

AI Update: FCC Hosts Inaugural Forum on Artificial Intelligence

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On November 30, 2018, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) [hosted](#) a forum to discuss artificial intelligence (“AI”) and machine learning. Chairman Ajit Pai moderated the forum’s two main panels “What Is AI and Where Is It Taking Us?” and “Applications of AI and Machine Learning in the Here and Now,” which invited academics, industry professionals, and government affairs specialists to weigh in on the evolving AI ecosystem.

Chairman Pai made clear in his opening [remarks](#) that the purpose of the forum was not to initiate AI regulation at the FCC. He stated: “It’s important to note that this event is about discussion and demonstration. It is not about the FCC dipping its toes in the regulatory waters. These are emerging technologies. And when dealing with emerging technologies, I believe that one of the foundational principles for government should be regulatory humility.” This sentiment of sharing information about new AI issues and best practices was lauded by many of the panelists as the correct approach in the sphere. They explained that to create “AI regulation” would be a particularly challenging endeavor because AI has so many different applications across all different sectors.

Although the Chairman is not looking to AI regulation at the FCC, he does see an important role for the agency to play: facilitating the deployment of 5G. The promise of 5G to advances in AI became a consistent theme among the Chairman, the panelists, and Commissioners Carr and Rosenworcel. The Commissioners delivered remarks at the forum as well.

We have [previously explained](#) the benefits of 5G, including increased capacity and reduced latency in the context of the Internet of Things, and these benefits also profoundly impact AI. AI’s application to 5G is particularly interesting, as many new technologies employing AI will benefit immensely from the power of 5G. In addition, AI could be used to optimize the network and facilitate spectrum usage to help with the expansion of 5G. This means AI has a role to play in making the network itself better for other technologies, including other AI applications that depend on these improved networks to function. So, some AI applications may help 5G networks function better, and other AI applications will benefit from these improved networks.

Panelists discussed utilizing AI to help optimize networks. In essence, AI has the potential to more effectively analyze traffic flow, spectrum usage, and other factors that affect the network’s reliability and functionality. As networks continue to expand and become more complex, utilizing AI may

become a critical component of understanding network architecture and ensuring a well-functioning Internet.

Apart from the network optimization use case, there are myriad examples of AI applications. As the networks continue to improve, we may see new AI applications emerge that were not previously possible because of latency or bandwidth problems. The FCC, academics, and industry players certainly see the importance of 5G to bolstering the promise of AI. Accordingly, it will be important to continue to watch the FCC's ongoing goal to promote 5G by making more spectrum available for the technology and taking other steps to facilitate its deployment.

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