

EN_38254642 Summary of A Research Paper

Anthropomorphism; the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to non-human entities, has been criticized for setting wrong expectations of technical systems. This study will check whether Anthropomorphization of a product description will impact a potential users personal and broader trust in that system. And whether certain variables like age or gender will have impact on the preferences between anthropomorphized/de-anthropomorphized AI product descriptions. They have used a survey-based approach with a total of 954 participants.

Humans tend to create their own simplified mental models of how a complex technical system works, these models however are not always consistent with the real working of the system. Research has shown that humans show a clear tendency for anthropomorphism in technological devices. Numerous academic papers have warned us about anthropomorphic language used to describe these AI systems.

The experiment will check whether: Anthropomorphizing language used in describing a AI product will impact personal and general trust. If different types of anthropomorphizing have different impact on their trust. And if there are differences in preference between certain groups, like age and gender. The different types of Anthropomorphizing language are: Cognition (such as “intelligent” or systems that can “decide”), agency (where systems “choose” or “monitor”), biological metaphors (such as “neural networks”), and communication (where systems are described as “telling” or “responding”).

Each participant will be shown 2 product pitches, of which one is anthropomorphized, and one is not, then they will be asked which one they will trust more for themselves, and which one they will trust more for others.

The study did not show a significant tendency for either anthropomorphized or de-anthropomorphized product descriptions in general. However, the study did show that there was a clear distinction between the types of products pitched, for example people trust juristic

systems more if they are de-anthropomorphized, another example is AI Scan Guards. Also, age showed a significant difference in trust between the anthropomorphized and de-anthropomorphized product descriptions, age was the only variable they checked for which had a significant difference.

In conclusion, this paper explored the impact of anthropomorphized descriptions of AI systems on trust. Three main observations were made, where there was a statistically significant association between preference in anthropomorphized and de-anthropomorphized product descriptions. However, they did not find a universal preference, and the preference is dependent on certain factors like age and product type.