Mike

State Leaders Discuss Opportunities, Risks of AI
Mentioned in this Story
[Sen. Jerry Cirino](#) (R-Columbus)
[Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted](#) (R)
[Attorney General Dave Yost](#) (R)

State lawmakers, university presidents and industry experts Tuesday gathered in the Atrium of the Statehouse for the first ever Artificial Intelligence (AI) Symposium hosted by the Inter-University Council of Ohio.

Keynote speakers Lt. Gov. Jon Husted and Greg Simpson, retired chief technology officer at GE and author of The Quantum Contingent, mostly highlighted the promise of AI and large language models.

Husted described his first experience using ChatGPT shortly after it was released.

"I remember thinking 'this is going to change everything,' and I know technology ... you know a lot of people like to overhype it, but that's not overhyping it in my mind," Husted said. "It is going to change everything and it's true."

Husted vowed Ohio will be an AI "hub" through data centers, Intel, chips manufacturing and more.

"We've got to lean into this and be great at it, so that no one in Ohio gets left behind," he said.

Simpson also focused on what AI can do for people rather than potential risks. He showed examples of an AI model quickly translating a conversation between people who speak two different languages and another example of an AI model helping a person with blindness navigate a city by using a camera to describe the person's surroundings.

AI, he said, is improving "exponentially."

"You're not going to be replaced by AI, you're going to be replaced by a human that's using AI," he predicted.

Attorney General Dave Yost moderated a panel of deepfakes and disinformation in the 2024 presidential election featuring Sen. Jerry Cirino (R-Kirtland), chair of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, Rep. Tom Young (R-Centerville), chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and Mehtab Kahn, a fellow at Harvard Law School and incoming assistant professor of law at Cleveland State University College of Law.

Kahn went through examples of AI generated political ads, fake statements by politicians, and fake imagery, saying this type of content will proliferate now that AI models are so easy to use.

She noted also that interactive AI models have also been shown to have bias and to try to give users answers the AI expects the person to agree with, though many users may not realize this.

Yost described his recent conversation with an Ohio food blogger who has tried to monetize her content. The person gets "a lot of traffic off of Google," he said, but with the advent of AI, her traffic is taking a hit because AI is filling search results with "garbage" that the blogger has to compete with.

In another story, Yost said his office experimented with trying to get ChatGPT to write a legal brief, but it cited, several times, cases that do not exist.

Despite the shortcomings of AI models and their risks, Yost and the other panelists said companies should not slow up on the development of AI, raising concerns that would mean the technology would be built in another country.

"This is an arms race folks. If we choke this stuff off and put the brakes on and try to prohibit or limit its development in the United States, all that will mean is that it is developed elsewhere by China or Russia or the European Union," Yost said.

Yost suggested regulating them like cars.

"It's illegal, and it's not the manufacturers' fault, if you drive recklessly and run over a pedestrian. It's not the manufacturers' or the cars' fault if you drive drunk and crash into a family going the other way," Yost said. "We need to recognize that many of the harms that we're thinking about … are actually a function of individual people misusing the technology, and I would suggest that as we go forward, let's avoid demonizing the technology which is after all, not good or evil in and of itself, but is good or evil depending on the use that it's put to. We should be looking strongly at holding individual uses responsible [for illegal actions]."

Cirino compared AI to the beginning of Internet and said, "we're already behind, from a legal protection standpoint, with AI."

"The last thing we want are a bunch of legislators who don't fully understand what the issues are or how it works legislating recklessly. We need to go at this very intelligently without artificial intelligence assistance, and make sure that we are providing the right protections," he said.

The full symposium can be found on the Ohio Channel.