

Amazon's AI Recruitment Tool

Guiding Topics: *Which do you think are generally more biased: algorithms or humans? Are there tools in the industry that display examples of this bias? Were there issues?*

To preface the answer for the first question, we need to understand the situation and task given to the algorithm or person, alongside that also need to understand the motive behind both of these subjects; however, in the former's case, the algorithm creator's motive. I will answer this question at the end of the paper after my analysis from the required readings along with the chapters I have read thus far in *Machine Platform Crowd* (MPC) and *The Second Machine Age* (SMA).

As discussed by Daniel Kahneman in MPC, we think with 2 systems. System 1 being the more logical and intuitive method of thinking whereas System 2 is the more subjective and conscious method. The development of the AI for Amazon's recruitment tool ultimately was based on the motives and objectives given to it; whether it is to use a logical or subjective approach to determining which candidates to pass and which to fail. The AI and machines that we create are based on our bias and intuition; they cannot be programmed to have "consciousness" or "common sense" as we know it. We, humans, are the only beings who have this intuition. With that being said, algorithms have less bias than humans; thus, they base all their decisions on the data they learn from – which begs to differ at times whether or not the data presented has biases removed.

In Amazon's AI recruitment tool, the problem arose from data that showed applicant data from the past 10 years when it was a male-dominated field than women. Thus, it caused the AI to learn that men were more preferable over women, it downgraded applications if it had keywords such as "women" or "captain of the women's soccer team" etc. Although a mistake made by outdated information, it is the human's job to ensure mistakes like biases in machines do not occur.

As any organization should, discrimination and bias, whether it is conscious, unconscious; it should not (although not 100% preventable as all humans have an innate bias) occur at any level to a point where decisions are heavily skewed to one end of the spectrum. With that being said, Amazon made the correct decision by ultimately removing the AI for screening resumes.

Kevin Parker, a C-Suite employee of HireVue, a start-up that helps firms analyze candidates' speech and facial expressions in video interviews is a method of reducing reliance on resumes, thus, reducing reliance on AI screening them – which brings back the Human within Human Resources. I believe that an application is more than just paper; yes, previous experience is important and must play a factor but that should not determine the entire application. What Parker discusses is also adding that aspect of seeing whether or not a candidate has the soft skills and fit that the company is looking for upon hiring employees. Having a human interaction

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amongst this new digital age is slowly, yet surely, becoming more important as our world is becoming less interactive with technology.

Should Amazon continue to utilize AI within its' application process, there will be a few things to keep in mind:

1) Before giving data to the machine, the people designing the AI must be conscious of their own biases, it is necessary to remove as much bias as possible before creating an AI so that our bias does not transfer over – having a diverse team to create this AI will be effective as the design process will pass by many people from different backgrounds and experiences. Next, instead of feeding the AI with outdated data, programmers and designers should first identify *what* to let the machine learn – learning from their mistake of feeding it prehistoric data that had a higher pool of male applicants than female.

2) Follow what other companies are doing. LinkedIn, for example, has created algorithms to base candidates for the fit with the company; however, it is important to note that the algorithm has not been a replacement for traditional recruiting. There still needs to be humans at the end of the day to make the decisions – not just one, but multiple, to ensure that our biases are just as reduced as the technologies'.

Machines can be a great wonder to humans, it is no doubt that machines have helped us get to where we are now. However; unlike the Industrial Revolution, times are different and are changing rapidly with no signs of slowing down. We must understand how, as humans, we function, before we can move on to designing machines that can make decisions for us. A world without bias is difficult, especially when there are many rights and wrongs; but we can make that better but learn as much about the world and the people around us, can make biases a little bit easier to understand, and avoid. We will get to a point in time when artificial intelligence can be greater than we can be at thinking, but before we get there, we only need to do more research, understanding, and tests, to best utilize technology for the people – for the future.