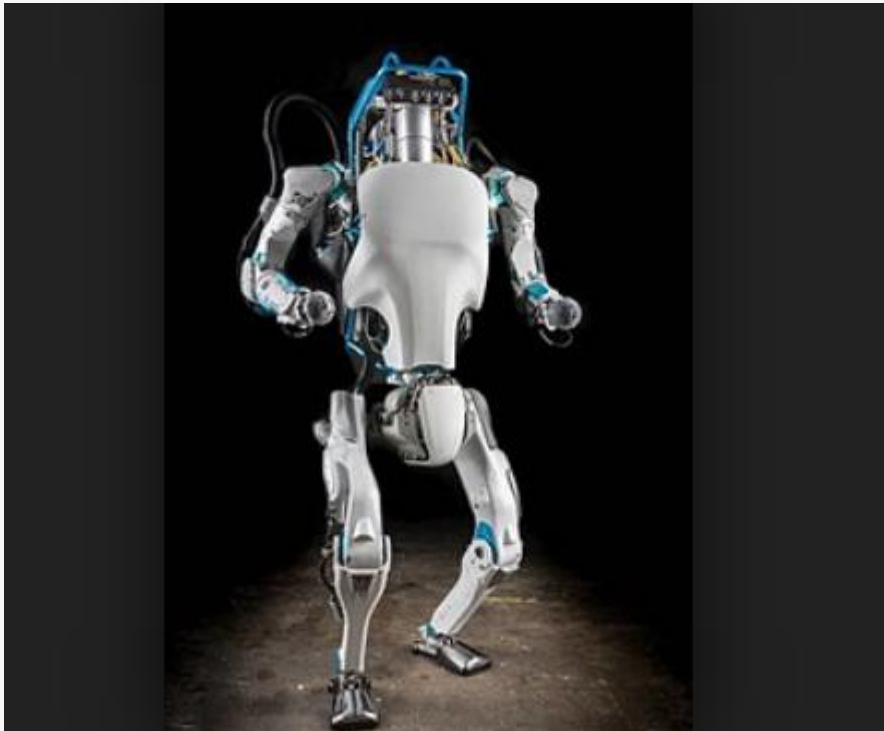# 2,400 Leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) Scientists Sign Pledge Against Killer Robots

written by GEG | July 19, 2018



More than 2.400 scientists who specialize in artificial intelligence (AI) have declared that they will not participate in the development or manufacture of robots that can identify and attack people without human oversight.  The Future of Life Institute is behind the pledge that calls for norms, laws and regulations that stigmatize, shame and effectively outlaw the development of killer robots.

Thousands of scientists who specialise in artificial intelligence (AI) have declared that they will not participate in the development or manufacture of robots that can identify and attack people without human oversight.

Demis Hassabis at Google DeepMind and Elon Musk at the US rocket company SpaceX are among more than 2,400 signatories to the pledge which intends to deter military firms and nations from building lethal autonomous weapon systems, also known as Laws.

The move is the latest from concerned scientists and organisations to highlight the dangers of handing over life and death decisions to AI-enhanced machines. It follows calls for a preemptive ban on technology that campaigners believe could usher in a new generation of weapons of mass destruction.

Orchestrated by the Boston-based organisation, The Future of Life Institute, the pledge calls on governments to agree norms, laws and regulations that stigmatise and effectively outlaw the development of killer robots. In the absence of such measures today, the signatories pledge to "neither participate in nor support the development, manufacture, trade, or use of lethal autonomous weapons." More than 150 AI-related firms

and organisations added their names to the pledge to be announced today at the International Joint Conference on AI in Stockholm.

Yoshua Bengio, an AI pioneer at the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms, told the Guardian that if the pledge was able to shame those companies and military organisations building autonomous weapons, public opinion would swing against them. "This approach actually worked for land mines, thanks to international treaties and public shaming, even though major countries like the US did not sign the treaty banning landmines. American companies have stopped building landmines," he said. Bengio signed the pledge to voice his "strong concern regarding lethal autonomous weapons."

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