'Ethics of Code' for AI in business

By Kriti Sharma   25 Jul 2017

Building chatbots and AI that helps our customers is the easy part - the wider questions that the rising tide of AI brings are broad and currently very topical. Because of this, we developed our AI within a set of guiderails, these are the core principles that we believe help us to ensure our products are safe and ethical.

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The 'Ethics of Code' is designed to protect the user and to ensure that tech giants are building AI that is safe, secure, fits the use case and most importantly is inclusive and reflects the diversity of the users it serves.

As a leader in AI for business we would like to call others to task – big businesses, small business and hackers alike - and ask them to bear these principles in mind when developing or deploying their own artificial intelligence.

1. AI should reflect the diversity of the users it serves

Both industry and community must develop effective mechanisms to filter bias as well as negative sentiment in the data that AI learns from – ensuring AI does not perpetuate stereotypes.

2. AI must be held to account – and so must users

Users build a relationship with AI and start to trust it after just a few meaningful interactions. With trust, comes responsibility and AI needs to be held accountable for its actions and decisions, just like humans. Technology should not be allowed to become too clever to be accountable. We don't accept this kind of behaviour from other 'expert' professions, so why should technology be the exception.

3. Reward AI for 'showing its workings'

Any AI system learning from bad examples could end up becoming socially inappropriate – we have to remember that most AI today has no cognition of what it is saying. Only broad listening and learning from diverse data sets will solve for this.

One of the approaches is to develop a reward mechanism when training AI. Reinforcement learning measures should be built not just based on what AI or robots do to achieve an outcome, but also on how AI and robots align with human values

to accomplish that particular result.

4. AI should level the playing field

Voice technology and social robots provide newly accessible solutions, specifically to people disadvantaged by sight problems, dyslexia and limited mobility. The business technology community needs to accelerate the development of new technologies to level the playing field and broaden the available talent pool.

5. AI will replace, but it must also create

There will be new opportunities created by the robotification of tasks, and we need to train humans for these prospects. If business and AI work together it will enable people to focus on what they are good at - building relationships and caring for customers.

ABOUT KRITI SHARMA

Kriti Sharma is VP of bots and AI at Sage. She was recently named in Forbes magazine's 30 under 30. She built her first robot at the age of 17, designed to bring chocolates to its controller. The software bots she works on at Sage today are designed to helping business builders do less admin, and more of what they love.
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