



Is it time our devices showed a little respect?

Informing the design of respectful intelligent systems

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What *is* Respect?

- Respecting the speed limit while driving (directive)
- A sailor's respect for the sea (obstacle)
- Respecting someone's skill at plastering (evaluative)
- Respecting the office of the president (institutional)

(Hudson, 1980)

Send web sites a "Do Not Track" signal that you don't want to be tracked

☒ Always





What *is* Respect?

- Something due to everyone?
- Something earned?
- A key component of human relationships, society, and culture
- A duty that we have to each other?
- A duty for Designers and Developers?



Overview

1. Introduction
2. Conceptualising Respect
3. Configurations of Respect
4. Respect and the Lifecycle of Intelligent Systems
5. Conclusions and Take-Aways

Conceptualising Respect





Kant & Respect for Persons

- Recognise the worth of others as human beings (and moral agents)
- Basis for modern human rights
- Imposes a moral obligation on people to treat others in such a way that they are ends in themselves

“One should always treat humanity, whether in oneself or in another, always as an end and never merely as a means”

Deontological, focussing on the morality of one's choices rather than evaluating the consequences



Kant & Respect for Persons - application to data and privacy

- Treating users and their needs genuinely
- Dark patterns/nudging behaviours
- Distinction between being respectful and other principles (e.g. fairness)
- Individual outcomes not just as a means to an end

Do features treat people's needs as ends in themselves?

Is a system fair/accessible/etc. but disrespectful?



Post-Kantian Respect

- Rejection of abstract equality in favour of individual equity
- Integrating care: rooted in the characteristics and relationships that make us unique
- Recognising the structural oppression that pervades society

Fairness typically focussed on notions of distributive justice, esp. Welfare and resources

Respect highlights the importance of justice as recognition



Post-Kantian Respect - application to data and privacy

- Imposing models of relationships and bodies
- Paternalistic interventions
- Reducing users to a small set of features for decision-making

What other objective functions might we use to create software?

How does a system interact with existing inequalities?



Respect as an Enacted and Dynamic Concept

- Respect does not exist a priori, but arises from our interactions and social norms
- How we ascribe agency to others
- Self identity
- Social signals about how we wish to be treated (deference/demeanour)

Respect for social and institutional conventions

Actions that confirm or constrain agency



Respect as an Enacted and Dynamic Concept - application to data and privacy

- Accessibility - conflating needing help with wanting help
- Performance of gender and other characteristics by chatbots and voice assistants
- Allowing people freedom to express themselves and self-identify

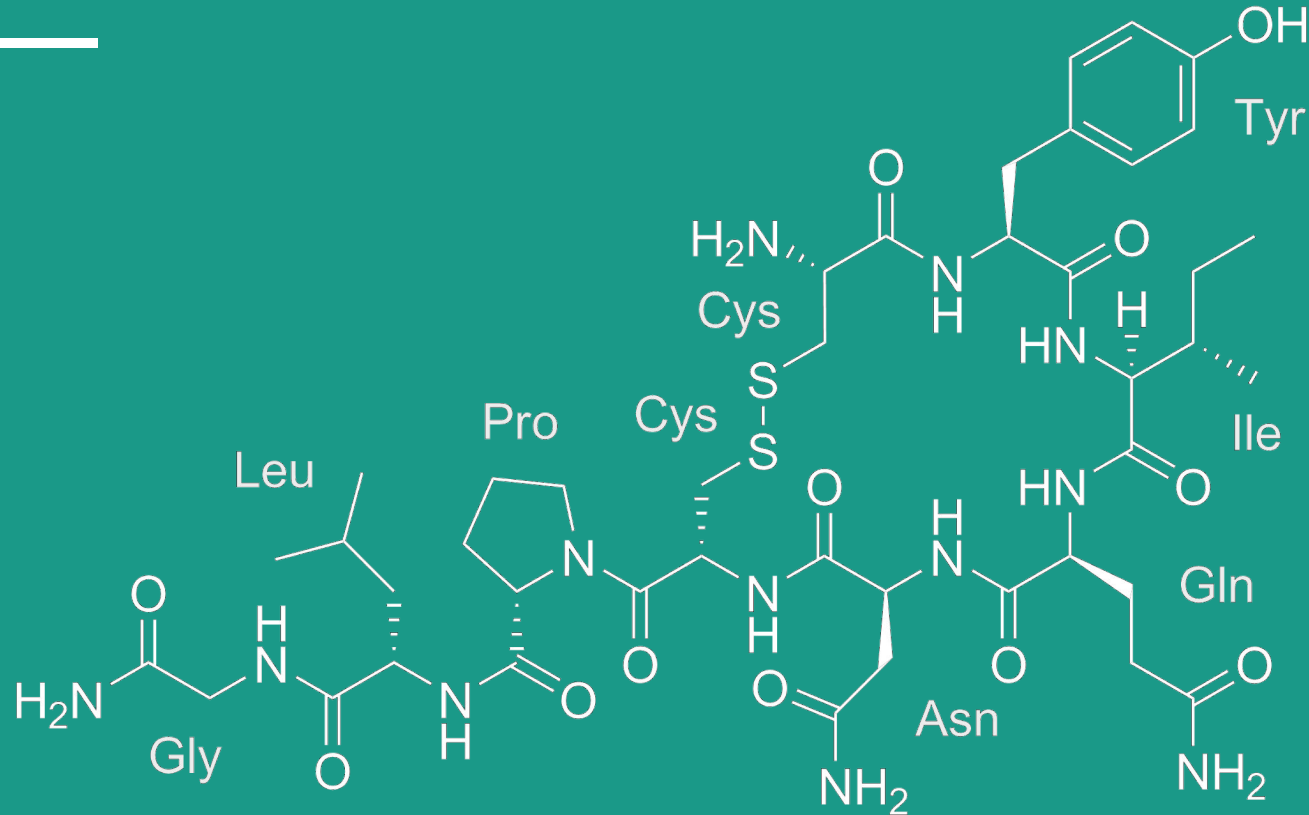
What do flows and structure assume about the user?

