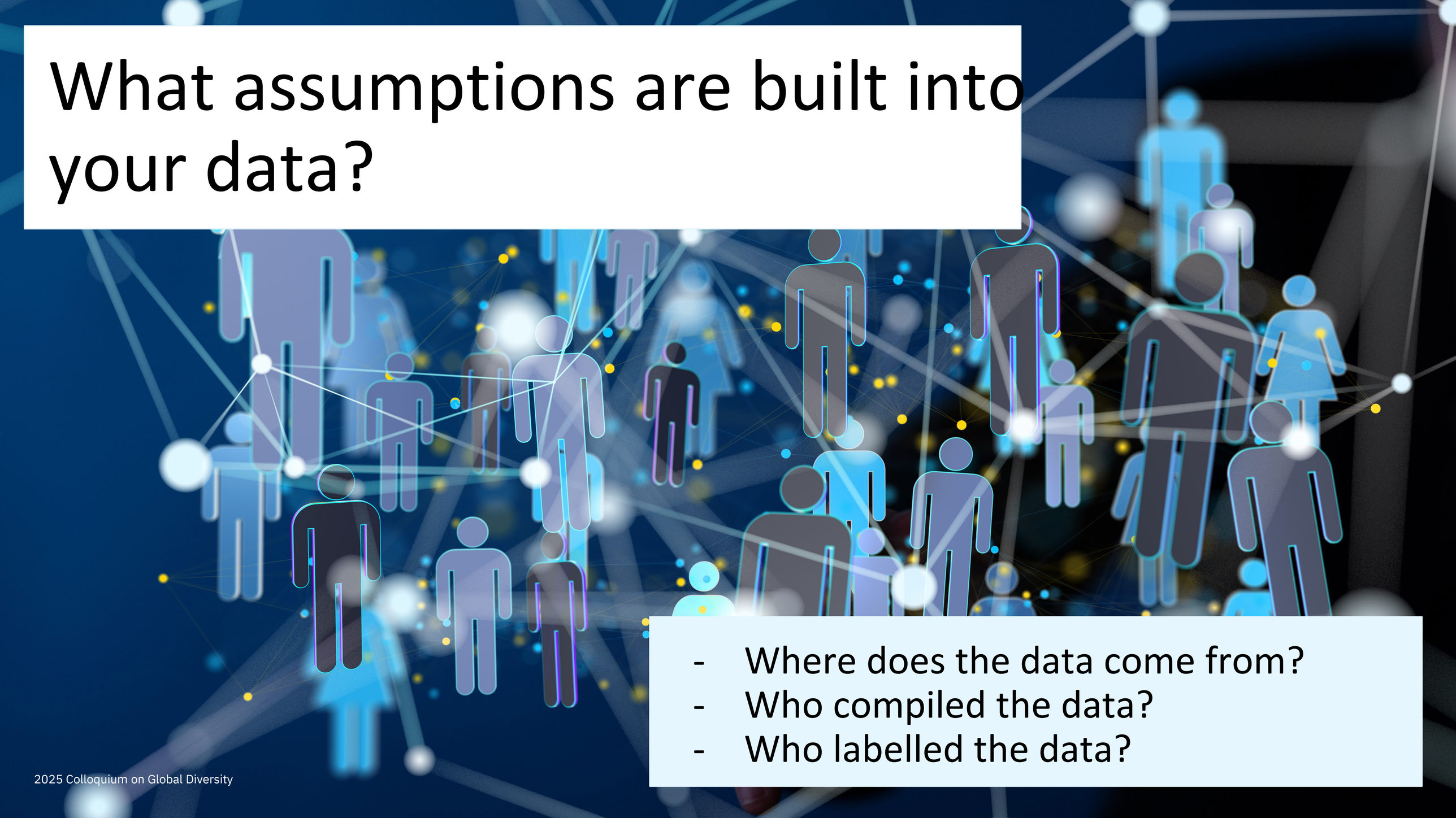
The Intersectionality of AI & Inclusion

2025 Colloquium on Global Diversity

Diversity and inclusion must be prioritized at every stage of AI — design, development and deployment.

