

Translational AI Center (TrAC) Seminar Spring 2024

Carrie Alexander

February 7th at 1:00 PM (US Central Time)

<https://iastate.zoom.us/j/95263587232?pwd=K1BVcURvWExFb3pUT000NIRwdFZsZz09>

The “Fatal Flaw” in AI Policy & Governance, and a Simple Yet Strategic Framework that May Help

Abstract

Much of policy and governance for AI can be divided into three broad categories. There are “soft law” mechanisms, such as ethics frameworks and guidelines. There are calls for and efforts toward creating new regulations or “hard law” targeted at the unique capabilities and risks posed by AI. And there are those who argue that we should make better use of existing law and policy. All of these pathways generally share a goal of reining in AI and/or the corporations and governments that use it, so that the benefits of these technologies are not captured by a few private interests at the expense of risks and harms borne by the public. This is a reasonable goal. However, almost all of these paths, for their many differences, rest upon a single assumption and method, that, because of its popularity and pervasiveness, has become a “fatal flaw” of AI governance, and even of governance broadly. This assumption will be discussed, along with several ways in which the assumption is countered by facts identified in various literatures. The gap in governance methods will be identified and a short framework will be offered as a model to help to fill this gap.

Short Bio

Dr. Carrie Alexander is a postdoctoral scholar for Socioeconomics, Ethics, and Policy at the USDA-NIFA/NSF AI Institute for Next Generation Food Systems (AIFS), led by UC Davis. She earned her Ph.D. in U.S. and Environmental History at UC Davis, specializing in governance and negotiation strategies regarding property, taxation, and crime in California. Her research areas include AI ethics, corporate law, liability frameworks, negotiation, risk, and governance in contexts of intense cultural and technological change and high-stakes political and economic decision-making. Drawing on computational and qualitative methods including regression and topic modeling, textual analysis, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, she develops research and solutions that translate across disciplinary lines and sectors to identify and solve systemic/root problems. She has a lengthy professional background in web, print, and game design and marketing with state organizations, large corporations, and start-ups. She was also a Mellon Public Scholar with California Humanities and a public humanities research consultant for the State of California. She has lectured, published, and presented on AI technologies, law, and policy, negotiation strategies, cultural and technological change, and built and natural environments. She is passionate about working strategically, creatively, and collaboratively toward an achievable and resilient future.