

Its your data, but my algorithms

ABSTRACT

The world is increasingly digital, but the understanding of how the digital affects everyday life is still often confused. Digitalisation is sometimes optimistically thought as a rescue from hardships, be it economical or even educational. On the other hand, digitalization is seen negatively as something one just can't avoid. Digital technologies have replaced many previous tools used in work as well as in leisure. Furthermore, digital technologies present an agency of their own into the human processes as marked by David Berry. Through manipulating data through algorithms and communicating not only with humans, but other devices as well, digital technology presents new kind of challenges for the society and individual. These digital systems and data flows get their instructions from the code that runs on these systems. The underneath code itself is not objective nor value-free and carries own biases as well as programmers, software companies or larger cultural viewpoints objectives. As such, digital technology affects to the ways, we structure and comprehend, or are even able to comprehend the world around us.

This article looks at the surrounding digitality through an artistic research project. Through using code not as a functional tool but in a postmodern way as a material for expression, the research focuses on how code as art can express the digital condition that might otherwise be difficult to put into words or comprehend in everyday life. The art project consists of a drawing robot controlled by EEG-headband that the visitor can wear. The headband allows the visitor to control the robot through the EEG-readings read by the headband. As such the visitor might get a feeling of being able to control the robot, but at the same time the robot interprets the data through its algorithms and thus controls the visitor's data and the robot's actions.

The aim of this research project is not to focus on the interaction design or illustrating some aspects of brain science, instead the project aims to give perspectives to the everydayness of digitality. It wants to question how we comprehend digital in everyday life and asks how we should embody digitality in the future. The benefits of artistic research are in the way it can broaden the conceptions of how we know and as such can deepen one's understanding of the complexities of the world. Furthermore, artistic research can expand the meaning to alternative interpretations of the research subjects. As such, this research project aims at the same time to deepen the discussion of digitalization and to broaden it to alternative understandings. The alternative ways of seeing a phenomenon, like digitality, are essential in the ways future is developed.

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