Dialogue on Privacy, Security, Ethics
In Preparing for this Panel...

- Folks from very different areas of research and practice
- All interested in the issues of privacy, security, ethics, research
- Disciplinary differences have emerged in our discussions
- We feel this debate is healthy and necessary
Elizabeth’s World

• Coming from Philosophy, Applied Ethics, and Research Ethics: Hoping to prioritize the role of ethics in our considerations (Meta Considerations, such as research methods and ethics; IRBs’ stake in big data discourse; specific issues, such as privacy, anonymity, de-re-identification science);

  – Trying to make connections between the language of privacy harms and risks (from research regulation) with emotive harms cause by “inadvertent algorithmic cruelties,” and “spurious correlations” vis-à-vis big data
  – Today, thinking about the epistemology of big data and research and our “aspirational visions”
  – What is our common goal? Is ethics one of them?
  – Predictive analytics, targeting, profiling: Are we ready to embrace these for a social good, and who is/is not on board? Is this TOO deterministic?
  – What is not quantifiable? When did we accept the quantification of self, experience, as the only or the best, realities?
  – Digital diploma mills ideology (Nobel, 1990s)
  – When we look at nations, eg, Finland, how is the educational system using BD and analytics?
  – Differential systems in access to data?
  – Longitudinal look at return of results to students
  – Work versus education; education versus training (Wisconsin Idea demise)
  – How transparent are the analytics?
The Original Plan

• Privacy is a right
• Privacy is contextual
• Privacy is subjective
  – The quality or condition of being secluded from the presence or view of others
  – The state of being free from unsanctioned intrusion
  – The state of being concealed

• Natural and normative privacy protections
• Control/Restriction; contextual integrity theories (Moor, Nissenbaum)
• Instrumental versus intrinsic value
• Growing concerns around the ethics of use of core and derived data;
• Considerations of public data
• Balancing data sharing with personal information;
• What are students consenting to? Students as learners, research participants, customers, members of groups

There are very few Moby-Dicks. Most of us are sardines. The individual sardine may believe that the encircling net is trying to catch it. It is not. It is trying to catch the whole shoal. It is therefore the shoal that needs to be protected, if the sardine is to be saved. An ethics addressing each of us as if we were all special Moby-Dicks may be flattering and it is not mistaken, but needs to be upgraded urgently. Sometimes the only way to protect the individual is to protect the group to which the individual belongs. Preferably before any disaster happens.
Think about where we are in our teaching and education. What are we teaching about the ethics of data science
Big Data = Transactions + Interactions + Observations

Source: Contents of above graphic created in partnership with Teradata, Inc.
“Algorithms are worthless (and also valueless) without data to run on. Tapping into personal info is actually foundational to the connection to privacy in the ethics/rights context. The whole enterprise of predictive analytics is predicated on tapping into personal info, fitting people into categories, and feeding that back to users in various ways. So, we can think of data as a “fuel source” for algorithms AND we can think of it as inextricably tied to one’s private zone, one’s personal identify, space, etc.

Privacy is something that can be compromised when information appropriate to one context is distributed in another; consent and privacy are intermixed here as well since it's hard to say that someone who turned over their info after absent-mindedly agreeing to some EULA or ToS actually consented to their info being used in certain ways. There can be a contextual conflict here, I think - and that is also relevant for privacy, since privacy is also important for allowing us to navigate different settings and understanding the social world around us.”
Consider the Ethics of:

- Algorithms providing course selection advice, algorithm stereotyping via student clustering,
- Algorithms providing encouragement/discouragement, the cultural norms of advice delivery and whether they impact the student (Una-May)
- The incompleteness or incorrectness of data that might be used to feed algorithms (Ari)
- What potential harms do researchers have to think about / design / disclose / account for when using algorithmic (specifically: machine-learning) approaches to educational data? (Ari)
- Reconsideration of risks and harms
  - Secondary subjects
  - Research bystanders
  - Collateral subjects
  - Group and individual emotive harms
New Dynamics, New Norms?

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