

Google aims AI at whales, words and well-being

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Google said it was developing ways to use artificial in tracking whales as part of efforts to protect endangered species

Google on Tuesday provided a look at efforts to put artificial intelligence to use for good, from protecting whales to breaking language

barriers.

The [internet giant](#) unveiled projects on AI work teams a week after Google chief executive Sundar Pichai urged a "proportional approach" to regulating the technology.

Among demonstrations on Tuesday was a "bioacoustics" project using AI to help scientists, governments and nonprofit groups track [endangered species](#).

Two years ago, Google partnered with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to track [humpback whales](#) by using AI recognize the sound of whales in audio captured by underwater microphones.

Google on Tuesday announced an alliance with [environmental groups](#) to track critically endangered killer whales in the Salish Sea using AI.

"We trained a deep neural network that automatically and immediately detects orcas and sends alerts to Canadian harbor managers," [Google said](#).

Another AI team showed how Google translation software that already lets smartphones serve as interpreters is being enhanced to power a new feature to transcribe what is being said in real time and provide the results in text.

"With this, your Android mobile phone will effectively turn into an almost real time translator device for long-form speech," Google said.

Google's AI endeavors include infusing cords, headphone cables, clothing drawstrings or other textiles with gesture-sensing capabilities that could allow [electronic devices](#) to be controlled with squeezes or

twists.

Google engineers are also exploring using AI to help with medical diagnostics, such as detecting signs of cancer or eye disease in scans.

Pichai, also boss of Google's parent company Alphabet, argued before an audience at a Brussels think tank, Bruegel, that companies like his own—an internet behemoth valued at \$1 trillion—need to be given a say as governments formulate AI regulatory policy.

AI is seen as an area where developments and applications risk outpacing regulatory measures unless authorities act swiftly.

"There is no question in my mind that [artificial intelligence](#) needs to be regulated," Pichai said, while stressing that Google wants "to offer our expertise, experience, and tools as we grapple with the inevitable tensions and trade-offs."

More information: www.blog.google/technology/ai/protecting-orcas/

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