

Human rights should be incorporated into the development of artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence can be harnessed for good purposes as well as discrimination. There is still time to influence the direction of development.

Artificial intelligence is used to make insurance and loan calculations, identify - and even predict - the onset of cancer or sudden illness, distinguish counterfeit money from real money, find locations and even drive cars for us.

But what if your insurance is denied or its price rises significantly because artificial intelligence predicts a downturn in your state of health? What if the bank refuses a loan based on an algorithm it uses? What if artificial intelligence makes a false diagnosis, or if a pedestrian dies when hit by a self-driving car?

Regarding artificial intelligence, many questions are still left unanswered: does the responsibility lie with the software developer, the builder of the device, its controller or all of them? It is also worth considering what the responsibilities of the authorities are when new software and hardware are launched into the market.

Artificial intelligence refers to, for example, model-based and rule-based learning systems or machine learning, that is, classifying data and making predictions based on samples fed into a program.

In recent years, artificial intelligence has developed by leaps and bounds. Artificial intelligence is able to go through extensive data sets quickly, and the error rate is often small. Artificial intelligence can replace routine work, speed up tasks, expand the amount of available material and get more accurate results than any human. However, artificial intelligence is not infallible.

Artificial intelligence can be non-discriminatory when calculating such things as working hours and holidays, but it can also be used with discriminatory algorithms. Artificial intelligence can uphold discrimination in the society.

It may be useful, for example, to make predictions about the dropout rate or a need for social care and to provide people with targeted support at a sufficiently early stage. However, it is important to consider who has access to this information and how to prevent the branding of people through the collection of information.

When artificial intelligence is linked to extensive data sets, people can be profiled with frightening accuracy. Who uses this information and to what purpose, how is it stored and who has access to it? We may not always know how the algorithms work. Therefore, authorities using algorithms as tools in their work should justify their decisions as openly as possible.

Terrorists can also use artificial intelligence. Armaments and warfare are already being developed through artificial intelligence.

Physicist Stephen Hawking said that artificial intelligence can lead to the destruction of our civilisation unless we find a way to regulate its development. On the other hand, Hawking believed that the

creation of effective artificial intelligence can be the finest achievement of our history if we are aware of the dangers hidden in its development, if we use and control it in the best possible way and if we prepare ourselves for the consequences of its development in advance.

Artificial intelligence can be developed in a positive direction. The development work and the use of artificial intelligence should be regulated internationally. We need ethical reflection: our values, human rights, non-discrimination and democracy are at stake.

This reflection should take place widely between various entities. Governments, judiciaries in different countries, the authorities responsible for enforcing decisions as well as companies need to be brought to the same table. The international scientific community - economists, sociologists, information technology experts and philosophers - must also be involved. Also, one should not forget the civic society and international organisations.

Finland will start its Presidency of the Council of Europe in November this year. In February 2019, a high-level conference on artificial intelligence and human rights will be held in Helsinki.

The Council of Europe is a natural partner in this discussion: its mission is to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and its work is based on internationally binding agreements.

In addition to the European Convention on Human Rights, important documents include the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Treaty) and the Council of Europe Convention on Data Protection, which was recently revised in accordance with the EU Data Protection Regulation.

The time for action is now. Artificial intelligence affects our lives more than we know.

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