

Birth of Bias

Implicit bias' permanence on
Wikipedia

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Session Agenda

- Learning outcomes (what we will learn today)
- Small activity
- Implicit bias facts
- Learn how to recognize bias
- Discussion and Questions

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Recall the definition and the way we develop implicit biases
- Identify ways to impact implicit bias in your own life
- Discuss the impact of implicit bias on Wikipedia

Embrace Discomfort

Today we will think about our own biases.

This discussion today will make you uncomfortable.

That's okay.

When we are uncomfortable, that means growth is happening!

Stop trying to be
good people.

We need real people.

-Vernā Myers

Be honest with yourself. Society will
grow only if we grow.

What is bias?

The stories we make up about people, places, or things, before we really know who or what they are.

Feelings, thoughts, or beliefs you automatically associate with the people, places, or things, without even thinking about it.

Cats or Dogs?

How many of you like cats?

How many of you like dogs?

If you like both cats and dogs,
pick the one you like the most.

Cats or Dogs?

Dog lovers, what do you think about people who like cats?

Cat lovers, what do you think about people who like dogs?

“oh, cat owners are so aloof” “cat people are lonely”

“Dog owners look like their dogs” “they wake up early”

That was bias.

**But was that
implicit bias?**

Implicit Bias

What is implicit bias?

Implicit bias goes deeper than bias.

Implicit bias is unconscious. It's your default setting.

It's what makes you feel safe. It's what you're afraid of.

It's bias we learn and we don't consciously realize we have.

Previous slide notes

Sometimes bias is just an unexamined set of defaults, but those can be just as damaging.

Examples of my own bias:

Bias about people who voted for Trump (not implicit)

Bias from Women's March talking to child and assuming he came with mom and dad instead of his two moms (implicit)

How is this different?

How are these types of biases different from each other?

- Conscious biases, when they might be inappropriate, we know we should hide them. Hiding not to be secretive but to not offend others.
- Implicit biases are sneaky. You can only see them by looking at your past situations.

How is bias a problem?

How is bias a problem for Wikipedia?

- Wikipedia's contributions are largely white and male (Cohen; Glott, Schmidt, and Ghosh)
- Perceived authority make combatting bias challenging (think about talk pages, RfC, debates, ANI)
- Creates gaps in content
“Wikipedia is characterized by uneven geographies, uneven directions, and uneven politics...” (Graham, 271)
- We can't possibly quantify it, but it's big.

Previous slide notes

It is not just about numbers of bodies. It is about the contributions and amount of participation.

This includes behavior norms that show up in conversations due to implicit bias. For example, many white men will speak over other people in conversation. This is an unconscious act, but still damaging.

Topic and language coverage is a real challenge we have, but being open to listening to others, giving them their time to speak, and learning from what they are saying will help move the community in the correct direction.

Check Your Bias

When entering into a discussion or topic, first ask yourself, “What are my biases?”

What is my bias about

- this situation?
- this person?
- this topic?

Previous slide notes

Biases are the reactions and thoughts we have first in a situation. They're our own individual default setting.

Biases can come up with emotions. Think about when you were mad about something or scared. What biases did you feel, even if just for a moment.

Practice!

- **Ask questions**

Written text is always hard to decipher without voice and facial expressions to give it context.

- **Follow the 24-hour rule**

Don't respond immediately. Emotions are often fueled by bias. Pause and reflect.

- **Write in a reflexive journal**

Researchers do this to help reveal any bias that may be affecting the project! You can do it too!

Practice!

- **Challenge bias**
Be civil. No one likes hearing they were wrong.
- **Be open to being challenged**
We make mistakes. Sometimes we think with our bias. This is a caring act. They care about you and other people by bringing your attention to your bias.
- **Be an advocate**
Bring attention to groups which might be excluded due to bias. Tell others how this bias affects inclusion.

Your Challenge for Wikimania:

Go connect with someone your bias might tell you to avoid.

Ask questions. Be interested. Learn about them.

Really connect with them on a human level.

Previous slide notes

Changing our bias takes time, but just like everything else we do, the more we do it, the easier it gets. Go try something new. Join a group or conversation you might not normally. Talk to someone and get to know them on a human level.

Discussion

Thank you!

I would love to connect with you!

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