

To make ethical choices, Googlers need to know what we're building. Right now we don't. So we, the undersigned, are calling for a Code Yellow<sup>1</sup> on Ethics & Transparency at Google.

Our industry has entered a new era of ethical responsibility: the choices we make matter on a global scale. **Yet most of us only learned about project Dragonfly through news reports early August.** Dragonfly is reported to be an effort to provide Search and personalized mobile news to China, in compliance with Chinese government censorship and surveillance requirements. Eight years ago, as Google pulled censored websearch out of China, Sergey Brin explained the decision, saying "in some aspects of [government] policy, particularly with respect to censorship, with respect to surveillance of dissidents, I see some earmarks of totalitarianism." Dragonfly and Google's return to China raise urgent moral and ethical issues, the substance of which we are discussing elsewhere.

Here, we address an underlying structural problem: currently we do not have the information required to make ethically-informed decisions about our work, our projects, and our employment. That the decision to build Dragonfly was made in secret, and progressed even with the AI Principles in place makes clear that the Principles alone are not enough. **We urgently need more transparency, a seat at the table, and a commitment to clear and open processes: Google employees need to know what we're building.**

In the face of these significant issues, **we, the undersigned, are calling for a Code Yellow addressing Ethics and Transparency**, asking leadership to work with employees to implement concrete transparency and oversight processes, including the following:

1. An ethics review structure that includes rank and file employee representatives;
2. The appointment of ombudspeople, with meaningful employee input into their selection;
3. A clear plan for transparency sufficient to enable Googlers an individual ethical choice about what they work on; and
4. The publication of "ethical test cases", an ethical assessment of Dragonfly, Maven, and Airgap GCP with respect to the AI Principles; and regular, official, internally visible communications and assessments regarding any new areas of substantial ethical concern.

Signed,

---

<sup>1</sup> A Code Yellow is a standardized process in Engineering for addressing new or long-simmering business-critical problems that span multiple groups. A Code Yellow includes: an executive responsible for the process; an overall owner; a clear list of objectives to be resolved before closing the Code Yellow; and weekly (or more frequent) updates to any interested parties.