

#EqualAI

*Bulletin on Bias & Artificial Intelligence:
Issue 8, October 2020*

Spotlight of the Week: David Dorfman



“AI holds both promise and peril, but the question is no longer whether AI is good or bad. The question is whether we can ensure that automated systems, which are already augmenting human decision-making in countless seen and unseen contexts, perform in accordance with our values. America’s greatness is rooted in the fact that we’re defined not by who we are, but what we stand for. So as the global AI Race unfolds, we must measure success not solely in terms of quantity of data, but also the quality of outputs. The choice before us is clear: we can either lead the world in developing ethical and explainable algorithms, or we can resign ourselves to a dystopia of automated discrimination. The future of civil rights may well depend on the path we choose.”

- *David Dorfman, Legislative Director & General Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives*

Hot Topics in Business and Technology 🔥

- **How AI is powering a more helpful Google:** Google introduced new features for its search engine, including AI programs to identify a song title when a person hums its tune, signaling expanding search capacities beyond traditional language processing (10/14).
- **The Washington Post introduces AI-powered election results:** *The Washington Post* announced that it will provide timely election updates through Heliograf technology, which will automatically insert results updates for House, Senate, and presidential races into The Post’s political podcasts. Listeners will hear state-specific results personalized to their location(10/13).
- **Microsoft takes on AI Accessibility:** Microsoft announced its partnership with a number of nonprofits to increase AI inclusivity through expanding the data representation of people with various abilities. This comes as part of their

effort to enhance accuracy of AI-based tools like vision and voice interfaces to people with disabilities, as a current “data desert” on that population exists in AI development (10/12).

- **The Latest Machine Learning: Data Not Required?:** A study from the University of Waterloo introduced the “less than one shot” or LO-Shot AI learning model. While machine learning has been characterized by its need for extensive examples to recognize something, making “technology computationally expensive— and very different from human learning,” researchers propose that AI models should accurately recognize more objects than the number of examples (i.e. data points) it was trained on (10/16).
- **Twitter announces that it will flag premature content about next month’s election outcomes:** The latest move from the social media giant to prevent disinformation about the election from spreading on its platform (10/9).
- **BMW releases Code of Ethics on the use of AI:** Building on the requirements formulated by the EU for trustworthy AI, the BMW Group announced seven principles covering the use of AI within the company (10/13).

AI & Public Health

- **Dutch experts find resistance to independent AI health technology:** A study published in the *Journal of the American College of Radiology* found that 78% of women oppose using AI to interpret mammograms without the supervision of a radiologist.
 - “The findings illustrate that even if such algorithms are ready for primetime, radiology providers may have work to do convincing patients of their efficacy” (10/13).
- **Researchers explore voice recognition technology to diagnose coronavirus infections, dementia, and depression** A *Nature* article reviews a number of research groups using AI and machine-learning to find vocal biomarkers of a spectrum of health conditions, with a significant focus on COVID-19 (9/30).
- **Australian and New Zealand scientists use AI to predict heart disease risk:** Scientists have developed and trained an AI system to predict a person's risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) by looking at the retinas of their eyes (10/13).
- **COVID-19 hinders AI development:** Internal data from Google analyzed by The Information demonstrates a concerning trend that engineers are reporting less productivity during coronavirus shutdowns.
 - The percentage of the company’s engineers that felt they had been highly productive fell down 8% points from March to June due to the shutdown, finding it more difficult to handle their workloads while working remotely (10/12).
- **Facebook & Vaccines:** Facebook announced on Tuesday that it will ban anti-vaccine ads in an effort to combat misinformation and support public health experts. CEO Mark Zuckerberg also announced Monday that Facebook would be expanding its hate speech policies to ban any content that “denies or distorts the Holocaust.”

US Federal and State Government News

- **AI Commission Pushes for DoD to Focus on AI:** The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence recommended to President Trump and

Congress that the DoD should elevate the role of its chief technology officer and open a CTO office within the intelligence community. This comes as part of their strategy to improve U.S. AI adoption, increasing competitiveness and security in staying ahead of a global arms race (10/14)

- **FCC will move to regulate social media:** FCC announced plans to regulate social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter by reinterpreting Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, consistent with the President's May [Executive Order](#). Chairman Ajit Pai argued that social media giants lack "a First Amendment right to a special immunity denied to other media outlets, such as newspapers and broadcasters" (10/14).

AI Around the World 🌐

- **Pakistan becomes the latest country to ban TikTok:** The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority announced their decision on Friday to ban TikTok "in view of a number of complaints from different segments of the society against immoral/indecent content." Their announcement has prompted backlash from government critics, however, who claim that the decision is more political than ethical (10/11).
- **Korea addresses its lack of women in AI sector:** A recent state-run agency report called for government action to cultivate women "digital experts" in order to remedy the country's shortage and boost Korea's competitiveness in the tech and AI industry; Korea has the lowest quantitative and qualitative competitiveness in AI experts among the three Northeast Asian countries of Korea, China and Japan (10/11).
- **India accelerates AI use:** Intel India announced their partnership with IIIT Hyderabad, Public Health Foundation of India and the Telangana government to create the applied AI research center, INAI. The institute is meant to "accelerate" India's leadership in AI and leverage AI to come up with solutions to India's population challenges in healthcare and smart mobility (10/12).
- **EU limits mass surveillance:** The EU placed limits on the mass surveillance powers of police and intelligence agencies last Tuesday. The European Court of Justice ruled that EU countries are only permitted to carry out the transmission and retention of communications data when there is a "serious threat to national security." The bloc's highest court also included in their judgment that such practices must be subject to review by "a court of an independent administrative authority" (10/7).

Op-Eds: Top Picks of the Week 🗣️

- **What *The Social Dilemma* left out:** The trending Netflix original *The Social Dilemma*, which highlights the unethical features of tech's addictive properties and algorithmic bias, was called out by Mozilla for omitting key leaders on ethical tech, specifically women and people of color. (10/1).
- **The World Economic Forum published guidelines for how to use AI hiring tools to reduce bias in recruiting:** The World Economic Forum's Jobs Reset Summit released an approach (10/13).
- **Why we need AI to save Green Energy:** The International Business times offers their position on the future of green energy: that AI is necessary to

protect the green energy grid by protecting against future cyberattacks and by turning the grid into a routable energy network (10/10).

- **A Practical Guide to Building Ethical AI**: HBR dives into key tactics businesses can take to build trustworthiness around their usage of AI, including identifying existing infrastructure that a data and AI ethics program can leverage and taking insights from the healthcare industry to inform ethical dilemmas around consumer data privacy and control (10/16).

Upcoming Events 🍻

- WSJ Tech Live: October 19-21.
- MIT Technology Review's EmTech Annual Conference: October 19-22.
- 'The Jobs Reset Summit ("to address concerns about technology-driven displacement of jobs and rising societal discord globally"),' hosted by the WEF: October 20-23.
- 'Challenging the Use of AI in Public Benefits Determinations,' hosted by CDT: October 20.
- 'Leading Ethically in the Age of AI and Big Data,' hosted by Purdue University: October 28.