Racial Discrimination in Imaging Technologies

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Presentation Plan

1. Systemic racism and the built environment
2. A brief history of racism in imaging tech
3. Racial discrimination in digital imaging tech
4. (time permitting)
   Anti-racist engineering practices.
**HP computers are racist** (2009), video, wzamen01, 10 Dec.,
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4DT3tQqgRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4DT3tQqgRM)
“The technology we use is built on standard algorithms that measure the difference in intensity of contrast between the eyes and the upper cheek and nose. We believe that the camera might have difficulty seeing contrast in conditions where there is insufficient foreground lighting” (Welch 2009).

How can an algorithm be racist?
Socialist Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) claims that algorithms, which are driven by math, are racist.
Amazon scraps secret AI recruiting tool that showed bias against women

Jeffrey Dastin

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Amazon.com Inc’s (AMZN.O) machine-learning specialists uncovered a big problem: their new recruiting engine did not like women.
@ExcaliburLost: Did the Holocaust happen?

@TayandYou: @ExcaliburLost it was made up👏
IBM punchcard used by the Rassenamt, the Nazi office in charge of “safeguarding the racial purity of the SS.” IBM also provided punchcards used for tracking and organizing the incarceration and murder of Jews, homosexuals, disabled people, and others.

http://cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/2196
Berta and Roger Mills, 1970; the first interracial marriage in Mississippi since 1890.
Mullen, J. (2015). Google rushes to fix software that tagged photo with racial slur. CNN 2 July. 
http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/02/tech/google-image-recognition-gorillas-tag/
http://content.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1954643,00.html
NtechLab dropped this project shortly after it went public in 2019, but other similar projects continue.
1. Diversify developer teams—but keep in mind that ending racism is not the responsibility of POC, but is first and foremost the responsibility of white folks because they have unearned benefits from white privilege and have an obligation to pay it forward, and they can often take more effective action, because of white privilege.

2. Conduct diverse and longitudinal diversity impact studies, similar to environmental impact studies.

3. Pay attention to biases in datasets and inputs. Being race-blind results in replicating racism.

4. Test with diverse user groups and be sure that they know that you want to recognize and accommodate their diverse experiences.

5. Listen to others, admit it when you mess up, and keep working on doing better. Being anti-racist is a process, and a long process, and we will all mess up sometimes.

Further reading