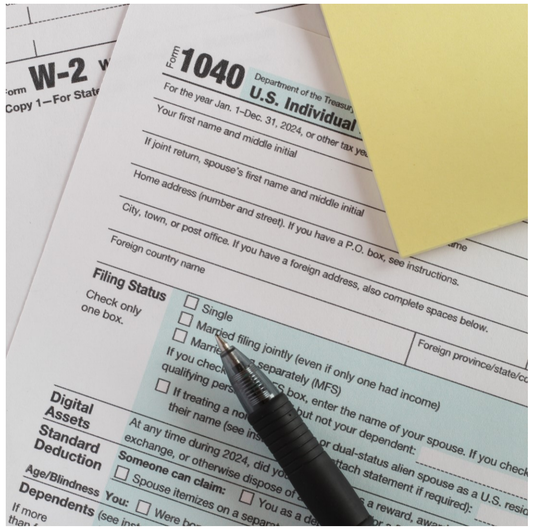
What assumptions are built into your data?



- Where does the data come from?
- Who compiled the data?
- Who labelled the data?

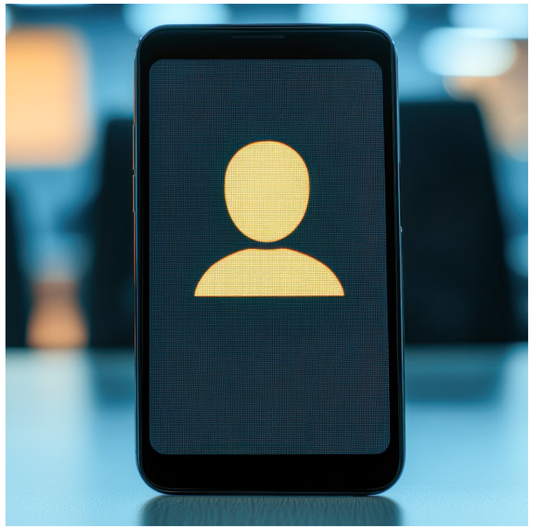
AI Assumptions

Would you trust a financial AI system to approve or deny your loan if it was trained primarily on data from high-income neighborhoods?



Can a virtual assistant truly understand and serve diverse users if it has only been trained on Western languages and cultural norms?

Would you feel comfortable being evaluated for a job by an AI that analyzes your facial expressions for emotional cues?



Potential Goals

- Hiring diverse talent
- Inclusive culture
- Holistic approach
- Intersectional analysis
- Bias mitigation
- Ethical AI development
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Community engagement
- Empowerment
- Equity
- Diverse perspectives
- Inclusive design
- Policy reform
- Continuous learning

Possible Challenges

- Bias amplification
- Discrimination
- Marginalization
- Homogeneous workforce
- Negative feedback loop
- Vicious cycle
- Gender bias
- Racial bias
- Stereotyping
- Systemic inequalities
- Exclusion
- Power imbalances
- Cultural insensitivity
- Unintended consequences
- Algorithmic bias

Challenges of diverse representation in AI development

Facial Recognition: A study by Joy Buolamwini revealed that commercial facial recognition systems had error rates of up to **34.7%** for darker-skinned women, compared to **0.8%** for lighter-skinned men, indicating significant racial and gender biases.

Employment Opportunities: AI systems with inherent biases can perpetuate existing disparities in hiring, **often disadvantaging qualified candidates** from underrepresented groups.

Workforce Representation: A 2024 report by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission highlighted that women comprised less than **23%** of tech workers, while Black and Hispanic workers made up **7.4%** and **10%**, respectively, indicating underrepresentation in the tech industry.

