

Discrimination in AI-based systems: tackling algorithmic discrimination



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THE PROBLEM

If used correctly, algorithmic decision-making has the potential to be both beneficial and valuable to modern society. Yet, the risk of discrimination resulting from the use of these automated systems is substantial and widely acknowledged.

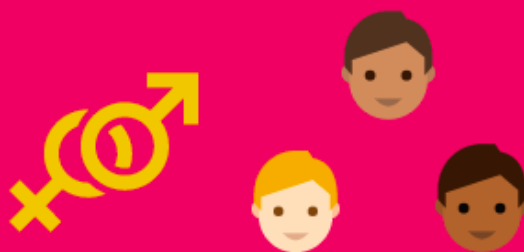
There is a plethora of cases of algorithmic decision-making gone wrong, and these span across a wide-range of sectors. This research focuses on an instance in which facial-analysis software incorrectly assumed the gender and sexuality of numerous individuals.

Research carried out by the Gender Shades project identified that Microsoft, IBM and Face ++, all of whom offer 'gender classification products', had difficulties in identifying subjects accurately (Gender Shades, 2018).

This project grouped subjects by gender and skin type. In this particular instance, it was found that Microsoft had difficulties in correctly identifying the gender of darker skinned subjects, IBM struggled with identifying darker skinned females and Face ++ frequently 'misgendered' female subjects (Gender Shades, 2018).

The lack of transparency provided in instances such as this, particularly with regards to Face ++ is yet another reason for the growing distrust of artificially intelligent systems.

THE CASE STUDY



THE SOLUTION

With the exponential growth of artificial intelligence and the evolution of an 'algorithmic society' (The Community Research Development Information Service (CORDIS), 2020), it is integral that current legislation and regulatory frameworks have either adapted to, or are able to adapt to accommodate these technological advancements.

The first line of defence in tackling discrimination, particularly within automated decision-making systems is via legal measures such as legislation, regulation and policy.



This work proposes that reform to the law is necessary in order to properly safeguard against the risks of discrimination posed by the increasing use of automated systems. Continuous and widespread use of AI and other intelligent systems in order to assist with everyday tasks is inevitable: any attempt to stop this is counterproductive and futile.

Therefore, it is recommended that one part of a multi-faceted approach in dealing with this problem is to begin by modifying the law in such a way that it is more suited to adequately protect against the risks posed by these automated systems.

CONCLUSION

