

## 24061 Tech giants pledge action against deceptive AI in elections

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Tech giants including Microsoft, Meta, Google, Amazon, X, OpenAI and TikTok unveiled an agreement on Friday aimed at mitigating the risk that artificial intelligence will disrupt elections in 2024.

The tech industry "accord" takes aim at AI-generated images, video and audio that could deceive voters about candidates, election officials and the voting process. But it stops short of calling for an outright ban on such content.

And while the agreement is a show of unity for platforms with billions of collective users, it largely outlines initiatives that are already underway, such as efforts to detect and label AI-generated content.

Fears over how AI could be used to mislead voters and maliciously misrepresent those running for office are escalating in a year that will see millions of people around the world head to the polls. Apparent AI-generated audio has already been used to impersonate President Biden discouraging Democrats from voting in New Hampshire's January primary and to purportedly show a leading candidate claiming to rig the vote in Slovakia's September election.

"The intentional and undisclosed generation and distribution of Deceptive AI election content can deceive the public in ways that jeopardize the integrity of electoral processes," the text of the accord says. "We affirm that the protection of electoral integrity and public trust is a shared responsibility and a common good that transcends partisan interests and national borders."

The companies rolled out the agreement at the Munich Security Conference, an annual gathering of heads of state, intelligence and military officials and diplomats dubbed the "Davos of Defense."

The agreement is a voluntary set of principles and commitments from the tech companies. It includes developing technology to watermark, detect and label realistic content that's been created with AI; assessing the models that underlie AI software to identify risks for abuse; and supporting efforts to educate the public about AI. The agreement does not spell out how the commitments will be enforced.

Its broad scope lacks the specific, enforceable measures many tech critics have pushed for, but likely reflects the challenge of getting 20 different companies on board in such a short timeframe.

Microsoft president Brad Smith said "We all want and need to innovate. We want and need to compete with each other. We want and need to grow our businesses," he said. "But it's also just indispensable that we adhere to a high level of responsibility, that we acknowledge and address the problems that are very real, including to democracy."

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