

AI and the News: An Open Challenge | Ethics and Governance of AI Initiative

By Ethics and Governance of AI Initiative

September 13, 2018

Applications due October 12, 2018. Winners will be announced March 2019.

Artificial intelligence — and its subfield of machine learning — is reshaping the landscape of news and information. From the algorithms filtering what we see on social media, to the use of machine learning to generate news stories and online content, AI has and will continue to play a major role in shaping what and how information is distributed and consumed.

As researchers and companies continue to advance the technical state of the art, we believe that it is necessary to ensure that AI serves the public good. This means not only working to address the problems presented by existing AI systems, but articulating what realistic, better alternatives might look like.

This open challenge, which will award up to \$750,000 to a range of projects, is seeking fresh and experimental approaches to four specific problems at the intersection of AI and the news:

- **Governing the Platforms:** Ensuring that AI serves the public good requires the public to know how the platforms are deploying these technologies and how they shape the flow of information through the web today. However, as many others have pointed out, the level of transparency and accountability around these decisions has been limited, and we're seeking ideas that help to raise it. This might be new policies in the form of draft legislation, or technical tools that help keep an eye on the information ecosystem.
- **Stopping Bad Actors:** AI might be applied by a variety of actors to spread disinformation, from powering believable bots on social media to fabricating realistic video and audio. This exacerbates a range of existing problems in news and information. We're seeking approaches we can take to detect and counter this next generation of propaganda.

- **Empowering Journalism:** Journalists play a major role in shaping public understanding of AI, its impact on the information ecosystem, and what we should do to ensure the technology is used ethically. But it can be hard to keep up with the latest developments in the technical research and communicate them effectively to society at large. We're seeking ideas that will help bolster this community in this important work, and give them the tools they need to effectively communicate about AI and its impact.
- **Reimagining AI and News:** It is easy to find a lot of things to critique about the influence that automation and AI have on the news and information space. More challenging is articulating plausible alternatives for how these platforms should be designed and how they should deploy these technologies. We're interested in ideas that paint a picture of the future: How might platforms from smartphones and social media sites to search engines and online news outlets be redesigned in part or entirely to better serve the public good?

We believe there are a diverse range of communities that can bring their expertise to bear on these issues but are frequently left out of the conversation. This challenge is open to anyone: We're looking for journalists, designers, technologists, activists, entrepreneurs, artists, lawyers from a variety of communities around the world — anyone who thinks they have a good idea about addressing these problems that may not have been tried before.

Source: [AI and the News: An Open Challenge | Ethics and Governance of AI Initiative](#)