

Bradley Merrill Thompson Quoted in “NIST Releases New AI Risk Management Framework for ‘Trustworthy’ AI”

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Bradley Merrill Thompson, Strategic Advisor with EBG Advisors and Member of the Firm at Epstein Becker Green, was quoted in *VentureBeat*, in “NIST Releases New AI Risk Management Framework for ‘Trustworthy’ AI,” by Sharon Goldman.

Following is an excerpt:

Today the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) released the first version of its new AI Risk Management Framework (AI RMF 1.0), a “guidance document for voluntary use by organizations designing, developing, deploying or using AI systems to help manage the many risks of AI technologies.”

The NIST AI Risk Management Framework is accompanied by a companion playbook that suggests ways to navigate and use the framework to “incorporate trustworthiness considerations in the design, development, deployment, and use of AI systems.”

Congress directed NIST to develop the AI Risk Management Framework in 2020

Congress directed NIST to develop the framework through the National Artificial Intelligence Act of 2020, and NIST has been developing the framework since July 2021, soliciting feedback through workshops and public comments. The most recent draft had been released in August 2022.

A press release explained that the AI RMF is divided into two parts. The first discusses how organizations can frame the risks related to AI and outlines the characteristics of trustworthy AI systems. The second part, the core of the framework, describes

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four specific functions — govern, map, measure and manage — to help organizations address the risks of AI systems in practice.

Community feedback will be key

In a live video announcing the RMF launch, undersecretary of commerce for technology and NIST director Laurie Locascio said “Congress clearly recognized the need for this voluntary guidance and assigned it to NIST as a high priority.” NIST is counting on the broad community, she added, to “help us refine these roadmap priorities.”

Deputy secretary of commerce Don Graves pointed out that the AI RMF comes not a moment too soon. “I’m amazed at the speed and extent of AI innovations just in the brief period between the initiation and the delivery of this framework,” he said. “Like many of you, I’m also struck by the enormity of the potential impacts, both positive and negative, that accompany the scientific, technological, and commercial advances.”

However, he added, “I’ve been around business long enough to know that this framework’s true value will depend upon its actual use and whether it changes the processes, the cultures, our practices.” ...

Some criticize the RMF’s ‘high-level’ and ‘generic’ nature

While the NIST AI RMF is a starting point, “in practical terms, it doesn’t mean very much,” Bradley Merrill Thompson, an attorney focused on AI regulation at law firm Epstein Becker Green, told *VentureBeat* in an email.

“It is so high-level and generic that it really only serves as a starting point for even thinking about a risk management framework to be applied to a specific product,” he said. “This is the problem with trying to quasi-regulate all of AI. The applications are so vastly different with vastly different risks.”