Professional Accountability
&
Professional Codes of Conduct

Ethics in NLP: Including Society in Discourse and Design

January 31st, 2019

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1

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More Discussion Today

- From Community Principles on Ethical Data Practices:

  - *"Ensure that all data practitioners take responsibility for exercising ethical imagination in their work, including considering the implication of what came before and what may come after, and actively working to increase benefit and prevent harm to others."*

- "Ethical imagination"

  - …how do we teach that?

Domains of Accountability

- **Behavior affecting others within the field**

  - [ACL Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

  - …statement for accommodations [[UW-IT](#)]?

- **Behavior affecting the public**

  - Intent/use of your research

  - Honest communication

- **Behavior affecting the field itself**

  - Scientific integrity/academic honesty

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1. **Responsibility to the Public**
   a. Make research available to general public
   b. Be honest and realistic in stating claims; ensure empirical bases and limitations are communicated appropriately
   c. Only accept work and make statements on topics which you believe have competence to do
   d. Contribute to society and human well-being, and minimize negative consequences of computing systems
   e. Make reasonable effort to prevent misinterpretation of results
   f. Make decisions consistent with safety, health & welfare of public
   g. Improve understanding of technology, its application and its potential consequences (positive and negative)

2. **Responsibility in Research**
   a. Protect the personal identification of research subjects, and abide by informed consent
   b. Conduct research honestly, avoiding plagiarism and fabrication of results
   c. Cite prior work as appropriate
   d. Preserve original data and documentation, and make available
   e. Follow through on promises made in grant proposals and acknowledge support of sponsors
   f. Avoid real or perceived COIs, disclose when they exist; reject bribery
   g. Honor property rights, including copyrights and patents
   h. Seek, accept and offer honest criticism of technical work; correct errors; provide appropriate professional review

3. **Responsibility to Students, Colleagues, and other Researchers**
   a. Recognize and property attribute contributions of students; promote student contributions to research
   b. No discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, disability, marital status, race/ethnicity, class, politics, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, etc. (should this go elsewhere?)
   c. Teach students ethical responsibilities
   d. Avoid injuring others, their property, reputation or employment by false or malicious action
   e. Respect the privacy of others and honor confidentiality
   f. Honor contracts, agreements and assigned responsibilities

4. **Compliance with the code**
   a. Uphold and promote the principles of this code
   b. Treat violations of this code as inconsistent with membership in this organization

4

Behaviors to Consider

- Data Collection

- Data Sharing/Distribution

- Data Utilization

- Human Interventions

- Honesty in Communication

Behaviors to Consider:
Data Collection

- Informed consent

- Meaningful inclusion of relevant populations

- Track and make clear provenance of data

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Behaviors to Consider:
Data Sharing/Distribution

- Work to ensure security of data

- Work to ensure privacy of personal data

- Again, ensure provenance is clearly communicated
  - Model Cards — Mitchell et al (2019)
  - Data Statements — Bender & Friedman (2018)

Behaviors to Consider:
Human Interventions

- This is somewhat unique to parts of our field vs. "Data Science"

  - Things like chatbots interact with people

  - …when does a chatbot implementation run into issues of Human Subjects?

  -

Some Institutional Suggestions

- Ethics Review Board — Leidner et al (2017)

- AI Safety Disclosures — Schmalz (2018)

- Ethics score for peer reviewers?

- …others?

Some Discussion Questions

- Are there any things that you have experienced/witnessed that are not covered in the codes of conduct that should be?

- Are there other institutional changes that you think could be made to better guide decision making?

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