



Association for  
Computing Machinery

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **US AND EUROPEAN COMPUTING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS ANNOUNCE STEPS TO PREVENT ALGORITHMIC BIAS**

#### **ACM US Public Policy Council and ACM Europe Policy Committee Issue Seven Principles to Foster Algorithmic Transparency and Accountability**

**NEW YORK, May 25, 2017** – Recognizing the ubiquity of algorithms in our daily lives, as well as their far-reaching impact, the ACM US Public Policy Council (USACM) and the ACM Europe Policy Committee (EUACM) today issued [a joint statement and a list of seven principles](#) designed to address potential harmful bias. The goals of the statement include: providing context for what algorithms are, how they make decisions, and the technical challenges and opportunities to prevent and mitigate potential harmful bias. The ACM US Public Policy Council approved the principles earlier this year. Today's announcement demonstrates and affirms their shared support for principles to help minimize the potential for harm in algorithmic decision making.

Algorithms, the set of instructions computers employ to carry out a task, influence almost every aspect of society. The explosive growth of data collection, coupled with increasingly sophisticated algorithms, has resulted in a significant increase in automated decision making, as well as a greater reliance on algorithms in human decision making. Industry forecasters believe software programs incorporating automated decision making will only increase in the coming years as artificial intelligence becomes more mainstream. One of the major challenges of this emerging reality is to ensure that algorithms do not reinforce harmful and/or unfair biases.

A few examples of potential algorithmic bias that have been featured in government reports and news articles include: (1) Job hunting websites: Do these sites provide more listings of high-paying jobs to men than to women? (2) Credit bureaus: Does the dataset that algorithms weigh in determining credit scores contain prejudicial information? (3) Social media: What factors go into determining the news items that are served up to users?

The Statement on Algorithmic Transparency and Accountability was designed to be consistent with ACM's Code of Ethics.

#### **About USACM**

The [ACM US Public Policy Council \(USACM\)](#) serves as the focal point for ACM's interactions with the US

government in matters of US public policy related to information technology. ACM US Public Policy Council statements represent the views of the Council and do not necessarily represent the views of the Association.

**About EUACM**

The [ACM Europe Policy Committee \(EUACM\)](#) is a standing committee of ACM Europe. It serves as the focal point for ACM's interactions with governmental bodies in Europe, the computing community, and the public in matters of European public policy related to computing and technology. ACM Europe Policy Committee statements represent the views of the Committee and do not necessarily represent the views of the Association.

**About ACM**

[ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery](#), is the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field's challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.

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