

Summary Notes: Discussion on data science and ethics within the Humanitarian Sector

1530 GMT February 12th 2019

Participants: Aaron Swaving, Caitlin Howarth, Daniel Scarnecchia, Eduardo Zambrano, Juliane Klatt, Kashif Muhammad, Leonardo Milano, Mark Latonero, Rebeca Moreno, Robert Trigwell, Tracey Li from **Organizations:** Data & Society Research Institute, FlowMinder, HHI Signal Programme, IDMC, IOM DTM, Leiden University and UNHCR.

Agenda (planned): 1) Update on peer review mechanism to date 2a) What should the ethical peer reviewers be reviewing – building on examples from previous discussions, 2b) Define the scope of our group’s understanding of ethical review, 2c) What should the ethical peer reviewers consider minimum red flags. Agenda (actual): 1) Update on peer review mechanism to date 2) Discussing the ethics process and where the review steps fit in	
Overview: Overview of the peer review mechanism that was launched on January 9th, with the first submission on January 17th. The system utilises an open-source encrypted and privacy-focused email service provider. The process implements a double blind review process with the use of a moderator. The authors do not know who is reviewing their work, nor do the reviewers know who they are reviewing, offering a bigger transparency with compared from standard academic peer review.	ACTION 1: Encourage more submissions to the peer review system. Present in the next meeting the lessons learnt from the current submissions.
Discussing the ethics process and where the review steps fit in: Many stages in the data science process should be subjective to review. Therefore the ethics incorporations needs to be throughout the process rather than just at the end. Therefore, efforts towards developing a document that first of all, draws the boundaries between the elements to be included and excluded in the ethical review. Once we know the scope of the area for the ethical review to focus on, then develop a framework for the ethical considerations for the different phases of the data processing lifecycle per the identified scope. No need to re-invent the wheel. Substantial amount has been done in the AI/Ethics area over the number of years, but must be done bespoke to humanitarians. Lastly, there is still concern regarding the communication of the results from said work, however there is a feeling that once all these steps have been considered, then we should know the risks/limitations better which need to be communicated within the presentation of the results.	ACTION 2 (2A): Share the needs assessment ethos document to the audience and other best practice guides, 2B) Work towards developing the boundaries between what ethical review should and should not include, 2C) Based on 2B Develop a pilot framework for the ethical considerations for the different phases of the data processing lifecycle.

Moving Forward

- Dan (HHI), Mark (Data & Society), Juliane & Rob (both IOM) to draft the framework/guidelines per action point 2B and share at the next meeting
- Next Meeting, March 19th 1530pm GMT. **Proposed Agenda** (please share feedback/comments/topics):
 - Feedback on the lessons learnt from submissions to the peer review mechanism
 - Group review of the ethical checklist for the data processing lifecycle
 - How to tackle other issues such as; the need for better communication of results from advanced models, how current funding structures incentivise competition rather than idea sharing and collaboration, a need to identify who is accountable for the decisions made based on a

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complex data analysis, how to ground truth the theoretical model findings, how to tackle over reliance on models and how to prevent accidental harm through data science activities.