

DeepFest Dissects True Potential of AI to Transform Everything from Cancer Medicine to Social Fabric

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, March 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Transformative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies and their potential impact dominated conversations on Tuesday on the second day of DeepFest, the premier meeting place for the global AI ecosystem, at Riyadh Exhibition and Convention Centre in Malham.

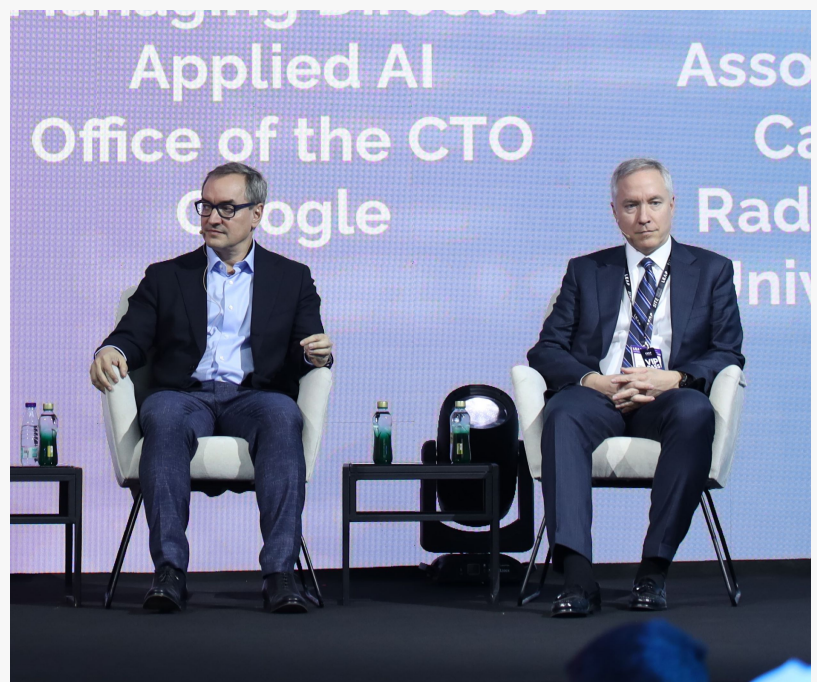
Co-located with LEAP, the world's most-attended tech event, and powered by the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA), the second edition of DeepFest is set to feature 150-plus leading AI experts and 120 global AI companies between now and March 7.

New Drugs in 12 minutes
Brothers Scott and David Penberthy took to the DeepFest Main Stage in a session titled "How AI is Changing Diagnostics, Drug Discovery, and Personalised Care," where they revealed the tragedy of losing their mother to cancer 24 years ago had been the driving force in their disease prevention pursuits.

David Penberthy, a professor of radiation oncology at the University of Virginia, told attendees: "Twenty million



Professor Nicholas Dirks, CEO and President of the New York Academy of Sciences



The Penberthy brothers - Scott (left) and David

developed cancer in 2020. By 2035, that will reach 30-40 million. People are being diagnosed earlier, which is good, but treatment is very expensive. We are now backpedalling to find the genomic sequence, using predictive AI, as we look at preventive measures. The work we are doing in Virginia can affect the people of Riyadh and beyond the next day. The best medical treatment is rooted in AI.”

His brother Scott, Managing Director of the Applied AI office, at Google, added: “Just like you can train AI to identify a missing music track or movie scene, we can train AI to understand the body and identify missing molecules. With this, we are finding new drugs in 48 minutes, in some cases within 12 minutes. We are bringing in the best technology to treat diseases.”

The Panel Nobody Wanted to Exist

On the nearby DeepMedia Stage, a panel discussion entitled “Women in AI in the Media Industry” featured three leading females from the tech industry discussing the challenges of flourishing in a male-dominated industry, insisting there are some things AI will never be able to replace.

Mariam AlMheiri, Meta’s Public Policy Manager for the GCC, was joined by Helen Fullen, Managing Director at Ireland-based Alinea, an early-stage venture development specifically for female entrepreneurs, and Sahar Albaharna, founder of Bahrain startup Women4Impact. The trio agreed they wished there was no need for such women-focused panels, before highlighting various ways to hasten gender equality.

AlMheiri revealed Meta offers new fathers between four and five months of paternity leave, which she believes is as beneficial to a woman’s role in the workplace as it is to a man’s role at home. “By allotting these times to men, it changes social norms, the way we approach caregiving, and how the burden is always put on the woman,” she said. “Just by having more flexible policies, you give families more choice and create better opportunities for both.”

Fullen urged female entrepreneurs to be properly supported during the early stages of their startup journey. “Education is crucial,” she said. “We want to get to a day when we don’t need women-led initiatives because it shouldn’t really matter, but in the early stages we know there are challenges. When pitching, more often than not, it’s still to a room full of men, so women need to be confident they know their numbers.”

