The Fallacy of AI Functionality

Description

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Evaluators should have a basic working knowledge of how to evaluate algorithms used to manage human affairs (law, finance, social services, etc) because algorithm designs embody human decisions and can have large scale consequences. For this reason I recommend:

Raji ID, Kumar IE, Horowitz A, et al. (2022) The Fallacy of AI Functionality. In: *2022 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, Seoul Republic of Korea, 21 June 2022, pp. 959â??972. ACM. DOI: 10.1145/3531146.3533158.

Deployed AI systems often do not work. They can be constructed haphazardly, deployed indiscriminately, and promoted deceptively. However, despite this reality, scholars, the press, and policymakers pay too little attention to functionality. This leads to technical and policy solutions focused on â??ethicalâ?• or value-aligned deployments, often skipping over the prior question of whether a given system functions, or provides any benefits at all. To describe the harms of various types of functionality failures, we analyze a set of case studies to create a taxonomy of known AI functionality issues. We then point to policy and organizational responses that are often overlooked and become more readily available once functionality is drawn into focus. We argue that functionality is a meaningful AI policy challenge, operating as a necessary first step towards protecting affected communities from algorithmic harm.

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