Data Ethics Conversation Series 2022

Presentation Abstracts

April

Speaker: Ravit Dotan (UC-Berkely) Monday, April 18th 10:00am (Pacific)
Topic: AI Ethics and Investors

Abstract: Should investors integrate AI ethics into investment strategies? If so, how? The goal of my talk is to lead a conversation about this topic. To that end, I will go over what AI is, what AI ethics is, how AI ethics can impact companies' financial performance, and how I think investors should evaluate ethical dimensions of organizations that develop AI systems. I will then turn it over to the audience: I will facilitate a discussion intended to hear the participants' opinions on these issues and brainstorm collectively.

May

Speaker: Eran Tal (McGill) Wednesday, May 4th 10:00am (Pacific)
Topic: Target specification bias in healthcare applications of machine learning

Abstract: Bias in applications of machine learning (ML) to healthcare is usually attributed to unrepresentative or incomplete data, or to underlying health disparities. This article identifies a more pervasive source of bias that affects the clinical utility of ML-enabled prediction tools: target specification bias. Target specification bias arises when the operationalization of the target variable does not match its definition by decision makers. The mismatch is often subtle, and stems from the fact that decision makers are interested in predicting the outcomes of counterfactual, rather than actual, healthcare scenarios. Recent work in metrology – the science of measurement – as well as philosophy of science, suggests ways of counteracting target specification bias and avoiding its harmful consequences.

Speakers: Stephanie Harvard (UBC) and Eric Winsberg (University of South Florida) Wednesday, May 18th 10:00am (Pacific)
Topic: Epistemic Risk and Modeling Decisions in Science

Abstract: Both the distinction between the 'internal' and 'external' phases of science and the concept of 'inductive risk' are core constructs in the values in science literature. However, both constructs have shortcomings, which, we argue, have concealed the unique significance of values in scientific representation. We defend three closely- related proposals to rectify the problem: i) to draw a conceptual distinction between endorsing a 'fact' and making a decision about representation; ii) to employ a conception of inductive risk that aligns with this distinction, not one between internal/external phases in science; iii) to conceptualize 'representational risk' as a unique epistemic risk, no less significant than inductive risk. We outline the implications of each proposal for current debates in the values in science literature

June

Speaker: Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen (University of Aarhus, Arctic University of Norway)
Wednesday, June 1st 10:00am (Pacific)
Topic: Using (un)fair algorithms in an unjust world

Abstract: Algorithm-assisted decision procedures – including some of the most high-profiled ones, such as COMPAS – have been described as unfair because they compound injustice. The complaint is that in such procedures a decision disadvantaging members of a certain group is based on information reflecting the fact that the members of the group have already been unjustly disadvantaged. I assess this reasoning. First, I distinguish the anti-compounding duty from a related but distinct duty – the proportionality duty – from which at least some of the intuitive appeal of the former illegitimately derives. Second, I distinguish between different versions of the anti-compounding duty, arguing that, on some versions, uses of algorithm-assisted decision procedures rarely clash with the anti-compounding duty. Third, drawing on examples of algorithm-assisted decision procedures, I present three objections to the idea that there is a reason not to compound injustice. The most important of these is that one can compound injustice in a non-disrespectful way, and that the wrongfulness of non-disrespectfully compounding injustice is fully explained by the proportionality duty

Speaker: Jenna Burrell (UC-Berkeley/Data and Society) Monday, June 6th 10:00am (Pacific)
Topic: Automated Decision-Making as Domination: what's missing from discussions of AI & justice?

Abstract: TBA