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AI Executive Order - What's Next?

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a complex, fascinating and even mind-boggling technology that has already changed the world. Web searches, email sorting, algorithms using AI are all examples of how AI is already a part of our technological lives. When you type a response to an email and text is suggested for you, that is AI at work. When your LinkedIn profile ads contain content that interests you, that is AI at work.

This week my own fascination with AI intersected in two ways. I just finished reading James Rollins' new book (on my Kindle app, of course), *Crucible: A Thriller* (Sigma Force Novels). I've been a fan of his books for years and have read all of the Sigma Force series of novels. I don't want to be a spoiler for this book but suffice it to say that AI is central to the plot of *Crucible*. As I was deep into the book, President Trump issued an [Executive Order](#) on AI on February 11, 2019.

I'm an avid reader but this week was special because one of my favorite authors wrote a page-turner about AI - it was like hitting the work/life balance lottery. On its face, an Executive Order on AI is big news and signals recognition that the United States wants to continue its focus, development, and strategic vision for the continued development of AI.

So what does the Executive Order do for AI? The Executive Order is titled: Executive Order on Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence. It is broken down into several sections, such as federal investment in AI research and development, data and computing resources for AI research and development, guidance for research of AI applications, AI and the American workforce, and an action plan for protection of the United States Advantage in AI technologies.

The Executive Order has policy language sprinkled throughout addressing privacy and civil liberties issues, notably stating that the United States must foster public trust and confidence in AI technologies and protect civil liberties, privacy, and American values in their application in order to fully realize the potential of AI technologies for the American people.

So how are all these lofty concepts going to be operationalized? The Executive Order calls on federal agencies to mobilize plans and resources to properly budget for AI programs, research and development. There are specific deadlines for various federal agencies to mobilize, prepare reports and come up with strategies and budget proposals to operationalize resources to achieve these strategic goals. Most of the deadlines for the federal agencies are within the next 90-180 days for the agencies to report out their progress.

Some commentators have expressed concern that the Executive Order is long on policy goals and short on implementation details and fails to address critical funding and immigration issues inherent in science and technological innovation and development. The recognition of the necessary investment in AI research and development, encouraging and developing a trained and skilled workforce, and utilizing data to enhance the capabilities of the algorithms that power AI, are all critical to allow continued and responsible growth and enhancement of AI. The power of AI is mind-boggling: it will impact our legal system, our medical technology, the cars we drive, the websites we visit, and the technology we use every day. It is critical that we recognize and develop AI responsibly, ethically, and in ways that enhance society. The challenges of maintaining our privacy and security, integrating existing (and future) privacy and security laws, and protecting our data and infrastructure are all facets of the complex sphere that is AI. AI will continue to fascinate and astound us at breakneck speeds. We must be ready to meet the challenge.

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