

#EqualAI

*Bulletin on Bias & Artificial Intelligence:
Issue 11, November 2020*

Spotlight of the Week: Democracy in Action Part Cont'd



Hot Topics in Business and Technology 🔥

- **Pope Francis prays for AI ethics:** For his November monthly intention, Pope Francis prayed for AI to be good for humankind, given concerns that it could worsen economic inequalities. This follows the Pope's February summit at the Vatican, the "Rome Call for AI Ethics" with IBM and Microsoft, calling for AI to design to focus on the environment and "our common and shared home and of its human inhabitants" (11/4).
- **New technology uses AI to find gender bias in fictional characters:** Allen Institute for AI created PowerTransformer, a tool that rewrites text to correct implicit and potentially undesirable bias in character portrayals in movies and other media (10/29).
- **CertNexus Launches Data Ethics Certification:** CertNexus released the Certified Ethical Emerging Technologist (CEET),

certifying professionals' ability to devise and maintain ethical, trusted, and inclusive data-driven technologies (11/3).

- **Quarterly revenue reveals that the pandemic boosts Big Tech:** Thursday's Big Tech earnings reports showed that while "COVID-19 may be bad in all sorts of ways...it's not slowing down the largest tech companies. If anything, it's helping some companies, like Amazon and Apple" (10/30).
 - Apple's performance was especially strong, with the company reporting its best September quarter ever.
 - Amazon saw its revenue grow 37% from last year as consumers continued to shift spending online.
 - Google parent Alphabet posted better-than-expected revenue of \$46.2 billion.
 - Facebook reported only modest user growth, but its quarterly revenue beat Wall Street expectations.
- **AI is making the beauty industry more accessible:** Atima Lui, creator of Nudemeter, is using facial recognition technology to recommend the best product for a customer's skin tone (11/4).
- **Popular dataset leads to AI bias:** Scientists at Carnegie Mellon and GW show that AI models trained on ImageNet, a popular dataset containing photos scraped from the internet, automatically learn humanlike biases about race, gender, weight, and other stereotypes portrayed on the web (11/3).
- **AI predicted presidential election outcome:** Dr. Hernan Maske of the City University of NY used AI to predict the outcomes of international elections by analyzing Twitter (11/3).

AI & Public Health

- **CMS announces 7 finalists in AI challenge:** CMS picked seven healthcare organizations to receive \$60,000 as finalists in its AI Health Outcomes Challenge. Launched in March 2019, the challenge encourages creation of AI tools to predict unplanned admissions and adverse events within 30 days (10/29).
- **AI better at forecasting flu outbreaks:** Scientists developed an AI tool, incorporating location data, that outperformed other state-of-the-art forecasting methods, delivering up to an 11%

increase in accuracy and predicting influenza outbreaks up to 15 weeks in advance (11/2).

- **Bulgaria:** A Bulgarian startup, Humans in the Loop (HITL), has found remote work in the AI industry for hundreds of refugees in the Balkans and the Middle East (11/4).

US Federal and State Government News 🇺🇸

- **How the 2020 election could impact US initiatives to address algorithmic bias:** Business Insider discusses the difference in policy on AI bias between a Trump or Biden presidency (11/4):
 - “If Trump wins, there will probably be little attention to this issue, although his administration may push for limited rules on transparency of algorithmic inputs.”
 - “A Biden victory would likely lead to the inclusion of algorithmic bias as a focus in a privacy bill or a standalone bill.”
- **Trump’s Tech Legacy:** In discussing Trump’s policy legacy, Axios reporter Bryan Walsh reported that AI is “one area in science and technology where Trump can claim some success: Trump called for doubling research funding in non-defense AI and quantum computing over the next two years, and earlier this year launched a dozen federal research centers in AI and quantum (10/31).

Op-Eds: Top Picks of the Week 🤖

- **A dose of optimism:** The Harvard Kennedy School’s Tech Spotlight initiative has selected over 200 submitted projects from all over the world that are “championing the public good” (10/13). One of them, the Thorn Spotlight aids law enforcement with identifying sex traffickers. Another, Google AI Model Cards, explains machine-learning models, their abilities and shortcomings, in attempt to establish an industry standard.
- **A Simple Tactic That Could Help Reduce Bias in AI:** The Harvard Business Review offers a “blind-taste-test” concept to reduce bias in algorithms. It functions by denying the algorithm the information suspected of biasing the outcome, to ensure that it makes predictions blind to that variable (11/4).
- **Everything You Always Wanted to Know About AI (But Were Too Afraid to Ask):** Vogue sits down with author Tabitha Goldstaub over her newly released book, *How to Talk to Robots*, in which she Tabitha shines a light on the women working to ensure

that AI bolsters gender equality and diversity rather than reinforcing tired biases – giving an insightful overview of the technology behind AI in the process (11/2).

Upcoming Events 🎉

- The Athens Roundtable on Artificial Intelligence and the Rule of Law: Nov 16-17 (f/t EqualAI on 11/16 at 1:30pm).
- Ethics Awareness Week, hosted by Georgia Tech: Nov. 9 - 13.