AI INSIGHT FORUM - STATEMENT FROM HOAN TON-THAT, CEO CLEARVIEW AI

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Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Senators Heinrich, Rounds, and Young,

It is an honor and a pleasure to participate in our conversation today, which is at the beginning of a transformative moment in human history. I want to thank the Senators for their foresight to learn about this important topic.

My name is Hoan Ton-That and I'm the founder and CEO of Clearview AI, the top facial recognition company in the world. Our product is used by law enforcement and government agencies to solve crimes, such as child exploitation, murder, money laundering and financial fraud, as well as to investigate threats to national security. It is used in an after-the-fact forensic manner, not in real-time, and only searches public information from the internet.

Every technology goes through 3 phases: innovation, adoption, and then regulation. Today, technologies we take for granted, such as the printing press were highly controversial when they came into the world. Even the Kodak camera, and the word processor were received with fear and criticism.

Like the typewriter, the automobile and the word processor, we went through a lot of controversy early on with our technology. Many were concerned, and rightly so, about the potential for misuse by police, algorithmic bias and inaccuracy, and the loss of privacy.

We worked hard to engage and assuage the fears. For example, we had the accuracy of our algorithm independently tested and verified through the US Government's NIST Facial Recognition Vendor Test. We were the first in our industry to have a mandatory intake form, meaning before any search a law enforcement officer would have to fill out a case number and document the reason for doing a search before conducting one. We were also the first to include a suite of stat-generating and oversight tools in our platform, so agency leadership and elected officials can quickly and fully understand how an agency is using facial recognition. We engaged with the media to build understanding and trust with the public, and proactively sought out members of Congress, and state and local elected officials, to educate them about what our technology does.

Today, we see that these efforts have resulted in a more accurate understanding of facial recognition technology and its positive impact. And that positive impact has been large: After Jan 6th, the FBI and other agencies were able to use Clearview AI to help identify many of those who stormed the Capitol.

When the war in Ukraine started, Clearview AI began offering services to many Ukrainian government agencies. They have used our technology to help identify Russian personnel and infiltrators, prisoners of war, deceased people and to help identify numerous victims and perpetrators of war crimes.

Facial recognition can also help protect the innocent and wrongfully accused. Recently the New York Times reported that a Floridian man was facing 15 years in jail for a case of vehicular manslaughter that he didn't commit. His public defender was able to use Clearview's technology to identify another witness to the case, from the police bodycam video, and after the witness testified, these charges were dropped.

Most recently, a dedicated Homeland Security Investigations task force was able to use Clearview's technology in an operation that led to the identification of 311 missing and exploited children in only 3 weeks. HSI and other agencies were able to conduct multiple child rescues as a result.

Clearview AI is a small company, but over the last few years, we've gained a considerable amount of hard-won experience and spent a lot of time thinking about how facial recognition technology can safely be used to benefit the public interest. There is nothing more rewarding for us than knowing that our technology has been able to help save lives.

Everyone agrees that American regulation of AI technologies should try to strike the right balance–mitigating potential downsides while still enabling society to capture the tremendous benefits that this technological revolution could bring. I believe that if we can dramatically reduce child exploitation and other serious crimes, and substantially enhance national security, by after-the-fact searching of public information with a highly accurate algorithm and strong safeguards, we should design regulation that makes sure we can do that.

We should also design regulation with the knowledge that AI and facial recognition is a key component of national security and defense, as evidenced by the brave Ukranians' ingenuity when applying technologies in conflict. It is of utmost importance to national security for the United States to retain our lead in AI.

Today we are using facial recognition to unlock our phones, verify our identity and increasingly for access control and security purposes. Facial recognition can also be seen as a technology that helps prevent deep-fakes, discover fake social media profiles, and help authenticate real humans to help prevent the upcoming explosion of AI generated misinformation.

It will be important to address the risk of AI being used to impersonate people, including government officials. Facial recognition can potentially distinguish between when a video is real and when it is a deep-fake. This will be increasingly important in future elections to help protect our democracy against disinformation including from malign foreign actors.

We are open to and welcome regulation and oversight into the application of AI in law enforcement and government and look forward to being part of the conversation.

Thank you,
Hoan

HOAN TON-THAT
Founder & CEO, Clearview AI