in healthcare':** Leading researchers discussed which requirements AI algorithms must meet to fight bias in healthcare, during a recent meeting of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) (12/11).

US Federal & State Government News 🇺🇸

- **Facebook fights more than antitrust suits:** The allegations of anticompetitive practices against Facebook include "far-reaching" implications for enterprise technology companies: data sharing.
    - The suits filed Wednesday by the Federal Trade Commission and 46 state attorneys general argue that Facebook leveraged its collection of user information, both to entice third-party developers onto the platform and to influence them. (12/10)
- **US Defense to Equip MQ-9 Reaper Drones With AI**: The Pentagon's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center has awarded a $93.3 million contract to General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc (GA-ASI), makers of the MQ-9 Reaper, to equip the drone with new AI technology. The aim is for the Reaper to carry out autonomous flight, decide where to direct its battery of sensors, and to recognize objects on the ground (12/11).
- **U.S. Agencies Hacked in Russian cyberattack:** The U.S. Treasury and Commerce departments' computer systems were breached as part of a "widespread global cyber espionage campaign" believed to be organized by the Russian government. The attacks exposed as many as hundreds of thousands of government and corporate networks to possible risk, alarming national-security officials. (12/13)

AI Around the World 🌎

- **EU:** The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) released a report on AI and the ethical considerations. FRA's report, *Getting The Future Right*, begins with the ways AI is already improving lives through helping with cancer diagnosis, and even predicting where burglaries are likely to take place (12/14).

- **France:** France's privacy regulator CNIL issued more than $163 million in fines to Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Amazon.com Inc., saying they improperly collected information about website visitors. Google;s €100 million was a record for a privacy fine in France (12/10).

Op-Eds: Top Picks of the Week 🧐
- **Health: 'Top 10 AI and machine learning stories of 2020':** HealthCare IT News presents their most-read stories about AI this year, including "UK to use AI for COVID-19 vaccine side effects" and "AI algorithm IDs abnormal chest X-rays from COVID-19 patients" (11/4).
- **AI needs to face up to its invisible-worker problem:** Many of the most successful and widely used machine-learning models are trained with the help of thousands of low-paid workers through online crowdsourcing platforms. Even though many work for some of the wealthiest AI labs in the world, they are paid below minimum wage without opportunities to grow their skills (12/11).
- '**What are algorithms and why are they biased against me?**' *The Washington Post* offers a concise yet thorough summary of the problem and current path to bias in AI, along with a number of examples where biased algorithms have compounded inequity within our society (12/17).
- '**From whistleblower to laws to unions: How Google's AI ethics meltdown could shape policy**': This piece from VentureBeat examines Timnit Gebru's firing as a case in point for the need for legal protection of AI ethics researchers, similar to that afforded to whistleblowers (12/16).

Upcoming Events 🥳
- Virtual session with the top investors, founders, and technologists forging the future of space, hosted by TechCrunch: December 17.
- Committee for Justice's virtual event on the conservative case against weaponizing antitrust law: December 18.