Healthcare Algorithms: An investigation found that a healthcare algorithm **favored white patients** over sicker Black patients. The algorithm predicted healthcare needs based on costs, leading to **underestimation** of the medical needs of Black patients who historically incurred lower healthcare costs.

Healthcare Outcomes: Biased AI systems in healthcare can lead to serious consequences, such as **unnecessary surgeries** or **missed diagnoses**, particularly affecting underrepresented groups.

Academic Representation: In 2018, it was reported that 80% of AI professors were male, underscoring the gender disparity in AI academia.

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AI ethics definition

AI ethics is a multidisciplinary field of study in which the main goal is to understand how to optimize AI’s beneficial impact while reducing risks and adverse outcomes for all stakeholders in a way that prioritizes human agency and well-being, as well as environmental flourishing.

AI Ethics through good governance

Consider forming an AI Ethics Board to identify and manage risks

- Route significant AI ethics issues to the AI Ethics Board for review and decisions
- Drive implementation and execution of AI ethics policies and practices within business units in accordance with a well - defined AI Ethics Governance Model and AI laws and regulations
- Communicate and educate workforce on AI ethics policies, points of view, practices, and risks
- Proactively identify and assess AI ethics risks
- Interlock with business and organization leaders regularly

The road to responsible AI

It’s important to adopt frameworks for systemic empathy. Bias must be proactively monitored for and mitigated throughout the AI lifecycle. It can never be completely eradicated from a human-based system, but with a holistic approach that includes people, ethical practices data, and tools, it can be managed. Essential elements are:

- **Fairness:** How can developers monitor whether their AI model is fair towards everybody, including historically underrepresented groups?

- **Explainability:** An AI system should be explainable, particularly with respect to what went into its algorithm’s recommendations.

- **Robustness:** Can the AI model protect against intentional manipulation, so it doesn’t disproportionately benefit a particular person or group? AI-powered systems must be actively defended from adversarial attacks, minimizing security risks and enabling confidence in system outcomes.
- ...

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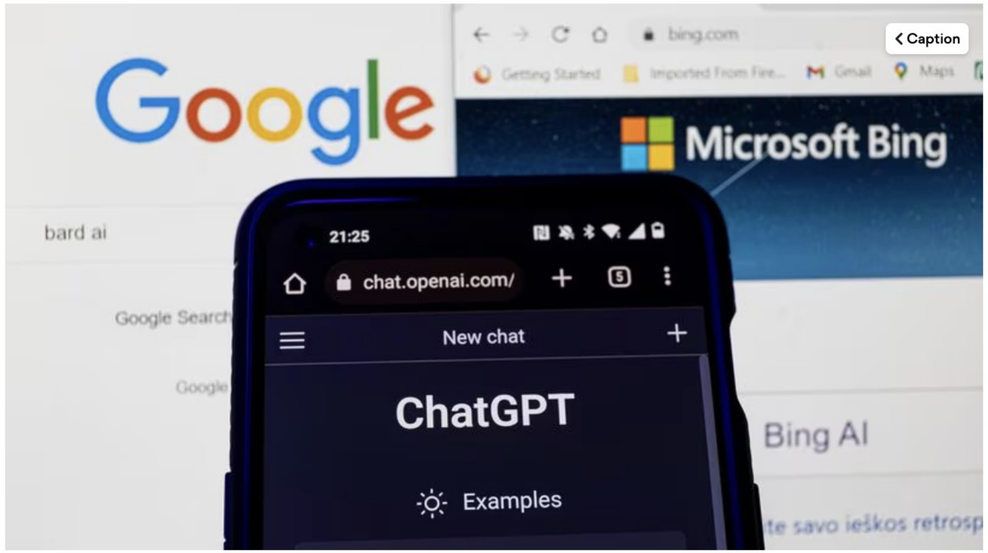
Opinion: Let’s build an ethical AI culture for all

Building inclusive, fair artificial intelligence systems requires intentional work at all phases of development and use.



Credit: TNS