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Applying Design Justice Network Principles to AI Generator Design

As advancements in AI exponentially increase and more and more people become familiar with various platforms, it is vital that we as a society agree on various ethical standards. When designing AI platforms, thoughtful and humanistic approaches must be implemented to protect the artists, designers, and users of our world. The goal of this reflection is to explore how the Design Justice Principles can be used to make sure ethical practices are being implemented.

The first Design Justice Principle emphasizes the importance of using design to "sustain, heal, and empower our communities, as well as to seek liberation from exploitative and oppressive systems (Design Justice Network)." This specific principle is very important when it comes to using AI for the general good. These technologies should be used to address societal issues and positively impact communities that are currently marginalized. The key factor in this is receiving input from these communities during the design process. We discussed in class that this can be difficult but is definitely not impossible. Design in general is a privileged field, so it sometimes requires the extra mile to gain these perspectives. This will ensure that the needs of these communities are being met in the most efficient way possible.

The third principle states that, "We prioritize design's impact on the community over the intentions of the designer (Design Justice Network)." This principle explains the importance of

prioritizing the community's needs. When considering AI design, this could include collaborating with artists, designers, and other potential users to pinpoint certain wants/needs. Surveys or polls could also be used to accomplish this goal. This sense of community within design will foster a sense of ownership among users and contributors. I think this principle also brings up the interesting point of not prioritizing the *designer's* intentions. This could help avoid inflated egos or selfish motives within the design community. It is important to constantly realign with the goal of working for the greater good, whatever that means in the specific context of the situation. This specific principle can be correlated with predictive policing (Onuoha & Cyborg, 2022). The needs of the community could include sending specified task forces to 911 calls instead of armed officers. Further, the communities could be harmfully impacted by discrimination with these AI programs. It is vital with AI features like these that the community remains involved in the design process.

Principle 8 says, "We work towards sustainable, community led and controlled futures (Design Justice Network)." It is important the power remains with the people, and that designers do not create environments where they have uneven amounts of control in the AI spheres. This would inevitably lead to societies dominated by fear and division among various communities. In order to avoid this possibility, designers must engage with forums or surveys as I mentioned earlier to constantly remain tapped into the local narrative surrounding AI. By doing so, communities can feel as though they have partial ownership and design input to these platforms. This is especially important in the early stages of AI, when there is a lot of fear and concern surrounding it. Further, this would foster a sense of shared responsibility in maintaining and improving the system over time.

Principle 7 says, "We share knowledge and findings from our work with the community (Design Justice Network)." The design process can never reach its full potential without prioritizing collaboration. In addition, this sense of transparency is key when designing, especially when the technologies at hand are somewhat new to the general public. The design collective can benefit from shared information. This way, designers can improve and adjust AI in the best way possible.

This democratization of AI technology allows for artistic expression and empowers artists and designers to use AI as a tool for positive social impact. By applying the Design Justice Network principles, we can ensure more equitable and inclusive outcomes. Prioritizing the well-being and empowerment of communities, centering community needs over individual intentions, embracing community led and controlled futures, and promoting knowledge sharing all contribute to a design process that fosters positive impacts.

Citations

Onuoha, M., & Cyborg, M. (2022, January 21). *A People's Guide to Tech*. Allied Media

Projects. https://alliedmedia.org/resources/peoples-guide-to-ai

Read the principles. Design Justice Network. (n.d.).

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