

Judith Simon

IT University of Copenhagen

Big Data & Machine Learning: Reflections on Trust, Trustworthiness & Responsibility

The realities and promises of applying Big Data and machine learning in different societal domains have stirred tremendous hopes and fears. While defendants praise big data as the "new oil" and urge for more public trust, critics have raised concerns regarding the negative implications of data practices on societal values such as privacy, equality or autonomy. Questioning the premises of such common request for more trust in big data and machine learning practices and in recognition of potential threats to civil liberties, I will argue that before addressing trust, we need to first focus on trustworthiness: only if systems are trustworthy and can reliably signal their trustworthiness rational trust in data-based processes and applications will be possible. Without such trustworthiness only blind trust can be achieved which should be neither philosophically nor politically attractive. Enabling and supporting such trustworthiness and rational trust, will require a recognition of the various responsibilities different stakeholders have in the context of big data and machine learning.