

iConference 2022 Interactive Event Proposal

Title: Artificial Intelligence and Inequities Amid COVID-19

Type: Workshop

Organizers: Xiaojun (Jenny) Yuan¹, DeeDee Bennett Gayle¹, Abebe Rorissa², George Berg¹, Dan Wu³

¹College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, The University at Albany, State University of New York, NY 12222

²University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 37996

³Wuhan University, Wuhan, China

Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) has changed our daily lives and enabled us to evolve and advance human capabilities. Though we lived in a digitally connected world prior to COVID-19, during the pandemic the impact of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence is ever more present. In particular, AI may include built-in bias during data collection or it may be used to perpetuate inequities based on how it is implemented. These inequities may manifest among various sectors, including government, education, employment, healthcare, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened many inequities and challenges for socially vulnerable populations especially in regards to emerging technologies. The workshop will provide a forum for researchers and practitioners to discuss key issues and lessons learned on AI and inequities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This multidisciplinary workshop will facilitate interactive discussions on the implications of these challenges from a variety of disciplines and perspectives in an international context.

Description:

Purpose and Intended Participants: To engage researchers working on single or multi-disciplinary research and practitioners interested in new perspectives on artificial intelligence technologies and inequities amid a global pandemic in an interactive discussion of issues and potential solutions in an international context.

Proposed Format: The workshop will begin with a poll of the participants to assess the types of barriers they think exist on the topic of AI and inequities. The remainder of the workshop will consist of a panel discussion among international practitioners and researchers working to address AI and inequities. A host of countries will be represented by the panelists, including the US, China, and Canada. To engage workshop attendees, we will have a moderator with prepared questions and/or discussion prompts for each panelist to address. Following the panelists' discussion on their experiences, we will open the floor for questions or commentary. This will ensure the workshop is interactive and participatory. The table below presents an approximate outline of the workshop.

Activity	Timing
Introductions	15 minutes
Poll of Participants	10 minutes
Speakers (invited speakers and authors of accepted papers)	2 hours (about 15 minutes each)
Discussion	40 minutes
Concluding Remarks	10 minutes
Total	3 hours and 15 mins

Engagement: We will start the workshop with an introduction of the aim of the session and outline the agenda. We will then ask participants to engage in a poll to learn about the challenges they believe exist on AI and inequities. We will ask participants to type their names, affiliations and locations in the chat window. During panel talks, participants will log questions in the online chat feature. We will combine their questions with prepared questions to guide group discussion. The feedback from the groups will provide the basis for recommendations to be shared with educators, businesses, and governments to aid in improving equity and diversity in the development and usage of AI technologies along the way.

Goals or Outcomes: The main goal of the workshop is to generate new ideas and to encourage discussion around solutions to challenges in addressing AI and inequities and ensuring equity and diversity in technology development/adoption and pandemic response across different disciplines.

The outcomes of the workshop will include:

- Fresh awareness of key issues about artificial intelligence and inequities.
- Practitioner recommendations and a research framework of key issues, lessons learned, and technology shortfalls and successes during COVID-19.
- Attention and awareness of challenges facing socially vulnerable populations in their usage of AI technologies.
- Considerations on how we provide professional suggestions for universal AI technology use and accessibility as we prepare for the future.
- Promote collaboration across countries on research and practices relevant to artificial intelligence and inequities.
- Act as a starting point for research and practitioner recommendations and as a base for academic papers.

In addition, the workshop organizers will edit a special issue of the Aslib Journal of Information Management on the topic. Workshop presenters and participants will be invited to submit manuscripts to the special issue.

Relevance to the iConference: The workshop is directly relevant to the theme of the iConference 2022 “Information for a better world: Shaping the global future.” The workshop will create a new dialogue on the importance of shaping the global future on an emerging technology for researchers and practitioners in information science during a global COVID-19 pandemic. It

will ensure that AI and inequities are understood and create awareness of the wide range of key issues and shared values, which will facilitate greater trust and mutual understanding between communities.

Duration: We would expect this to be a Half-Day event at the iConference. Two typical iConference sessions will be included. It lasts about 3 hours.

Attendance: We would expect 50-100 to attend.

Special Requirements: We want each participant to have access to the Chat window, and the organizers have access to the polling. If possible, we need live caption service.