



AS IT IS

## US Launches AI Competition to Protect Computer Systems

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The United States has launched a competition for developing artificial intelligence (AI) to find and fix security issues in U.S. government **infrastructure**.

Anne Neuberger is the U.S. government's deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technology.

She told Reuters news agency, "Cybersecurity is a race between offense and defense." She said bad actors are already using AI to identify weaknesses in systems and to build **malicious** software.

A number of U.S. organizations, in healthcare, manufacturing and government, have been targets of **hacking** in recent years. Officials have warned about such threats, especially from foreign actors.

Canada's cybersecurity chief Sami Khoury made similar comments last month. He said his agency had seen AI being used for everything from creating **phishing** emails and writing malicious computer code to spreading disinformation.

The White House said the two-year competition includes around \$20 million in awards. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) will lead the competition. DARPA is the U.S. government body in charge of creating technologies for national security.

The technology companies Google, Anthropic, Microsoft, and OpenAI will make their systems available for the competition, the government said.

The event signals official attempts to deal with an emerging threat that experts are still trying to fully understand. In the past year, U.S. businesses have launched a number of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. These tools permit users to create videos, images, texts, and computer code. Chinese companies have launched similar tools.

Experts say such tools could make it far easier to carry out large hacking campaigns or create false identities on social media to spread lies and propaganda.

Neuberger said the goal of the DARPA AI competition is to build a larger community of cyber defenders who use AI to help increase America's cyber defenses.

The Open Source Security Foundation, a group of experts trying to improve open source software security, will also be involved in the competition. It will make sure the "winning software code is put to use right away," the U.S. government said.

I'm John Russell.

*Zeba Siddiqui reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**infrastructure** – *n.* the basic equipment and structures that are needed for a country function properly

**malicious** – *adj.* having or showing a desire to cause harm to another person

**hack** – *v.* the act of secretly getting access to a computer system in order to get information, cause damage, etc.

**phishing** – *n.* a method of getting sensitive data through an email

