A New Magna Carta for the Age of AI

Valerie Hudson's Framework for Human Rights, Governance, and Human Flourishing

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At the Organized Intelligence Conference 2026, Valerie Hudson proposed what she described as a **"New Magna Carta for the Age of AI."** Her proposal emerged from the conviction that society stands at a historic crossroads. Just as the original Magna Carta established limits on the power of kings, today's societies must establish limits on the power of increasingly influential AI systems and the companies that control them.

Hudson argued that the future of artificial intelligence is not predetermined. Human beings still have the opportunity and responsibility to shape AI in ways that protect freedom, preserve human dignity, and support flourishing communities. The AI Magna Carta is intended to provide a broad framework for those efforts.

Foundational Principles

The proposal begins with several fundamental assumptions about humanity and technology.

First, human beings possess inherent dignity and value. Human life is not valuable because of productivity, intelligence, or economic contribution. Human dignity exists independently of achievement and must remain the foundation for policy decisions. AI systems, by contrast, have instrumental value only. They may be useful, but they do not possess intrinsic worth and therefore must always remain subject to human control.

Second, human flourishing should be the ultimate goal of technological development. Flourishing involves the development of human capabilities, relationships, freedom, creativity, responsibility, and well-being. Technologies that weaken these capacities or exploit human vulnerabilities threaten rather than promote flourishing.

Third, Hudson emphasized that human beings possess natural cognitive limitations and vulnerabilities. Technologies that manipulate, exploit, magnify, or monetize those vulnerabilities can undermine individual freedom and democratic society. AI governance must therefore focus not only on technological capabilities but also on the effects of those systems on people and communities.

Project Control

The first major component of the AI Magna Carta is what Hudson termed **Project Control**.

This project seeks to answer a foundational question: Can the most advanced AI systems actually be controlled and understood by human beings? Hudson argued that current large language models present growing challenges related to interpretability, transparency, and control. Before society continues pursuing increasingly powerful AI systems, governments should invest in large-scale efforts to determine whether these technologies remain controllable and accountable.

Until that question is resolved, she recommended extreme caution regarding systems capable of recursive self-improvement or enhanced autonomous behavior. If AI systems cannot reliably remain under human control, they must be treated as potentially existential threats.

Project Contingency

The second pillar, **Project Contingency**, focuses on societal preparedness.

Hudson argued that governments should prepare now for the possibility of AI-enabled crises, including large-scale cyberattacks, infrastructure failures, and biological threats. Rather than assuming catastrophic scenarios are unlikely, societies should invest in resilience and preparedness. She pointed to Finland as a model of national readiness and urged states and local governments to begin developing contingency plans that strengthen social resilience in the face of technological disruption.

Importantly, she noted that preparedness is not solely a federal responsibility. Communities, states, institutions, and civil society organizations all have important roles to play in building resilience.

Project Legal Accountability

The third major pillar, **Project Legal Accountability**, centers on responsibility and governance.

Hudson argued that AI must never become a mechanism for avoiding accountability. Human beings and institutions must remain responsible for decisions made with AI assistance. Citizens should have access to transparency, legal protections, and meaningful recourse when AI systems affect critical areas of life. Companies, developers, and organizations cannot be permitted to shift responsibility onto algorithms.

This principle reflects one of the Magna Carta's central themes: technological power must remain accountable to democratic institutions, legal systems, and public oversight.

The Role of Citizens and Civil Society

A defining feature of the AI Magna Carta is its emphasis on public participation. Hudson repeatedly stressed that governments alone cannot create a just AI future. Civil society organizations, faith communities, educators, local leaders, and ordinary citizens must participate in shaping AI governance.

Rather than accepting terms and conditions imposed by powerful technology companies, citizens must help establish the rules by which AI operates. Public deliberation, accountability, and broad participation are essential to ensuring that AI development aligns with human needs rather than purely commercial interests.

Conclusion

The AI Magna Carta offers a comprehensive vision for governing artificial intelligence in service of humanity. It is grounded in the belief that human dignity is fundamental, that flourishing is the ultimate measure of progress, and that technology must remain accountable to democratic institutions and the rule of law. Hudson's proposal calls on governments, communities, and citizens to act now while meaningful choices remain available. The goal is not to stop innovation, but to ensure that innovation serves human beings rather than diminishing the freedoms, relationships, and values that make flourishing possible.

For additional information on the AI Magna Carta, please visit their website: AI Magna Carta