

Canada launches its AI Safety Institute with C\$50m over five years

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Rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have underscored both the promise and the risks associated with this transformative technology. Ensuring the safety and the responsible use of AI systems is a top priority for the government, with experts highlighting evolving risks, including the potential for their misuse in disinformation campaigns, cybersecurity breaches and election interference. The Government of Canada is taking concrete action to protect Canadians from the potentially harmful impacts of AI.

****Institute a centrepiece of Canada's commitment to the safe development and deployment of artificial intelligence technology****

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Today, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, announced the launch of the Canadian Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (CAISI) to bolster Canada's capacity to address AI safety risks, further positioning the country as a leader in the safe and responsible development and adoption of AI technologies. It is one component of a broader \$2.4 billion investment announced in Budget 2024 to help researchers and businesses develop and adopt AI responsibly.

CAISI will leverage Canada's world-leading AI research ecosystem and talent base to advance the understanding of risks associated with advanced AI systems and to drive the development of measures to address those risks. Building on Canada's commitment to international collaboration through the Bletchley Declaration, CAISI will also collaborate with safety institutes in other jurisdictions as part of the new International Network of AI Safety Institutes, which will convene for the first time later this month in San Francisco.

The Canadian AI Safety Institute is part of the government's broader strategy to promote safe and responsible AI development in Canada, which includes the proposed Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and the Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems.

With this institute, the federal government is helping ensure AI safety and building trust in the technology. Fostering greater trust in AI through its responsible adoption is to secure Canada's AI advantage today and for generations to come.

"The Canadian Institute for Artificial Intelligence Security will propel Canada to the forefront of global efforts to use AI responsibly, and will be a key player in building public trust in these technologies. In a world that's evolving quickly and full of unknowns, Canadians can be confident that we will always take the necessary steps to ensure the AI they use is safe, responsible, and trustworthy." – The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

"As the world grapples with the potential and also the risks of artificial intelligence, CIFAR is pleased to participate in Canada's response. The CAISI Research Program at CIFAR will draw on the strengths of Canada's robust AI scientific community in order to advance world-leading research on AI safety, for the benefit of all." – Stephen Toope, President and CEO, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

"For more than 20 years, the National Research Council of Canada has been at the forefront of responsible applied AI. Under the new institute, we will lead research projects to mitigate risks and advance the safe and

reliable development of AI systems that are crucial to government priorities and Canada's innovation objectives.” – Mitch Davies, President, National Research Council of Canada

“The rapid development of frontier AI models makes substantial investment in AI safety research essential. We must notably develop robust safety guarantees for these models, both to mitigate risks and help reap the social and economic benefits of AI. The creation of the Canadian AI Safety Institute is an important step in this direction and demonstrates Canada's ongoing commitment to the responsible development of AI.” – Yoshua Bengio, Full Professor at Université de Montréal, Founder and Scientific Director of Mila – Quebec AI Institute, and Canada CIFAR AI Chair

* The Canadian Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (CAISI) will have an initial budget of \$50 million over five years.

* CAISI will be housed at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, with a dedicated office responsible for overseeing the research agenda and engaging with international partners.

* It will leverage existing expertise at the National Research Council of Canada, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR), Canada's three national AI institutes—Amii in Edmonton, Mila in Montréal and the Vector Institute in Toronto—and engage the broader Canadian research and business community in undertaking projects to assess risks, test systems and develop guidance on addressing the risks.

* CAISI will conduct research under two streams:

* Applied and investigator-led research will be funded through a contribution agreement with the global Canada-based research organization, CIFAR, enabling Canadian and international experts to explore critical AI safety questions. * Government-directed projects will be implemented by the National Research Council of Canada, focusing on AI projects that address direct government priorities like cybersecurity or those involving other international AI safety institutes.

* CAISI's creation complements a suite of measures by the government—including the Pan-Canadian Artificial Intelligence Strategy, the proposed Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and the Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems—that collectively aim to support AI development and adoption in Canada while protecting Canadians against risks associated with the technology.

* Canada's AI sector is a key job creator and driver of productivity, innovation and economic growth:

* In 2022–23, there were over 140,000 actively engaged AI professionals in Canada, an increase of 29% compared to the previous year. * Canada has 10% of the world's top-tier AI researchers, the second most in the world. * Canada ranks first globally for year-over-year growth of women in AI (67% growth in 2022–23 alone); first in the G7 for year-over-year growth of AI talent; and, since 2019, first in the G7 for the number of AI-related papers published per capita. * The number of AI patents filed by Canadian inventors increased by 57% in 2022–23 compared to the previous year—nearly three times the G7 average of just 23% over the same period. * In 2022, the Canadian AI sector attracted over \$8.6 billion in venture capital, accounting for nearly 30% of all venture capital activity in Canada. * Canada ranks third in the G7 in total funding per capita raised for AI companies, with more than 670 Canadian AI start-ups and 30 Canadian generative AI companies receiving at least one investment deal valued at more than US\$1 million since 2019.