

Generations of STEM: Joy Buolamwini

Founder, Algorithmic Justice League

While studying at Georgia Tech, Joy Buolamwini trained social robots to play peek-a-boo and quickly learned that the facial recognition software used with the robots wouldn't recognize her dark skin tone, but would be able to distinguish her lighter skin toned colleague. Years later while researching at

MIT, Joy once again ran into the issue of facial recognition software being unable to recognize her face. In a world where technology is integrated within healthcare, economic opportunities and our criminal justice system, Joy's research revealed the dangers of bias built into our technology.

This led Joy to start a grassroots movement called the "Algorithmic Justice League" in an effort to create more inclusive code. Through the work of the AJL, a new benchmark for computer vision was created after auditing several of the leading facial recognition applications. The response was profound; companies like IBM and Microsoft began improving their software to be more ethical and responsible. Additionally, Joy went on to create the "Safe Face Pledge" so that tech companies could commit to a more equitable world where technology can work for everyone.



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