The Locus Charter and Ethics within GIScience

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Nick Bearman

We’re going to talk a little bit about Ethics and why I think they are important

- The Locus Charter
- Examples from Practical GeoAI Ethics Workshop at OS
- How it applies to Spatial Data
- How it applies to GIScience

When we are thinking about ethics

Data is key

- Data
- Big data
- Spatial data
- Geospatial data ….

“Datafication”: expressing and managing the world with data - *Jeremy Morley*

Applying ethics is a journey

- How you apply ethics has no “one” answer
  - There is no “ethics in geospatial expert”
- It is like questions my course participants ask:
  - “How can I apply time series analysis to spatial data?”
- It depends!
- What are you trying to achieve?
- What data are you using?

The Locus Charter

1. UNDERSTAND IMPACTS
2. DO NO HARM
3. PROTECT RIGHTS
4. PROTECT THE VULNERABLE
5. ADDRESS BIAS
6. MINIMIZE INTRUSION
7. MINIMIZE DATA
8. PROTECT PRIVACY
9. PREVENT IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS
10. BE ACCOUNTABLE

These principles are fine, but what do they actually mean?

- It depends!

It is a framework, a process:

- “to support responsible practice when working with location data”
- “an approach to working with location data, to help people who want to do the right thing work with data in the right way”
- “a checklist of things to think about”

These principles are fine, but what do they actually mean?

- It depends on your project!

There are lots of ways of using it.

There is no wrong way - we just need to use it

Practical GeoAI Ethics Workshop

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Order the Locus Charter Principles

- We were asked to order the principles
- From **most important** to **least important**
- Six groups
- Quite a bit of variation

Founding Principles

1. Realize Opportunities
2. Understand Impacts
3. Do No Harm
4. Protect the Vulnerable
5. Address Bias
6. Minimize Intrusion
7. Minimize Data
8. Protect Privacy
9. Prevent Identification of Individuals
10. Provide Accountability

Ordering Exercise

1. Do No Harm
2. Protect the Vulnerable
3. Provide Accountability
4. Protect Privacy
5. Understand Impacts
6. Prevent Identification of Individuals
7. Minimize Data
8. Address Bias
9. Minimize Intrusion
10. Realize Opportunities

Ordering Exercise

1. Do No Harm (#2)
2. Protect the Vulnerable (#4)
3. Provide Accountability (#10)
4. Protect Privacy (#8)
5. Understand Impacts (#1)
6. Prevent Identification of Individuals (#9)
7. Minimize Data (#7)
8. Address Bias (#5)
9. Minimize Intrusion (#6)
10. Realize Opportunities (#1)

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- Ordering depends on your project
- There is no specific ‘order’

Environmental sciences & **Social sciences**

think about ethics in different ways

There is no one path through the forest

Environmental science focuses on the **environment**

Social sciences focuses on **people**

This is not new to geographers!

Problems with principles

Is they look good and people say yes they to them

But does this impact what actually happens?

- *Often no*

Who is accountable?

If nobody (or everybody) is accountable, nothing happens

- *Jacqui Ayling, Moving from Principles to Practice*

So, how do we apply them?

So, how do we apply them?

- Ruth Bowyer, Alan Turing Institute / Kings College London, TwinsUK
- Using individuals data in a range of research projects
- They have a research panel with participants on it
- Engagement with participants is key in their trust in the research
- Being open with their research builds confidence with participants data

So, how do we apply them?

- Jeni Tennison, Connected by Data
- Public Trust is key
- Value jugdements are needed to enact the Locus Charter principles
- **Who** is making these value judgements is key
- Currently there is a lot of **theory** but not a lot of **implimentation**

Useful resources:

- Case Studies: Responsible and ethical use of location data with Doug Specht - https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/responsible-and-ethical-use-of-location-data-with/
- ODI Benchmark: Data Ethics Maturity Model https://theodi.org/article/data-ethics-maturity-model-benchmarking-your-approach-to-data-ethics/?new
- W3C Responsible Use of Spatial Data: https://w3c.github.io/sdw/responsible-use/

How do we apply this to our work?

- a question for us

An aside - particularly for ERCs

One thing that came clearly to me was this area has two sides:

- policy side
- practical implementation side

They are related - but know what you are interested in.

I’m not interested in policy - just practical implementation.

How do we view this? How do teach this?

What the policies are - to me, this is less important.

Thanks very much!

Questions?

Nick Bearman | @nickbearmanuk

nick@geospatialtrainingsolutions.co.uk

Slides: