

# Inventions Vs. Ethics

The world of artificial intelligence (AI) has been in an upheaval for the past few months and began when Sam Altman, a CEO at OpenAI, was fired seemingly out of the blue. OpenAI originally began in 2015 as a non-profit organization. Its goal was to develop new AI technology and is responsible for the creation of ChatGPT. Altman was one of the original chairmen of the company and stayed on the board of directors when OpenAI changed from a non-profit to a for-profit company in 2019.

Altman's connections in the corporate world were partly why Altman being fired in November of last year was so surprising. It even caused outrage and distress within the company. This led to board member

Greg Brockman resigning along with several other employees threatening to resign and go to Microsoft, the company that had offered Altman and Brockman a job running their own team at Microsoft that would be dedicated to AI development and research. Altman was rehired back onto OpenAI only a few days after he was fired. Sara Sinha (11) commented on the situation, "I find the entire situation interesting. OpenAI's board claimed there was a lack of confidence in his ability. However, the OpenAI employees disagreed, which is ultimately the reason for rehiring him." Him being fired is still considered a mystery, but it's believed that ethical disputes between board members may have occurred.

Ethics have always been a complicated topic in the

AI community. For one, some people working in AI would like to be able to invent, test, and research

AI without the limitations caused by ethics-based restriction. However, others are far more cautious when it comes to AI because scientists still do not know what to expect. Bryce Von Kanel (10) brought up an example of AI getting out of hand when he said, "There was an AI that was primarily created for purposes of war, and they told the AI to create potent chemicals. They came back and the AI came up with 40,000 of the deadliest chemicals humanity has ever seen. They took it down and killed the AI." Uncareful usage of AI can lead to conflict. This fear is part of why ethics is so important, but on the other hand, some innovators worry about how ethics inhibit creation. Some OpenAI board members supposedly had issues with Altman regarding him pushing products too quickly and ignoring the ethics of it. The board members worried that Altman was abandoning the principles that OpenAI was founded on and instead was moving to try to turn OpenAI into a bigger corporation. Many suspect tensions may

have been a factor in Altman's firing, but it has not been confirmed by any of the board members. Altman, himself, stated that he was centrist on the issue and wanted to consider the ethics while also striving for better things for AI. The battle around ethics does not end there, however.

As if ethical issues were not enough, OpenAI was sued in December by the New York Times because they were using New York Times articles to train AI. The New York Times sued under the impression that OpenAI committed a violation of copyright laws.

However, the New York Times is not the only group suing OpenAI, as well-renowned authors like John Grisham, Jodi Picoult, George R.R. Martin, Jonathan Franzen, and more are all suing OpenAI because of illegal action on OpenAI's end. These lawsuits tie into the overall conversation around the ethics of AI using people's work to better itself. Emma Martindale (12) stood in solidarity with the New York Times and said, "They

have every right to sue. As far as I know, OpenAI provoked legal action." OpenAI has since argued that using the material available on the internet falls under fair use, and that the New York Times lawsuit is meritless. Many seem to disagree with that stance. While courts have consistently ruled in favor of tech

companies lawsuits

like these, a verdict is still hard to dictate due to how copyright crimes are determined.

When discussing AI and its innovations, inventors want to uphold the public's safety, but they also need the ability to research and invent with full creative liberty. While a conclusion cannot yet be seen, OpenAI and the public both hope for the best outcome possible.