When software fails, what impact could this have on different groups?

Computers are social actors - deference and demeanour in the context of machines

E.g. Tamagotchi/Paro

Configurations of Respect





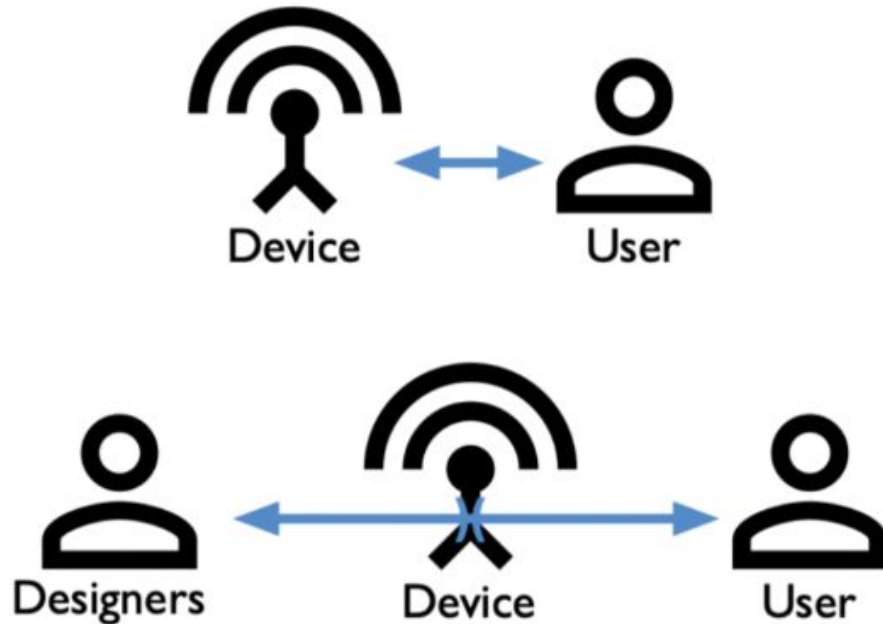
Complex Ecologies of Respect

- Systems are not monolithic - many parts brought together (data, services, artefacts)
- Constellations of interactions - designers have a different relation to the system from end users
- Where we draw system boundaries changes the way that we see respect

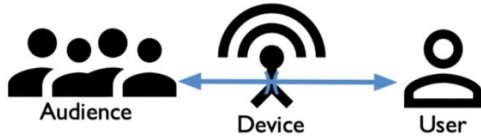
“Is Alexa sexist?”

- Interaction between end user and device
- Relation between designers and end user through the device
- Relation to communities as voices are developed by speech team
- Presentations through advertising about what device is for

Designers Respecting Users



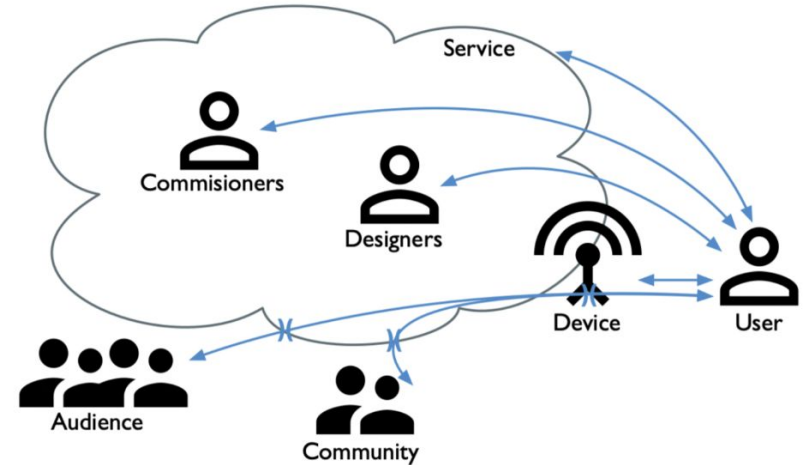
Users Respecting Each Other



Is the system designed such that it promotes respect *between* users?

Household / audience / strangers / friends

Example: automated email responses



Respect and the Lifecycle of Intelligent Systems



Creating New Systems

- How might different approaches/paradigms
- Are people a means or an end?
- What part of their experience is being optimised for?
- The 'colonial impulse' of ubiquitous computing



Collecting and Repurposing Data

- Moving from describing the world to describing people
- How the use and re-use of data affects the representation of individuals and groups
- How the system allows people to communicate with each other



Respectful Human-Algorithm Interaction

- Representation on design teams
- Implications of seemingly small decisions
- Compartmentalisation



End of Life for Data-Driven Systems

- Preservation of communities (e.g. Yahoo Answers)
- Including users and communities in the process of decommissioning
- Understanding the role a system has come to play in everyday activities
- Developing emotional attachment (e.g. Jibo)

Conclusion and Take-Aways



**What does respect mean for
your users and communities?**

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**Does the system treat people
as ends in themselves?**

What assumptions underpin its design decisions?

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Thanks for watching :)

Time for questions!

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