Unit 9 Reflection

This week I engaged in the various statistical exercises presented, particularly the representation of quantitative data. Completing the exercises helped me consider how I've used graphs in my career to show information. The information garnered in this unit has allowed me to weigh the different manners of information representation. Alternate representations help uncover hidden data. For example, showing data as a decreasing set of bars may visually show a downward trend. Still, suppose I think more deeply about the visual trends (not based on data). In that case, other variables may not be considered that may explain the data.

I continued the real struggle to prepare a research proposal (*please see "Spill the Tea" for further details*) which has opened my eyes to a few points about myself. This task has proven to be the single most challenging task I have faced to date and leads me to want to solve the pain that countless other students are facing. Namely, locating a research gap and finding your take on technology or issues in the computer science field. My emotions ranged from wanting to walk away to standing and facing the challenge to a sense of utter hopelessness. I even started to question the impact of colonialism behind the current structure of what makes a *master's degree* the way it is. I challenged my thoughts and asked, "How else can we improve and demonstrate the educational prowess of students?". One answer I considered is that a master's programme should focus more on *practical* aspects required in industry and less on the *theoretical* components. This is merely a thought. But what stays with me is the need to leverage artificial intelligence, machine learning or other technologies to automate the summarising and gap-finding. Machines never tire. They run 24/7. They can process in fractions of minutes what students perform in months. Why, then, are we not at this point in technology?

Despite the pain of preparing a research proposal, I look for some redeeming qualities from this awful experience of not knowing, understanding how, why, or what process to follow. I feel that literature review is the single most significant contributor to enriching my understanding of the broader computer science field. Because one topic leads to another, which leads to another, collectively, they give me an overview of a specific idea. So, there is some good in this dark void of lack of guidance. To obtain some titbits of advice, I reached out to the tutor. But despite their responses, I still feel oblivious, stupid, and none-the-wiser. Though ironically, I *understand the concepts*, the means and capability to implement them escapes me.

I provided a summary post of the discussion concerning the ethics applied to research. An annoyance which I cannot shake is the disconnect between what students are made to consider regarding ethics, and what is observed in the real-world. In the *real world*, ethics are slaughtered and thrown to the waste as society observes over and over the complete manipulation of statistical data, the fabrication of information or the power of money to influence public opinion one way or another. I understand that this is a symptom of a larger societal issue—the desire for right-ness, honesty, and integrity—and that universities have a positive role to play by instilling into students the consideration to act ethically and present honest data. For me, it feels like our discussion was more theoretical, while practically we should be focused on how to instil within researchers a deeper sense of personal integrity, one not swayed by reputation, money, or peer pressure (Gasparyan et al., 2016).

References

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Bibliography

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