

Tech Giants Unite to Combat Online Child Exploitation with AI-Powered Tools

February 11, 2025



A consortium of leading technology companies, including OpenAI and Discord, has announced the launch of ROOST, a new initiative dedicated to enhancing online safety for children. ROOST will leverage the power of artificial intelligence (AI) to develop and distribute free, open-source tools that can effectively detect, review, and report child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

This collaborative effort, announced at the AI Action Summit in Paris, aims to address the urgent need for innovative solutions to combat the growing threat of online child exploitation. The project will leverage the expertise of its founding partners – including Google, Roblox, and former Google CEO Eric Schmidt – to build scalable and interoperable safety infrastructure specifically designed for the AI era.

“ROOST addresses a critical need to accelerate innovation in online child safety and AI,” said Eric Schmidt in a statement. “By combining the expertise of the different partners and sharing that knowledge with smaller companies and public organizations, we can make it easier to introduce robust online safety measures and make the digital world safer for everyone.”

The project has received an initial investment of \$27 million, which will fund operations for the next four years. ROOST will be administered by the Institute of Global Politics at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.

This initiative comes at a critical time, with reports of suspected online exploitation of children increasing significantly. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, reports of suspected online exploitation of children increased by 12 percent in 2023, reaching over 36.2 million reports.

ROOST will leverage AI technologies to develop and deploy innovative tools that can effectively detect and

mitigate the spread of CSAM online. These tools will be made freely available to smaller companies and non-profit organizations, empowering them to enhance their own online safety measures.

“Offering a platform that is safe and that fosters meaningful connection, especially for young people, is at the center of everything we do,” said Kate Sheerin, head of Discord’s U.S. public policy.

This initiative underscores the growing recognition within the technology sector of the urgent need to prioritize child safety online. By combining the expertise and resources of leading companies and leveraging the power of AI, ROOST aims to make a significant contribution to creating a safer online environment for children.