

“Don’t forget people in the use of big data for development” by Joshua

Blumenstock depicts the increasing importance of technology and data science, and the impact it has on every individual. As more and more people have access to technology, the need for data science becomes greater. Throughout the article, Blumenstock argues that companies collecting data from technology should be aware that each piece of data is not just a number, but also a person.

First, Blumenstock describes the possible benefits of data science and increases in the use of technology. He states that “with some tweaks, the same algorithms that Google, Facebook and other companies use to match advertisements to people online can also be used to match resources to people living in poverty” (Blumenstock, 2018). In recent years, companies have been able to determine specific individuals wants and desires and develop targeted ads that only certain people can see, based on whether or not they would be interested in the product or not. This could also be used to determine some people’s needs and necessities, which would help to make sure that people living in poverty are receiving the resources they need. Blumenstock highlights the benefits of data science because people can more easily aid others in need, which would help make the world a better place.

While Blumenstock shows that increased use in technology has great benefits, it can also have negative effects. As he informs us that having technology makes it increasingly easier to receive digital loans, he also states that “a 2015 study in Rwanda found that only 51% of borrowers were aware of the interest rate they were being charged” (Blumenstock, 2018). Even though the use of technology makes it easier to

receive loans, people are not always as informed about the requirements. If someone was to get a loan in person, it would certainly be a long process, but they would be more likely to go through every detail and make sure that they understand the entirety of the loan, including the expected interest rate. Blumenstock emphasizes the importance of understanding technology, otherwise it can end up having a negative impact on people.

Throughout the article, Blumenstock details some of the beneficial aspects of using technology, but also describes that there could be unintended negative consequences. While technology and data science use makes many processes easier and more efficient, it can often be used poorly, giving people more problems than it solves.