

## ***ASIMOV Meetup Ignites Provocative Debate on Patents, IP, and Data Privacy***

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**Dubai, UAE, May 22, 2024** – The sixth ASIMOV Meetup, held on May 17, 2024, at Coders HQ in Emirates Towers, sparked a lively debate on patents, intellectual property (IP), and data privacy. The event was generously supported by the UAE Artificial Intelligence Office, who provided the venue. This engaging event, the first ASIMOV Meetup at Coders HQ and the second to feature a panel discussion, drew a passionate crowd eager to learn from leading minds in tech, law, and academia.

Moderated by Talal Thabet, CEO and co-founder at Haltia.AI, the panel debate featured four distinguished speakers:

- **Dr. Said Al-Dahri:** Director of the Center for Future Studies at the University of Dubai, AI ethicist, and published author.
- **Ahmad Saleh:** Partner and Head of Innovation for Patents and Industrial Property at Al Tamimi & Company.
- **Tony Evans:** AI researcher and marketing effectiveness specialist, former Meta executive.
- **Arto Bendiken:** Open-source advocate, co-founder of Haltia.AI, and expert in knowledge graph technology.

### **Diverse Perspectives on Patents and IP**

Ahmad Saleh kicked off the discussion by asserting the critical role patents play in protecting innovations. He distinguished between patents and copyrights, explaining that while abstract matters like algorithms and mathematical methods cannot be patented, concrete systems and applications of these concepts can be. He mentioned compelling statistics from an MIT study demonstrating the significant financial advantage startups with patents enjoy.

Dr. Said Al-Dahri offered a contrasting perspective, advocating for a hybrid approach that leverages both patents for core technologies and open-source elements to encourage broader innovation and collaboration. He cited Meta's open-sourcing of their Llama models as a successful example.

Arto Bendiken, a strong proponent of open source and the public domain, emphasized the collaborative nature of software development and questioned the effectiveness of patents in stimulating genuine innovation. He suggested that for many startups, publishing research openly can be a more effective strategy.

Tony Evans provided a balanced viewpoint, acknowledging the merits of both open-source and patented technologies. Drawing on his experience at Meta, he shared insights into the practical challenges startups face in navigating the patent landscape and the importance of tailoring an IP strategy to each company's resources and goals.

## **Shifting Gears to Data Privacy**

The conversation then transitioned to data privacy, a topic of heightened scrutiny since the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

Dr. Said Al-Dahri expressed concerns about the state of data privacy, citing the recent litigation against OpenAI for violating GDPR regulations. He stressed the importance of "privacy by design" and prioritizing ethical data practices from the outset. He also highlighted Gartner's prediction that by the end of 2024, 75% of the world's population will have their personal data covered under modern privacy regulations.

Tony Evans discussed Meta's efforts to be transparent about data uses and empower users with more control. He mentioned their oversight board and transparency tools that allow users to understand why they see specific advertisements. He criticized some competitors for creating an illusion of superior privacy practices while simultaneously running substantial ad businesses.

Arto Bendiken argued that users have a responsibility when it comes to data privacy and suggested that AI could be used to help users better understand terms of service. He warned about the increasing risks posed by generative AI, such as deepfakes and voice cloning, which will certainly lead to a decrease in personal information shared online.

Ahmad Saleh advised founders to integrate "security by design" into their products and prioritize transparency in how they handle user data. He discussed the trend of increasing regulations aimed at ensuring developers incorporate security features and disclose all aspects of their software. He emphasized the need for companies to obtain clear user consent and maintain robust data-sharing policies to protect confidentiality.

## **Regulation and Self-Regulation: Striking a Balance**

Dr. Al-Dahri addressed the balance between regulation and self-regulation, acknowledging that industries often resist self-imposed limitations. He cited the European Union's AI Act as an example of proactive regulation designed to mitigate potential risks associated with AI. He emphasized that proper regulation can foster, not stifle, innovation, contrary to the concerns of some large tech companies.

Arto Bendiken presented a critical viewpoint on the EU AI Act, arguing that it serves as a cautionary tale for AI regulation, similar to New York's BitLicense for cryptocurrencies. He highlighted the difficulties faced by startups, such as Mistral, who had to lobby hard against provisions that would criminalize open-source AI development. He pointed out the significant compliance costs associated with the act's lengthy document, potentially exceeding the billions spent on GDPR compliance. Arto suggested such costs could drive innovation away from regions with stringent regulations.

## **Conclusion: A Look Forward**

The ASIMOV Meetup provided a platform for a diverse range of perspectives on intellectual property monopoly, the role of open source, and ethical considerations surrounding data privacy.

The discussion underscored that there's no single solution, and continuous dialogue is necessary. The importance of innovation, collaboration, and ethical considerations in the ever-evolving tech landscape was firmly established. This exchange of ideas highlighted the

need for ongoing discussions and well-considered approaches to navigate the complexities of patents and data privacy in technology.

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### **About ASIMOV Meetup:**

The ASIMOV Meetup is dedicated to connecting the UAE's AI and tech social graph. It has rapidly grown into a leading event for the UAE's tech community, sparking new friendships, startup formations, and successful job placements, underscoring the event's impact on the local tech ecosystem. *"The ASIMOV Meetups have become a vital platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration, helping newcomers to Dubai integrate and thrive in our vibrant tech community,"* Talal Thabet, CEO of Haltia.AI.

For more information about the ASIMOV Initiative and upcoming meetups, please visit <https://asimov.forum> or <https://www.meetup.com/asimov-meetup/>