



Question Time assembles panel of AI industry stooges for tonight's special episode

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Question Time

BBC's *Question Time* is at it again – this time, the show has put together [a homogeneously pro-AI panel](#) for tonight's special on the environmentally ruinous technology.

Green leader Zack Polanski went so far as to speculate that the entire episode was bought and paid for by the AI lobby. Likewise, journalist Caroline Cadwalladr characterised the show as laundering AI's image in a similar manner to its performance with Nigel Farage.

Long-time readers will already be familiar with the *Canary*'s distaste for the national broadcaster's flagship panel show. *Question Time* has previously faced allegations of [blocking pro-Palestine audience members](#), [mis-labelling panelists](#) to massage right-wing images, and [biasing its audiences against the left](#), to name but a few instances.

So, really, presenting a grab-bag of AI shills and calling it a panel is par for the course.

Could we not get Skynet?

So, who exactly has *Question Time* dragged up to face a light grilling from Fiona Bruce at 9pm tonight? The [show posted](#):

Joining Fiona on the panel are Darren Jones, Julia Lopez, Mo Gawdat, Laura Gilbert, and Victor Riparbelli

Let's break that down, shall we?

Darren Jones is the Labour MP for Bristol North West. Whilst he's been [critical of companies like Royal Mail](#) using AI to monitor employees, he's also been a champion of the technology, particularly in the form of ChatGPT-style large-language models. Oh, and he dismissed worries about job losses, [which we're already seeing](#)

Julia Lopez is the Tory shadow technology secretary. She's [previously criticised the government](#) for its apparent alignment with an EU act which attempts to regulate AI. Likewise, she's also criticised Ed Miliband's environmental protection policies for [stifling the growth of AI companies](#). Noticing a pattern here?

Mo Gawdat was [once the chief business officer for Google X](#), the company's pie-in-the-sky research division. On multiple occasions, he's called for humanity to hand over control of society to AI, claiming "it may actually become our salvation." This is a technology currently [known for being unable to count fingers](#) by the way.

Laura Gilbert is the senior director for AI and innovation [at the Tony Blair Institute](#). That's the same Tony Blair Institute, which took over [£250m from Trump-buddy Larry Ellison](#), owner of software company Oracle.

Last but not least, Victor Riparbelli is [co-founder and CEO of SynesthesiaIO](#). Synesthesia [bills itself as](#) "the world's #1 AI video creation platform".

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Question Time - Not one critical voice

Fab, so our balance here ranges between "enthusiastic support, with caveats" to "we should crown AI as king of the world". Oh, and half of them stand to make a bunch of money from widespread AI adoption, too. Fantastic, no notes - the BBC has outdone itself here.

In reaction to the flagrant bias on display, Green leader Zack Polanski [called out the Tony Blair Institute's](#) ties to the AI business:

Oracle's £250m gift to the Tony Blair Institute appears to buy you an entire Question Time episode.

Likewise, journalist Caroline Cadwallaur pointed out the similarity to *Question Time's* past indiscretions:

So you know what [@bbcquestiontime](#) did with Farage? They're now doing it with AI.

This "expert" panel on AI is a disgrace: not one critical voice.

She also highlighted the [incredibly leading nature of the questions](#) the show posted in the run-up to its special episode. *Question Time* asked:

How has AI changed your life? Do you use it to help meet deadlines at work or school?

So do you like AI, or do you love it? Well, having [lost my job to an incompetent robot](#) I love how much free time I have to spend at home.

Theft and destruction

Just in case tonight's *Question Time* fails to acknowledge the problems with AI, here are just a couple.

Coupled with the threat to workers, AI is also a monumental threat to creatives. Generative AI relies on training from a vast well of data, which companies rarely bother to come by legally. As the [Good Law Project explained](#)

This fake art isn't just produced by algorithms that are trained with vast amounts of energy and by people paid poverty wages. It also depends on AI giants using creative work and refusing to pay for it. Companies like Meta and OpenAI are hoovering millions of copyright books, songs and films into their AI tools without permission – creative work that the companies admit they may not be able to afford if they were actually paying for it.

Beyond this, widespread AI adoption also comes at a huge cost to the already dying climate. For example, the Yale School of the Environment published research on the amount of energy it takes to power traditional computing vs AI. [It found that](#)

A.I. use is directly responsible for carbon emissions from non-renewable electricity and for the consumption of millions of gallons of fresh water, and it indirectly boosts impacts from building and maintaining the power-hungry equipment on which A.I. run.

So sure, you might be jobless and thirsty on a boiling earth, but at least you'll be able to watch an AI video of Homer Simpson making passionate love to Hank Hill.

Let's see if the *Question Time* panel gets round to that.

Featured image via the Canary

By [Alex/Rose Cocker](#)

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