The Bulletin

On Bias & Artificial Intelligence

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Spotlight of the Week: Our Team

The People Behind the EqualAI Pledge (2/3):
EqualAI's Workshop, Social Media and Legal Team

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Hot Topics in Business and Technology 🔥

- **President-Elect Biden's Agenda on Technology and Innovation Policy:** Information Technology and Innovation Foundation's (ITIF) reports on the president-elect's overall approach to tech and innovation policy as "formulated to engage the government as an active partner alongside industry in spurring innovation—but also as a tougher regulator of many tech industries and technologies."
- **COVID-19 accelerates AI retail algorithms**: Since the coronavirus outbreak, online retailers like Wayfair, Etsy, and Pinterest have been supercharging search-and-recommendation engines by feeding data into algorithms, building predictive models with a level of accuracy unimaginable just a few years ago (11/2).

- **WSJ on AI in Bias:** As the tech industry tries to make AI fairer, it faces significant obstacles. For one, there is little agreement about what "fairness" looks like (e.g., an algorithm that approves loans equally for men and women, or whites and blacks?) What's more, making AI fairer can sometimes make it less accurate. And it argues that the largest culprit is the data sets. Among the ways to root out bias in algorithms includes AI tools to identify bias. IBM's AI Fairness 360, Alphabet's What-if tool, and LinkedIn's Fairness Toolkit introduced by Microsoft are some of the existing softwares on the market that test for bias in the training dataset, the AI model itself, and its performance. (11/3).
- **AI is powering our latest electric-vehicle batteries**: Researchers are using AI for the development of batteries that are safer and recharge faster. (11/3).
- **TikTok could be banned… again:** Despite the previous injunctions issued by federal judges against Trump's TikTok ban, the app could still be banned in the US after today by the Committee on Foreign Investment's 11/12 deadline to unwind a 2018 acquisition (11/12).
- **AI-enabled platform to reduce bias in datasets released**: On Wednesday, London-based Synthesized launched an algorithm to help organizations identify and rectify biases in their data. (11/11).
- **Non-consensual porn videos can live on forever in machine learning datasets**: A collection of thousands of photographs of naked women that is being used to create machine learning-generated porn includes images from porn production companies that have been accused of lying to and coercing women to have sex on camera (11/10).
- **AI offers better predictions than polling**: WSJ reports that "as traditional political polling methods appear to fall short again," some tech firms claim to offer better "gauge" of electorate (11/6).
- **Big Tech and the new president-elect**: Facebook, Apple, Google and other tech giants are bracing for continued attention on their operations in a Biden administration, with issues such as competition, innovation and social-media platforms' policing of content likely to be in focus (11/9).

AI & Public Health 🏥
- **Algorithm Deprived Black Patients of Kidney Transplant**: Researchers Harvard University revealed that a skin color-based algorithm recently dropped hundreds of black patients from the waiting list. (11/7).

- **AI's Cure to Covid-19 was overhyped:** When the coronavirus outbreak struck, scientists and medical researchers believed AI would help accelerate the search for a cure. Its failure to do so stems from a number of shortcomings, including lack of data, lack of ability, and ethical concerns over privacy (10/28).
- **AI systems in wearable devices capture personal data**: Researchers investigated how much information about a person's behavior can be ascertained from a wearable device. Their algorithm successfully captured physiological and personalized information with greater than 70% AUC (the ratio of true positives to false positives, where closer to one is better) (11/11).

US Federal & State Government News 🇺🇸

- **CA rejects algorithm as substitute for bail system:** CA's voters opposed a ballot measure to replace cash bail system with an algorithmic risk-assessment tool. Supporters, including Gov. Gavin Newsom, argue that cash bail props up a system of racial disparity. Opponents are more concerned that the inherently biased algorithm would disproportionately affect people of color (11/3).
- **Portland, ME joins cities banning facial-recognition tech**: Voters approved a ballot measure to prohibit use of the technology by law enforcement and public officials for at least five years (11/4).
- **Air Force:** U.S. Air Force Purchase of Chinese Drones Spurs Security Concerns, as experts warn of data theft risks (11/2).
- **US Foreign Relations**: Europeans are optimistic about future relations with U.S. on data privacy after Biden's election.

AI Around the World 🌎

- **U.K.:** The U.K.'s top health regulator signed a contract with software company Genpact for a machine-learning system that can monitor high volumes of potential adverse drug-reaction reports from vaccine takers (need date).
- **EU**: "The European Commission is planning to present the Digital Services Act (DSA) in December, a legislative package that will have far-reaching implications for the EU's digital economy. Early drafts of these plans suggest that the Commission will ban some practices by search engines, operating systems, and cloud service providers to address concerns that their practices are unfair for consumers and new market entrants" (12/9).

Op-Eds: Top Picks of the Week 🧐

- **How to Get Big Ideas Off the Ground:** Sebastian Thrun, CEO of Kitty Hawk and chairman and co-founder of Udacity, shares some strategies for successful tech innovation. One is to maintain a small work unit and to not be intimidated by intricate concepts like deep learning (10/29).
- **Review of Coded Bias**: NYT reviews the latest movie exposing the ethical dilemmas of Big Tech release, Coded Bias, a "clear-eyed documentary explores how machine-learning algorithms can perpetuate society's existing class-, race- and gender-based inequities" (11/11).
- **What a Biden-Harris administration means for artificial intelligence**: Fortune offers its best guess on what the president-elect's AI strategy will be, based on indication that general scientific research and development are crucial (11/10).

Upcoming Events 🥳
- The Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law, hosted by the IEEE, Covington, European Parliament's Panel for the Future of Science and Technology and others: November 16-17.
  - **Catch our EqualAI panel on the *Lawyers' Role in Addressing Bias in AI* with CDT's Alexandra Reeves Givens, David Dorfman and Mantalena Kaili this Monday, 11/16 at 1:30 EST.**
- Repeat reminder: European AI Policy Conference, hosted by ITIF's Center for Data Innovation: Dec 1.
- EqualAI Forum - Join executives from leading global companies and industry experts to discuss bias in AI systems — why and how to address it and where to start: December 4.