

Opportunity for a Master's Thesis Project:

What are the ethical implications of automated content moderation tools to ensure and protect freedom of speech on social media platforms?

Description:

A functioning democracy depends on the guarantee of freedom of speech. On the other hand, every democracy and indeed every society places some limits on the exercise of speech to protect other important values (e.g. privacy, security, avoiding harm etc.). Understanding the ethical implications of software tools to detect and possibly delete unwanted speech, e.g. hate speech, on social media is an increasingly important undertaking for at least three reasons: first, what arguments speak for and against making for-profit platform operators (e.g. Facebook) responsible for the guarantee of free speech? Second, who should decide what forms of speech are permissible and impermissible? Third, and most centrally, does the use of machine learning-based content moderation tools deciding what can and what cannot be said on social media create novel ethical challenges? For example, how can we ethically justify the deployment of content moderation technology to prevent citizens from expressing their opinions? Does it make a difference if technology is used in this context?

Requirements:

We are looking for a master student in philosophy (and related disciplines) with a strong interest in freedom of speech. Candidates should be highly motivated to work on technical topics such as machine learning tools in particular in the context of social media platforms. High proficiency in English is required.

If you are interested, please contact me at severin.engelmann@tum.de

Severin Engelmann
PhD candidate
Professorship of Cyber Trust
Faculty of Informatics
Technical University of Munich

Munich, July 19, 2020