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The particularities of big data ethics

Renee Carpentier

University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada

The future technologies for knowledge discoveries in data are full of promises and benefits for research advancements in various fields of expertise such as medicine, environment and social sciences but also involve risks and ethics issues requiring a better understanding to avoid significant errors in our decision making. This presentation will concentrate on the ethics of big data in order to highlight their particularities mostly based on the technical capacities to connect different data sources making knowledge discoveries more effective. Ethics are part of the research world since a long time especially when human subjects are involved in order to ensure privacy and avoid abusive treatments during experimentations. When it comes to the ethics of big data, some particularities need to be understood in order to take the right decisions and elaborate good policies. We will see that these particularities of big data ethics include the unprecise ownership and control of data, the sharing and re-use of data across diverse contexts and the diversity of actors and interests involved bringing new power distributions between big data collectors, big data users, and big data generators. This context specific to big data requires new ways of thinking ethics such as the ethics of care recently elaborated in order to develop models of social property of data focusing on sharing and collaboration and considering big data as a social resource rather than a private resource.

carpentier.renee@courrier.uqam.ca