AI

Ethical Data:
Maintaining our trust in AI

Ethical Data: Maintaining our trust in AI

"Without trust, AI cannot deliver on its potential value" - Cathy Cobey, AI Advisory Leader, EY

"The possibility of creating thinking machines raises a host of ethical issues" - MIRI

Today is the time to "write a 'Magna Carta' for AI" - Raconteur.net

---

No doubt we are all familiar with the General Data Protection Regulation that came into effect recently. In addition there has been a sudden scramble to protect our privacy following several high-profile leaks. Everyone working with Artificial Intelligence ("AI") is suddenly conscious of ensuring responsible innovations and solutions to the emerging ethical implications of data. AI already has an aura of misgiving surrounding it, which is why the public's support it is more important than ever in businesses' considerations. Thich is where Ethical Data comes in.

What is Ethical Data?

Ethical Data can be split up into three categories:

Data Ethics - the study of moral problems, and the analysis and evaluation of how data is generated, recorded, curated, processed, disseminated, shared and used in order to formulate ethical solutions.

Ethical Algorithms - the Analysis and evaluation of how AI, Artificial Agents, Machine Learning ("ML") and robots use data)

Practice Ethics - devising responsible innovation, programming, hacking and codes, to draw up ethical guidelines and frameworks.

Why is Ethical Data important?

With the increasing usage of AI it is becoming more challenging to apportion decision making responsibility around data. Whilst the human race has had hundreds of years of evolution in which to define an effective code of ethics, ML algorithms are having to learn quickly through us. Ethical issues that arise from data collection, may result in harmful consequences to individuals or communities if not properly identified and resolved. Data is essential to AI, so if a limited data source is used to generate insights about a larger group of people it can have negative impacts.

A previous paper in this series focused on the issue of bias in AI algorithms. Unless a universal code of ethics is implemented, this bias is likely to become more prominent and widespread as our reliance on AI increases.

[1]https://medium.com/qdivision/ethical-algorithms-how-to-make-moral-machine-learning-e686a8ad5793

Assessing the risks of AI

The risks of AI are well publicised - with negative outcomes potentially arising from gaps in data, inaccuracies and bias when not properly regulated. So how do they come about? Causes may include:

- Survey questions being constructed by people with an intended result; or
- Selectively collecting data from certain groups/certain backgrounds; or
- Underlying bias in people from whom the data is sourced.

What can businesses do to maintain trust?

It is broadly accepted that businesses will need either ethical boards or independent auditors to regulate their use of data. Especially in light of the publicity around use of Cambridge Analytica data earlier this year, most businesses are extremely conscious of how to protect their clients' data and information.

The Cambridge Analytica story is a good example of the consequence of misusing data and the implications this can have. The alleged use of data to manipulate democratic processes is a clear violation of any code of ethics. However, the revelation that Facebook is also using AI to predict users' future behaviour and selling the data to advertisers, brings up the question of what codes are being written into our ethical frameworks.

External regulators are struggling to keep up with the increasing demand for regulatory data frameworks and transparent controls. For larger organisations, AI ethics boards are something to consider, because they provide independent guidance and advice, and sit largely outside of the technological sphere.

Smaller organisations will not be in a position to implement independent boards, but creating independent audits and relevant training will leave executives in a much better position without spending too much.

Businesses will not be able to rely solely upon this universal code of ethics. Each company will need to implement their own unique framework and ethical guidelines.

This is an important aspect of corporate responsibility that businesses must embrace to maintain the trust of clients and customers, or risk the possibility of becoming obsolete in the coming decade.

We need to continue asking questions as the world continues to turn to AI for solutions, in order to keep data use ethical.

Ethical Data as a Solution

Regulating our use of data prevents misuse and exploitation, but how can this be achieved?
It can be challenging for a single organisation/business or individual to spot potential biases in their data when they are so familiar with it, which is where an open source or platform would be beneficial.
A platform where organisations can share the data sources and algorithms they have created would help eliminate these negative outcomes, by exposing them to a broader variety of people and regulations. Data ethics frameworks can encourage an openness about how data is being used. Many such frameworks already exist, but some are lacking in areas where problems are outside of privacy and user control.

[2]https://techcrunch.com/2018/06/21/the-future-of-ai-relies-on-a-code-of-ethics/

Benefits of using Ethical Data:

These include:

- Building and maintaining trust with investors, employees and customers;
- Protecting against reputational risk through perceptions of how stakeholder's data is treated by a business;
- Guiding long-term decision making - a fixed position on data ethics may help to unlock the full potential of data not just now but for the future
- Complementing a business' corporate social responsibility (CSR) standards and reporting.

Conclusion:

Public trust is key to the future of how data is used, especially in emerging technologies such as AI. Transparency has to be observed in all future ethical frameworks so that businesses can take responsibility for all aspects of their data practice.

To discuss this paper and understand how Helix Insight can support your organisation through our Insight solutions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Alexandra Milligan.

Alexandra@helixinsight.com
020 3146 8440

London
Bridge House, 181 Queen Victoria Street, London,
EC4V 4DD