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Labour unveils AI, cybersecurity goals in King's Speech

The UK's new Labour government pledged to regulate foundation model developers and strengthen cybersecurity disclosure rules for businesses.

By Greg Noone



The UK's new Labour government has announced legislation in the next parliament intended to regulate artificial intelligence. The bill, the government revealed in today's [King's Speech](#), "will seek to establish the appropriate legislation to place requirements on those working to develop the most powerful artificial intelligence models." The proposals build on the previous Conservative government's regulatory framework for AI, which devolved most challenges arising from the technology's use to [market regulators](#), but fell short of [widespread expectations](#) of more comprehensive legislation. The Ada Lovelace Institute welcomed Labour's plans but argued that they should be but a first step toward a more stable regulatory regime for AI in the UK.

"Comprehensive legislation will need to cover sensitive or high-risk AI applications" such as live facial recognition or workplace monitoring applications, said the institute's director, Gaia Marcus. Additionally, Marcus added, the government would "need to introduce new powers, resources and statutory underpinning for regulators and their supporting institutional architecture."





The UK's new Labour government revealed several technology priorities in today's King's Speech. (Photo: YouTube / BBC)

Labour advised to balance regulation with spirit of innovation on AI

Other industry organisations expressed scepticism that new legislation would be able to preserve the spirit of innovation within the UK's nascent AI sector. "Our Labour government is well-advised to tread carefully with its AI bill capturing those who empower the most powerful AI, ensuring not to close market opportunities," said the chief executive of OpenUK, Amanda Brock. "For innovation to prevail, AI must be open."

In addition to its long-awaited legislation on AI, Labour also announced new measures to strengthen national cybersecurity and data exchange. Its Cyber Security and Resilience Bill is expected to resemble the European Union's draft Cyber Resilience Act and force businesses to disclose more data about any cyber incidents they have experienced. The announcement comes in the wake of several large breaches in the public sector – most recently a cyberattack against [two NHS hospital trusts in London](#).

Data-based government a priority in new parliament

The UK government also pledged to harness data to boost economic investment through the passage of a new Digital Information and Smart Data Bill, which would also create a National Underground Asset Register to standardise available information on cables and other subsurface technological assets throughout the country.

The government's legislative proposals were cautiously welcomed by technology vendors and industry associations, including techUK. The group had already begun collaborating with the new Labour administration on several bills, said the group's chief executive Julian David, but warned that there was much work yet to be done on striking a balance between proposals for new consumer protections without stifling innovation.

"Reform to the UK's data laws, including the creation of Digital ID and Smart data schemes alongside new cyber security laws, plans to streamline planning and infrastructure development, encourage investment, and deliver a major shake-up of skills policy and devolution in England all hold promise," said David. "However, there is a huge amount that industry and Government will need to work through. This will include close collaboration with industry as new laws on Artificial Intelligence and Employment Rights are drafted ensuring that we get the right balance between new laws and promoting the economic growth needed for the new Prime Minister to achieve his missions for Government."

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