**The Ethical and Societal Implications of AI**

**Introduction**

With the rapid advancements and implementation of Artificial Intelligence, and machine models into different industries, we’ve begun to see how it impacts society as a whole. It’s become easier than ever to automate mundane tasks, and handle large sets of data or information that usually would require lots of time or people. You can also find a model for pretty much any purpose needed, whether you need a chat model to give you ideas on a song or story, or just have songs, videos, images, even code created for whatever you need.

Considering how powerful and varied AI tools can be, lots of mundane and manual work can be completely avoided. Although with how useful these models and AI as a whole can be, with how powerful AI tools can be, they can easily be used for bad purposes as well. Deepfakes can completely mimic and steal a person’s image or voice, detection models can easily find personal information or leak it, and scams or malicious programs can automatically update and require no work from attackers to obtain information.

The point of this study isn’t just to point out the good and bad uses of AI, but how even “good” uses can still end up having consequences on society. The existence of AI models and tools brings many new, or unsolved problems that can have a negative impact on people even if it’s not initially obvious. Not everyone wants to agree with the new rise of AI, many concerns of privacy from new advanced tracking, broken copyright from stolen data being used to train models, jobs being taken over, and even bias from data impacting different users. For safer and more trusted AI models to exist, these concerns need to be addressed and considered during development.

**Industry Impacts**

The first base for many ethical and societal concerns around AI is how they’ve impacted various industries. Artificial Intelligence has made it possible to completely remove mundane tasks, and simplify large and complex tasks for less work overall. Some examples of AI being used in the affected industries are are:

**Healthcare:** Medical Imaging and Automatic Diagnosis prevent the need to search through thousands of records, and immediately identify abnormalities for quicker care.

**Finance/Banking:** Fraud Detection is able to prevent scams and suspicious activity by examining payment patterns, and other features like location. Market Trends are also able to be tracked for predictive trading based on data over the years.

**Farming/Agriculture:** Precision and Predictive farming allow for specific care to be administered to crops based on imaging and conditions, and automatically change needed parameters based on weather conditions and trends.

**Entertainment/Gaming:** Content Creation is simplified with AI tools helping come up with ideas, music composition, video/audio editing, or even generating code to help create media.

One of the main, and I think biggest concerns with AI being implemented in any of these industries is the problem of job displacement. Since AI is now becoming more efficient at completing certain tasks, such as mundane jobs, the need to pay workers a salary to do those jobs is not needed. With how much AI is improving and changing, the capabilities to take more jobs grows and many workers don’t like the idea of a robot taking their job. The implication on society is at what point does AI become so good that workers aren’t needed, making jobs harder and harder to keep or find.

**Privacy Concern/Lack of Transparency**

Another major implication to be considered is how efficient AI models are at tracking, and finding data. We’ve already seen many industries use models specialized to collect and monitor people, like in the healthcare industry with predictive analytics and remote monitoring. Although these are used to help, collecting data from genetics, lifestyle, previous history for fast diagnosis many people don’t like that information being revealed. The implication that AI knows more about them than they know themselves is a major violation of privacy for many.

Many question the ethics of their data being used to track their activity, and the problem spreads all around the collection of their data. Large financial institutions may track your card usage to prevent fraud, but also they now have information on your spending habits and where you’ve spent money recently. The biggest part of this issue is with data being sold, as companies collect your data and sell it, advertisers will spam your pages to try and get a click or sell an item you’ve shown interest in. Over collecting data can lead to personally identifiable information getting exposed, and now companies or AI models can use that information for whatever purpose they want.

The lack of transparency makes these issues even worse, as AI models aren’t always developed to be clear with what they’ve trained off of, or the data they ended up collecting. Meaning that not only can these models track you, it’s possible for all the collected data to be completely hidden from you. One case that comes to mind was referenced to me in my class, and partially outlined on their privacy policy, with lululemon tracking shipped orders. AI models can reference images posted of their product on social media from the tracked orders, and then examine and advertise towards anybody who liked the post or showed interest in the comments. Meanwhile the people who just liked a social media post are now getting their data collected, and a product’s trying to be sold to them.

**Copyright/Non-Consensual Training**

With there already being privacy issues of data collection, there’s also the fact that AI models need data to train on to properly learn and operate. With so much data being stored and no transparency on what they’ve been trained on, AI models can easily take copyrighted or original pieces of work and use them without any credit. Content creation and production is the most affected by this, with stolen ideas from copyrighted music, arts, and even scripts being used to generate new media.

As mentioned a bit in the last section, people may not even be aware when their data is being tracked or used, and a big ethical question is the use of deepfakes. Deepfakes have been used to resurrect dead actors, or cause fake audio or visuals of celebrities for whatever use people want. As for society, people begin to worry about putting any of their information or work out there out of fear of AI stealing their originality and using it to create something else.

**Bias/Safety**

Artificial Intelligence is created by people, who have their own thoughts and biases which can leak into AI either through the creation process, or data they’re trained off of. AI can begin to abuse data like demographics, using someone’s age or race, or geographic data on their location in personalized models to change their result. One of the places this affects is predictive policing, profiling high crime areas can be done on trends, but can also use criminal history and specific demographics to target or place people under watch.

The vulnerability of AI being corrupted or poisoned by bad data may not also be on accident, but attackers can use it to manipulate the AI into doing something they want. One early example of this happening was with the Tay AI from Microsoft, which was corrupted by people on social media to begin having unethical and harmful views. If something like a banking AI was tricked in the same way, it could also lead to massive breaches of personal information or accounts based on a misleading prompt.

**Overreliance/Emotional Resonance**

The implementation of AI in all these different fields and cases now also brings into question what happens if society relies too much on AI. Workers are able to find answers to their questions or develop solutions to problems, companies can integrate AI completely into their systems and remove all human workers. But when these systems fail or are unavailable, people may be left dumbfounded or entire industries could be sent offline.

Overreliance on AI also impacts industries like entertainment differently, where people begin to lose their emotional resonance with creators. As AI mimics and creates different work, people lose track of what’s real or AI and can no longer connect with creators since there’s no more human part of their creations. Especially with creative ideas now getting collected and stolen by AI, people can just be de-motivated to work on their passion at all.

**Conclusion**

Overall, I think AI definitely has it’s place in society and can lead to many great improvements as a whole. Without careful monitoring and development though, the implications of the danger AI poses to us should be taken seriously. I believe many of the issues with privacy and stolen content are unethical to ignore, and can be solved with AI training being made more clear, and policies on making AI media identifiable. This would also prevent heavy bias from slipping through unseen, and media being trusted again since they’re no longer questioning the human connection behind it. I think the most important thing with AI is just being completely clear with how it was made, and what it does to avoid any shady business or privacy violations from happening.

**References**

**Class Notes [A01-A08]**

**Class Presentations**

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