

Timnit Gebru's ouster shows how Big Tech dominates AI ethics | Fast Company

By Katharine Schwab

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Timnit Gebru—a giant in the world of AI and then co-lead of Google's AI ethics team—was pushed out of her job in December.

Gebru had been fighting with the company over a research paper that she'd coauthored, which explored the risks of the AI models that the search giant uses to power its core products—the models are involved in almost every English query on Google, for instance. The paper called out the potential biases (racial, gender, Western, and more) of these language models, as well as the outsize carbon emissions required to compute them. Google wanted the paper retracted, or any Google-affiliated authors' names taken off; Gebru refused. After the company abruptly announced Gebru's departure, Google AI chief Jeff Dean insinuated that her work was not up to snuff—despite Gebru's credentials and history of groundbreaking research.

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