

Summary of “Voices of Innovation: An Analysis of Influential AI Researchers in the United States”

This report uses AI publications data from the past decade to identify 217 of America’s most prolific, widely cited, and impactful AI researchers. As the competition for top AI talent intensifies, understanding the makeup of this select group is imperative.

Most of America’s top AI researchers are men in the later stages of their careers, and the majority work for only a few elite institutions.

- As of September 2022, the top AI researchers in the United States were a homogeneous group in terms of gender, career stage, and institutional affiliation. 94% were men and 6% were women. Most were in the later stages of their careers or retired.
- Over 60% were concentrated in 10 elite universities and top companies.
- The most widely cited researchers, compared to those with the highest number of AI publications or those with the top h-index scores, were disproportionately more likely to work for companies rather than universities.

Most of America’s top AI researchers were born in other countries. As of September 2022, the vast majority stayed in the United States, continuing to work at U.S. universities and companies.

- 70% of all leading AI researchers in the United States were foreign-born or foreign-educated, mostly hailing from China (50 researchers), India (14), or the United Kingdom (10).
- 87% of the foreign-born or foreign-educated leading AI researchers in the United States remained affiliated with a U.S. institution as of September 2022.

Foreign-born AI researchers have higher international research collaboration rates, but regardless of background, America’s top AI researchers most frequently collaborate with counterparts from China.

- Among the top U.S. AI researchers in our dataset, foreign-born or foreign-educated researchers had higher rates of international research collaboration (50%) than their U.S. born/educated counterparts (38%).

For more information:

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