

Preface for the Workshop on Public Interest AI 2024

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Abstract

As many AI projects claim to serve the public interest, this workshop brought together researchers and practitioners to critically examine what constitutes ‘public interest AI’. The workshop featured six peer-reviewed papers spanning topics from public health modeling to satellite imagery generation, which are published in these proceedings, complemented by discussions and keynote talks.

Keywords

public interest AI, AI ethics, AI for good, responsible AI

1. Motivation and Background

Many AI projects touch upon areas that impact the public interest, such as public health, accessibility, and urban planning. Despite the growing popularity of AI systems claiming to serve the common good, the criteria and qualities that define “public interest AI” remain rather fuzzy. This lack of clear definition presents a challenge for researchers, practitioners, and the public alike. In our interdisciplinary workshop, we aimed to connect public interest theory to such projects and foster exchange amongst researchers and practitioners in the field. Building upon discussions from our first workshop at KI2023, this second edition sought to explore common challenges, develop methods, and establish standards for AI systems serving the public interest.

The workshop addressed AI from an interdisciplinary perspective and solicited submissions on a wide range of topics that touch upon the public interest, including critical assessments of purported public interest AI systems. The event was co-located with the 47th German Conference on AI (KI 2024) at Julius-Maximilians Universität Würzburg. The workshop featured a keynote talk by Dr. Lucie-Aimée Kaffee from HuggingFace, who shared valuable insights on public interest AI from their perspective.

2. Accepted Contributions

The call for papers led to 13 submissions. After a double-blind peer-review process, six of the submitted manuscripts were accepted as part of the workshop, resulting in an acceptance rate of 46%. Of these three are regular length papers and three are short papers, as follows:

- “Generating Synthetic Satellite Imagery for Rare Objects: An Empirical Comparison of Models and Metrics” by Tuong Vy Nguyen, Johannes Hoster, Alexander Glaser, Kristian Hildebrand, and Felix Biessmann
- “Harnessing Probabilistic Logic Programming for the Transparent Local Modelling of Infectious Diseases” by Felix Weitkämper, Ameen Almiftah, and Kailin Sun
- “Towards a Semantic Format for FIM: Supporting German Public Services Using the GerPS-FIM-Microverse Ontology Pipeline” by Maximilian Raupach, Maximilian Enderling, Leila Feddoul, Hannes Legner, Marianne Mauch, and Birgitta König-Ries

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- “Data-driven Modeling of Combined Sewer Systems for Urban Sustainability: An Empirical Evaluation” by Vipin Singh, Tianheng Ling, Teodor Chiaburu, and Felix Biessmann
- “GPT-NL: Towards a Public Interest Large Language Model” by Tom Barbereau and Lieke Dom
- “Weizenbaum’s Legacy in the Era of Public Interest AI” by Anne Gerdes

3. Program Committee

In addition to the chairs, Dr. Asghari and Dr. Züger, the program committee consisted of a pan-European team of researchers from both computer/data science and social sciences:

- Dr. Filip Biały – European New School of Digital Studies (Poland)
- Leila Feddoul – Friedrich Schiller University Jena (Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Michael Gille – HAW Hamburg (Germany)
- Freya Hewett – University of Potsdam and HIIG (Germany)
- Stefan Hildebrand – TU Berlin (Germany)
- Dr. Valerie Krug – Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg (Germany)
- Dr. René Mahieu – Open University (Netherlands)
- Dr. Salar Mohtaj – TU Berlin (Germany)
- Dr. Arman Noroozian – European Center for Algo. Transparency (Belgium)
- Johannes Schleiss – Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg (Germany)
- Thorben Schomacker – HAW Hamburg (Germany)
- Dr. Kris Shrishak – Irish Council for Civil Liberties (Ireland)
- Dr. Paul Springer – MI4People (Germany)
- Prof. Dr. Marina Tropmann-Frick – HAW Hamburg (Germany)

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