The world's first ‘AI Safety Summit’ has ended with a series of agreements reached among the 29 governments that attended. The Bletchley Declaration committed the signatories to ensuring the safe development of AI, recognising risks related to transparency, fairness, accountability, safety, ethics, privacy and data protection. A further agreement on AI safety testing was signed by 10 countries, including the UK, US and major European states as well as by leading technology companies. Countries also agreed to support a report on frontier AI led by Professor Yoshua Bengio. It will be published ahead of the next summit in France in a year's time.

Apple, Meta and TikTok are appealing against the EU’s designation of their services as ‘gatekeepers’ under the Digital Markets Act. Meta is arguing that, while Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp qualify as gatekeepers, its Messenger and Marketplace services are out of scope. Apple considers its App Store to be not one but five distinct marketplaces offered across five devices – iPhones, iPads, Macs, Apple TVs and Apple watches. The company is making a similar case for its iOS operating system and Safari browser. TikTok owner ByteDance contends that the EU has based the designation on a global market capitalization from business lines ‘that do not even operate in Europe’. Google and Microsoft have decided not to appeal.

The Australian competition regulator, the ACCC, has released its latest report for the digital platform services inquiry, concluding that new competition laws were required. The report claims that the risk of harmful behaviour such as invasive data collection and consumer lock-ins had increased with the growth of the major technology platforms, whose significant market power enabled practices which reduced customer choice and deterred innovation at competitors. ‘Our proposed reforms include a call for targeted consumer protections and service-specific codes to prevent anti-competitive conduct by particular designated digital platforms’, said ACCC Chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb.

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Internet use does not appear to harm mental health, according to a new study. Research from the Oxford Internet Institute said there was no evidence of widespread harm from online activities such as browsing social media, nor that certain groups are more at risk. Professor Andrew Przybylski, one of the paper’s authors pointed out that the data necessary to establish a causal link was ‘absent’ without more cooperation from tech companies. ‘The best data we have available suggests that there is not a global link between these factors’. He suggested that any legislation aimed at addressing mental health problems caused by online activity would need to be based on much more conclusive evidence. The paper, ‘Global Well-Being and Mental Health in the Internet Age’, studied data on 2.4 million people aged 15-89 in 168 countries between 2005 and 2022.

Digital payment services in Australia will be regulated by the country’s central bank for the first time, with legislation due before parliament shortly. Digital wallets from companies like Apple, Google and Tencent have become very popular but have not, up to now, been covered by Australian payments law. A government spokesman said the aim was to ensure that the increasing use of digital payments should occur ‘in a way that promotes greater competition, innovation and productivity’.

Funding for European technology companies will almost halve in 2023, according to venture capital group Atomico. This year tech start-ups in Europe are expected to raise $45 billion, down from $82 billion in 2022. The shortfall is due to reduced funding from US investors amid a global fall in venture capital investment since the pandemic and the impact of rising interest rates. However, investment in European tech companies remained 18 per cent higher than in 2020 and the firm sees a more stable investment environment ahead.