TEAM MEMBERS

Mayra Ruiz	Gideon Peters	Shubham Sharma

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF AI-BASED SERVICES

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a key player in society today(Daley, 2020). As a result, it is not surprising that advancements in AI influence society, and societal and technological progress are often interconnected(Stone, 2022).

AI systems have gone past what we could only imagine in movies to more practical everyday uses (Makridakis, 2017). According to Mckinsey, 25% of companies have Generative AI(GenAI) on their boards' agendas and 40% of companies planning to increase their investments in AI in their day-to-day operations(McKinsey & Company 2023).

Currently, AI is used in different services, from our phones, to industries healthcare and finance. Few examples of services we may use in our daily lives include recommendation systems such as Netflix, Spotify, YouTube Music; Virtual Assistants like Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa; Online Customer Support Live chats powered by AI Chat-bots. This impacts the way we discover media (Anderson, 2020) (Gomez, 2015) and presents a unique way of interacting with new technology that conveys human-like attributes (Mclean, 2019).

One of the key factors that influences the product adoption, commercial development, research funding, and regulation of AI is public opinion (Kelly, 2021). Since the more explicit introduction of AI in 2015, there has been a shift in the public opinion of it. Despite the promise of AI development, there are also concerns on how AI is used in sensitive fields like healthcare, where data may be misused leading to privacy breaches and potential biases in treatment decisions (Vellido, 2019).

This raises the question on how society perceives this abrupt change in the delivery of services we receive and how AI is slowly being integrated in different aspects of our lives, often without prior consent on our preference to receive services from AI or a human agent.

Recently, Kelly et al. (Kelly, 2021)conducted a survey of public opinion of artificial intelligence over 8 countries and six continents. Overall the respondents believe AI will drive innovation, but there are concerns regarding privacy, job loss and harm to personal relationships. Regarding job loss, Wirtz et al. (Wirtz, 2019) suggests that there could be measures taken by the public sector, like transparency regarding the potential consequences that AI may bring to their social, working and personal environment.

Another study analyzed the views related to AI in the New York Times over a 30-year period and found that the discussion on ethical concerns of AI has raised sharply since 2015 (Fast, 2017).

Fui et. al(Fui-Hoon, 2023) discusses the particular challenges of GenAI in society, defining empathy and human needs as key factors in the adoption of AI. There is also a need for its transparency, explainability and governance. Daley et. al (Daley, 2020) question if existing legal frameworks are sufficient to govern the usage, development and distribution of AI.

A study found that for services that need high credentials like banking, the users need more authenticity when interacting with chat-bots that provide these services. This is different from other services that might be only for search purposes, like e-commerce (Wuenderlich, 2017).

Yigit et. al (Yigitcanlar, 2022) explored people's preferences regarding the application of AI in public services and the challenges of the governments to adopt AI and proper governance in Australia and Hong Kong. Despite finding public perception differences between both countries, there was a minimal gap regarding government AI adoption challenges.

Another survey on the public perception of AI includes a Mozilla study on what people think about AI (Mozilla, 2019) and a study on public perception made in the UK asked participants on eight common narratives about AI, both positive and pessimistic. (Cave, 2019).

With this wide adoption, it is important more than ever to emphasize human-centered design of these AI solutions. There have to be guidelines and policies in place to ensure that these products are built with humans at the center.

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