Ethical Issues arising out of AI

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November 14, 2018
IGF Paris

summary

- The emergence of AI affects digital rights profoundly. Much of our thoughts about privacy and free expressions are built on the premises about what constitutes a human being. For example, having paper "record" private thoughts written on it is not deemed to invade anyone's privacy because paper is not human being. Intermediary liability norms are justified by the argument that posting contents online should be subject to approval of other human beings.   Hence the importance of the question of AI's humanity. What are the qualifications of humanness? Intelligence as a requirement suffers from its inability to explain our willingness to accept the thoroughly unintelligent human behavior as human. Free will also fails because of our inability to understand our own freeness. What is clearly a necessary (as opposed to sufficient) condition of humanity may be will to survival, which other animals meet also. At that point, what becomes more important is whether we WANT to treat AI as a human being i.e., program AI in a way that self-preservation becomes its singular goal against the scarcity of resources such as electric power and computer chips. A brief mental exercise supports a prediction that we will NOT treat or program in such a way. Although a more detailed research is due on that issue, I postulate that AI's effects on digital rights landscape will rather limited for this reason.

Ethical issues of artificial intelligence

- Artificial Intelligence raises a bunch of issues but how about the issues relating to digital society?
- Digital society where people are empowered by access to and ability to spread data. Power of Internet is from connecting people to people. How about connecting people to machines or machines to machines. Is that still something valuable that we should protect? – E.g. machines can do valuable services as well, e.g., Google search engine
- There can be other scenarios.

Privacy

- When is privacy infringed? When a person obtains information about another person. How about when a machine obtains information about another person? When the mirror in the bathroom looks at you, is that privacy violation?

- Google Ad for emails – Machine reads the contents of emails. Is that privacy violation?

- How about when it records? → raises the risk of privacy violation, therefore a privacy violation itself.

- AI is related to right to be forgotten. Google's search algorithm does not really "control" data in a way that hospitals and schools control data. It is the bots that simply crawl what is out there (even with caching, the essence is the same). The reason for data protection law is to regulate conscious data processing, the school- and hospital- style. Google bots really don't do that. Should Google be considered data controller?

It is not that AI cannot be ethical agents, it can be. But will we build AI in that way?

- Ex Machina – how is AI built?

- Microsoft's AI Twitter user – again built from big data

- To do big data, AI must be omnipresent. AI must have sensors everywhere. Much of human ethics has a lot to do with knowledge. Lack or presence of certain data becomes a reason for justifying or denouncing that robot's actions.   AI has infinite data. Ethical evaluation is impossible.

Ok, AI being human is not likely then what problems remain?

- 3 Exclusions of AI

- Economic – Robots replacing humans in jobs

- Algorithmic – intensifying human bias through automation

- Data monopoly – AI is software that can be shared but how about the data through which software is trained. Who collects and retains that data?

Economic exclusion

People are worried that only few players have access to AI while others are displaced from their jobs, worsening economic inequity from the pre-AI capitalism when capital ownership worsened economic inequity in capitalism.   However, all technologies in human history have displaced human labor but created new jobs. AI's displacing impact will dwarf all technologies having come before it but the solution remains the same: welfare and re-education, most recently punctuated by the proposal for basic income.

Algorithmic Exclusion

People are concerned that algorithmic decision-making may deepen by automation the biases previously held by people. Insurance underwriting and recruitment if fully automated may eliminate by probabilistic triage those candidates with unconventional merits or minority cultural or racial backgrounds that have not previously flourished under certain criteria favored by the companies using the algorithm. MS chatbot Tay showed the extreme example of that. Once programmed to be a popular Twitterian, it hacked its way to achieve that by simulating the most sexist and racist human Twitterians. However, exactly, Tay's example shows a way to a solution. The results of algorithm depends on instructions given to it. If we do not like the result, we can hard-code good results into it: algorithmic affirmative action. If formulaic probabilistic triage will exclude racial minorities, we can inject a weighing factor to make the result more inclusive. What to hard-code into algorithm is not an AI problem but a political, human problem.

Data exclusion

Properly functioning AI requires training data of enormous quantity. AI is just a program just like Windows OS as you saw in the movie *Her*, which can be made available through downloading copies or through cloud. However, not all will have access to the data through which AI can be trained, and the availability of data is what will make or break for those wishing to harvest the benefits of AI. Data governance is the key to making AI inclusive.

For instance, data protection law has worked to protect people's ability to control about themselves and prohibit the data controllers (governments and companies) from using the people's data at will thereby lessening data inequity but at the same time, some parts of data protection law such as right to be forgotten have worsened data inequity by suppressing people's online access to data which can be accessed only through brute force methods available only to the rich. Also, data protection law has been used as excuses for government agencies not to disclose data that could be used by people in participating in governance and strengthening social stock of knowledge, e.g., judicial decisions database. Data protection and open data are all both important goals and how to weave that together will have impact on how inclusive AI will become.