

CS #1: Facial Recognition (Discussion Reflection)

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Question 1 – In responding to the case study reflection questions, where did I disagree with others in my group? What was the nature of our differing perspectives?

Answer 1 – In my group, when we talked about the reflection questions, I found that my idea was a bit different from others when it came to the software developers' action. I think the software developers in the company Fluvian are irresponsible and rodomontade because they promised to improve the facial recognition software in terms of gender and racial bias after the first iteration, but the bias had always been there, which means the software developers did not keep their promise. However, other members in my group think this is actually very normal, because software developers are just part of the whole project, and there are many factors preventing developers from updating the facial recognition software, such as the limited budget and the instructions from their employers, even if developers themselves really hope to improve the product.

Therefore, I think the nature of our differing perspectives is quite easy to understand. I mainly focus on judging the behavior of the software developers from an individual's or the societal perspective, while my group members also comprehensively take the company and the market into consideration.

Question 2 – Where did I agree with others in my group? What was our shared perspective?

Answer 2 – We all agreed with the last reflection question about who acted honorably. We all think that data scientists and machine learning engineers acted honorably, because the data scientists firstly noticed the lack of diversity in the training database, and the machine learning engineers expressed their concern to the entire team. We all agreed that the data scientists and the machine learning engineers did act out of selfish motives.

Our shared perspective is that although a good suggestion or reasonable concern sometimes could not be taken due to complicated issues, such as the limited budget in the company Fluvian, as long as one can bravely propose or express it, then we would regard this as acting honorably and out of selfish motives.

Question 3 – What were different views our group imagined others might have? How did these views disagree with our views?

Answer 3 – Our group imagined that there could be different views when evaluating the police department programmer's action. Our group's view is that the police department programmer is irresponsible and should be to blame for simply displaying the top 5 matches but omitting the match-confidence percentage. The other group sitting close us hold the view that we should not solely criticize the programmer, and the police department should rethink profoundly about how to use the facial recognition software in an appropriate way.

They hold the view because they think it is possible that the programmer also wants to display the match-confidence percentage, but the department only wants the top 5 matches, and then the police department should be to blame for changing the question from "Who committed this crime?" to "Did this individual commit this crime?", instead of the police department programmer.

Question 4 – In deciding what decisions were right or wrong in this case study, was my group most interested in:

----- the consequences of the actions taken by people in the case study,

----- the responsibilities of each person involved, or

----- the quality of character demonstrated by each of the people in the story?

Answer 4 – My group was most interested in the responsibilities of each person involved. I think this is actually very easy to understand, because currently we are all students studying engineering, and we want to be a data scientist, or a machine learning engineer, or a software developer/programmer in the future, so the first think that comes to our mind is how to get our job down, in other words, how to perform our responsibilities. My group also agrees that if we are working in a big company, sometimes we simply could not tell whether our work is right or wrong, let alone evaluating the quality of character or the societal consequences. Therefore, our group is most interested in the detailed responsibilities of each person involved in the story.