

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2024

Sundar Pichai  
Chief Executive Officer  
Google  
1600 Amphitheater Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

While artificial intelligence (AI) offers exciting opportunities in technological advancement and has the potential to enhance access to new information, we write to voice our concern regarding AI-generated responses through Google's new AI Overviews feature.

According to the Pew Research Center, 65 percent of U.S. adults report getting their news from Google's search engine.<sup>1</sup> Google Trends data shows that Americans often look to Google for reliable information about politics and elections.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, over half of U.S. adults report using the internet to look for health or medical information.<sup>3</sup> Given the rising threat of misinformation and disinformation online, it is critical that Americans are directed to authoritative, accurate resources when using Google's platform.

The AI Overviews feature is intended to provide an AI-generated snapshot with key information accompanied by web links. However, reporting has already found the feature to provide misleading information from a wide range of untrustworthy sources.<sup>4</sup> These sources often include satirical sites, or at worst, long-debunked conspiracy postings. In one response to the question "how many rocks should I eat," Google's AI Overviews feature told users to eat at least one rock a day for vitamins and minerals, citing advice from the satirical site, The Onion.<sup>5</sup> In another example, when users searched for how many Muslim presidents the United States has had, the feature responded that "the United States has had one Muslim president, Barack Hussein Obama".<sup>6</sup>

We appreciate Google's efforts to fix these errors by improving the feature through continued testing, taking down responses that violate the company's content policies, and labeling AI-generated responses as experimental.<sup>7</sup> However, more must be done to adequately ensure that Google can remain a trustworthy and reliable source of information for Americans.

To better understand the steps your company is taking to ensure Google prioritizes reputable sources of information, we request your responses to the following questions no later than August 1, 2024:

1. How does Google's AI Overviews feature determine if an overview would be helpful to the user, synthesize information from across the web, and choose which information to include in the provided summary of key insights?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/01/12/more-than-eight-in-ten-americans-get-news-from-digital-devices/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://apnews.com/projects/election-results-2024/google-trends/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db482.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/google-ai-overviews-96e763ea2a6203978f581ca9c10f1b07>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/31/well/live/google-ai-health-information.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/05/24/google-criticized-as-ai-overview-makes-errors-like-saying-president-obama-is-muslim.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://blog.google/products/search/ai-overviews-update-may-2024/>

2. Can businesses optimize their content, regardless of accuracy, to be more likely to be included in AI Overviews summaries?
3. How has the rate of Americans using the Google search feature changed since the AI Overviews feature was rolled out? Please provide specific data trends with respect to searches about elections and political information, health or medical information, and current events.
4. What existing fact-checking and content policies does Google extend to the AI Overviews feature? How does Google enforce these policies to prevent dissemination of misinformation and disinformation?
5. How does Google warn users that AI Overviews could be providing misinformation and disinformation? Has the company increased the presence of warning labels regarding misinformation and disinformation since launching AI Overviews? If so, please describe how. If not, please explain why.
6. What is the company's current capability and response timeline regarding the identification, vetting process, and removal of misinformation and disinformation provided through AI Overviews?
7. How many users have used the feedback feature to report misleading information provided through AI Overviews? How does Google use this feedback to improve the accuracy of information provided in future searches?
8. Google spokesperson Colette Garcia said in a statement that the company is "taking swift action where appropriate under our content policies and using these examples to develop broader improvements to our systems." Please elaborate on what these actions are and the status of any improvements to the AI Overviews feature.
9. What specific steps is Google taking to ensure that health-related search results through AI Overviews are clinically accurate and scientifically based? Are personnel at Google aware of any instances where health-related search results from AI Overviews resulted in bodily harm to a user?
10. How is Google working with relevant government entities, including the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), to ensure that only accurate information is provided through AI Overviews, particularly with respect to information about voting and elections?
11. What steps does Google plan to take to make clear what sources are being used to generate each part of an AI Overview, since different sources of information may have different degrees of trustworthiness?

We look forward to hearing your responses and welcome a briefing from your team on this issue.

Sincerely,



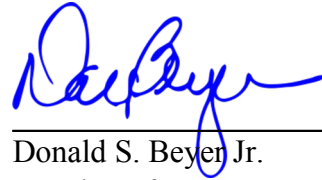
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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress