

Not to be released before 24. January 2023, 0800am

Press Release

Yvonne Hofstetter becomes German member of NATO DARB

German Federal Foreign Office appoints Prof. Yvonne Hofstetter to NATO's Data and AI Review Board DARB

Yvonne Hofstetter, Professor of Digitization and Society at Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences and CEO of 21strategies, will advocate for accountable artificial intelligence at NATO's Data and AI Review Board (DARB). NATO, which has adopted an AI strategy to adhere to six AI principles - lawfulness; responsibility and accountability; explainability and traceability; reliability; governability; and bias mitigation - in the development and use of AI, established their DARB in October 2022. The board is intended to support operationalization of the aforementioned AI principles. Each NATO member state can appoint one representative to the DARB.

As German representative, Hofstetter will advocate that AI be constructed in a bottom-up, value-based engineering approach as early as of the design and development phase. Specifically, she supports AI development according to the new standard ISO/IEC/IEEE 24748-7000:2022 Systems and software engineering - Life cycle management - Part 7000: Standard model process for addressing ethical concerns during system design. Value-based engineering, according to the standard, designs values directly into a software system. "The standard is unique, as it succeeds in the difficult fusion of philosophy and natural sciences," Hofstetter, who is one of the IEEE 7000 pioneers in Germany, said in praise of the model. "But a procedure for how to build values into socio-technical systems is overdue after our societies' poor experience with not-well-designed systems like social networks that undermine democracy or chatbots which learn hate speech. It complements normative efforts from lawmakers, such as the EU AI Act, which has not yet entered into force, though, to regulate AI with a top-down approach."

Since the standard is not self-explaining for technical staff including engineers of AI-based systems, it introduces the new profession of the Value Lead, a person commanding a philosophical education and serving as link between the Humanities and the natural sciences. "Value leads only need to be educated," explains Hofstetter. For the University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhine-Sieg and at request of Prof. Dr. Gary Schaal, Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg, she is preparing to offer Value Lead training still in 2023.

Hofstetter is soundly qualified to her work at NATO DARB. Originally trained as a lawyer, Hofstetter joined the software industry in 1999 and since has been involved in the design and

development of artificial intelligence of all flavors. Her books “Sie wissen alles” (C. Bertelsmann, 2014) and “Das Ende der Demokratie” (C. Bertelsmann, 2016) became bestsellers. „Der unsichtbare Krieg” (Droemer Knaur, 2019) picks out AI for defense as a theme. For her commitment to “AI with guardrails,” Hofstetter was awarded the Theodor Heuss Prize 2018 and appointed an honorary professor of University of Applied Sciences Bonn-Rhine-Sieg in 2020.

NATO DARB's inaugural meeting is scheduled for Feb. 7, 2023.

About 21strategies

21strategies was founded by Prof. Yvonne Hofstetter, Dr. Christian Brandlhuber and Dr. Scott Muller in 2020 and is based in Hallbergmoos, Bavaria, Germany. The company transforms how organizations make strategic and tactical decisions under uncertainty. To aim at their mission, 21strategies provides Third Wave AI. Solutions for the civilian sector include hedge21® for hedging foreign exchange exposure and commodity price risk, and GhostPlay for the defense sector. Both solutions are based on 21strategies' proprietary AI technology tactics21.

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