Albaharna added: “I really hope the day comes when we don’t need women initiatives and women panels. I personally don’t like cohorts just for women, but we are doing it now because there is a demand. And, of course, if it’s opening up doors, then we are always going to do it.”

DeepFest and LEAP 2024 is evidence that AI cannot do everything, Albaharna added: “People are still craving the human aspect. If you have 170,000 attendees coming to LEAP, that for me shows we still crave the human interaction. AI can’t replace that.”

DeepFest Drills Down to Drive Ecosystem

Michael Champion is CEO of Tahaluf, which co-organises LEAP alongside Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and is a strategic joint venture between Informa PLC, the Events Investment Fund (EIF), and the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones (SAFCSP).

He said: "The way AI is set to transform the way we live, and survive, in the future couldn't have been laid out any clearer in today's packed DeepFest Main Stage agenda. From life-saving drugs being discovered in a matter of minutes to cross-border collaborations to ensure AI becomes a one-for-all and not an all-for-some, uniting world-renowned industry pioneers in Saudi Arabia to drill down into these topics is what will help drive the ecosystem forward."

AI Requires Regulations, But it Can't be One Size Fits All

Michael Kratsios, who served as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for the US Government during the Trump Administration, told delegates that while AI regulations are needed, laws must be scalable to suit industry needs. Kratsios also praised the US for its "leadership in AI" and acknowledged constant cross-country dialogue is crucial – but that any calls for a global governing body to oversee regulations would be premature.

"Collaboration across countries is key," said Kratsios, now managing director of Scale AI, which provides training data for machine learning teams. "There is a belief that we can solve issues by coming together as one. More importantly, we should continue meeting to see how we collaborate to maximise the technology. Look at areas where multiple countries can coordinate and get the best out of AI."

"If you look at Europe, they have tended to take the precautionary approach to AI and look at the potential risks. In the US we have looked to maximise the benefits, rather than trying to minimise risks. Yes, we need regulations, but they have to be sector specific. There are different needs from AI to powering a car than there are for loaning money from a bank, for example. A single national law doesn't make sense. It is about ensuring the technology is more widespread and not less."

AI Will Change the Planet's Social Fabric

On the DeepFest Main Stage, Professor Nicholas Dirks, CEO and President of the New York Academy of Sciences, pondered how the development of AI and large-language models (LLMs) could change the entire social fabric of life – for good or bad.

Explaining how language is intrinsically at the heart of what it means to be human and allows us to think of ourselves as part of a social world, Dirks detailed how AI is already telling us how to live in that world: What to buy, who to network with at events such as LEAP 2024, and whether we are creditworthy.

Yet as AI gets more powerful, it will also better understand cultural context and share that

cultural context, in turn drastically changing the shape of the society we live in and within which we interact. With human feedback aimed at improving AI algorithms already being outsourced to an inexpensive labour workforce, the results AI works with will also be increasingly unbalanced.

Dirks predicted the evolution of society through AI could go one of two ways: "It could lead to us having much more faith in machines because they are built to make better decisions and judgements," he said. "It could, however, produce less faith in machines, whereby we eventually become a society distrusting everything we see projected on a screen. The power of deepfakes, for example, could lead to a desire for us to live in a face-to-face society once again."

For more information visit www.deepfest.com

About LEAP:

Saudi Arabia is putting itself at the forefront of emerging tech through large-scale adoption and ambitious pilot projects. Its ambition will be showcased on a global stage and the Kingdom will become a hub that connects three continents. LEAP is a manifestation of this ambition. A seismic event that accelerates the adoption of technology and transforms Saudi Arabia's economy. Together with LEAP, the Kingdom will see mass tech adoption, a shift away from oil as the principal strategic economic resource, and instead become a regional hub for both traditional and emerging technology.

Saudi Arabia has an endless ambition to shoot for something beyond that thought possible, to achieve a significant impact from game-changing tech and globally disruptive projects and to always keep one eye on the stars.

About Tahaluf:

Headquartered in Riyadh, Tahaluf brings together strategically important commercial communities from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the wider Gulf region, and from around the world to a portfolio of world-class exhibitions and digital platforms.

Tahaluf is a joint venture partnership between Informa PLC, the world's largest tradeshow organiser, the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming and Drones (SAFCSP), and Events Investment Fund (EIF). Sela, the Saudi-owned event production company renowned for its creation of spectacular event experiences, intends to join the joint venture in the near future.

Following the highly successful launches in the Kingdom of award-winning tech events LEAP, Black Hat Middle East, the artificial intelligence event DeepFest, Cityscape Global, the Global Health Exhibition and InFlavour for the food industry, Tahaluf plans to launch further diverse original concept events for the Infrastructure sector, the VC community, and multiple other sectors including Health, Consumer, Aviation, Consumer and Luxury. Tahaluf will also bring iconic Informa brands to Saudi Arabia, including CPHI and Cosmoprof, serving the global pharmaceutical and beauty industries, respectively.

For more information about Tahaluf, visit <https://tahaluf.com>.

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