

SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS

Strategy Committee

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Proposal for Ethical AI and Data Science Seminar series

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Background – Ethical issues in AI and Data Science have become increasingly important and high-profile. We would like to run a seminar series bringing leading figures in this area to Edinburgh.

Action requested from the committee – Approval of this proposal

Main subject text

We envisage a monthly seminar series (excluding holiday periods) of roughly 8 speakers for the year. The speakers would come from the UK, Europe and North America.

Topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Fairness in AI and Data Science algorithms (e.g. counteracting the effect of classification algorithms that may reinforce existing societal biases; understanding the limits of achievability of universal fairness).
- Privacy in the digital age: technological solutions (e.g., differential privacy), ethics, the law. Quantifying the trade-offs between the value of personalized digital services and data privacy loss.
- Transparency, i.e. being open and clear to the end user about how an outcome, such as a classification, a decision, or a prediction, is made. Transparency can enable accountability, i.e. the means to determine and assign responsibility for a judgement made by a machine.
- Other topics at the interface of AI, Data Science, and ethics/society/law.

Equality and diversity implications – The selection process for speakers will include consideration of diversity.

Resource implications (staff, space, budget) – Costs: We would estimate an average cost of £1,500 per seminar, taking into account travel, subsistence and a reception after each talk. However, this need not all be borne by the School; for example a number of CDTs have funds for "distinguished lectures" or similar.