



ACM SIGAI Student Essay Contest on the Responsible Use of AI Technologies

The ACM Special Interest Group on Artificial Intelligence (ACM SIGAI) supports the development and responsible application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. An increasing number of AI technologies now affect our lives (or soon will), from intelligent assistants to self-driving cars. As a result, AI technologies are often in the news and a number of organizations (including the U.S. government) are trying to ensure that AI technologies are being used for the maximum benefit of society. As with all potentially transformative technologies (such as the automobile and the transistor), there is some uncertainty about exactly how the future will look like and how it should best be shaped to harness the power of AI technologies while avoiding any drawbacks or misuses. ACM SIGAI is in a unique position to shape the conversation around these issues.

ACM SIGAI is interested in obtaining input from students worldwide to help shape this debate. We therefore invite all student members to enter an essay in the ACM SIGAI Student Essay Contest, to be published in the ACM SIGAI newsletter “AI Matters,” answering the following questions while providing supporting evidence:

What do you see as the 1-2 most pressing ethical, social or regulatory issues with respect to AI technologies? What position or steps can governments, industries or organizations (including ACM SIGAI) take to address these issues or shape the discussions on them?

All sources must be cited but we are not interested in summaries of the opinions of others. Rather, we are interested in the informed opinions of the authors. Writing an essay on this topic requires some background knowledge. Possible starting points for acquiring such background knowledge are:

- Preparing for the Future of AI
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/whitehouse_files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/preparing_for_the_future_of_ai.pdf

- AI and Life in 2030
https://ai100.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/ai_100_report_0831fnl.pdf
- Toward a Code for Ethics in AI
<https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/efai/>
- AAAI 2016 Workshop on AI, Ethics and Society
<http://www.aaai.org/Library/Workshops/ws16-02.php>
- AAAI 2015 Workshop on AI and Ethics
<http://www.aaai.org/Library/Workshops/ws15-02.php>

ACM and ACM SIGAI

ACM brings together computing educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources, and address the field's challenges. As the world's largest computing society, ACM strengthens the profession's collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM's reach extends to every part of the globe, with more than half of its 100,000 members residing outside the U.S. Its growing membership has led to Councils in Europe, India, and China, fostering networking opportunities that strengthen ties within and across countries and technical communities. Their actions enhance ACM's ability to raise awareness of computing's important technical, educational, and social issues around the world. See <https://www.acm.org/> for more information.

ACM SIGAI brings together academic and industrial researchers, practitioners, software developers, end users, and students who are interested in AI. It promotes and supports the growth and application of AI principles and techniques throughout computing, sponsors or co-sponsors AI-related conferences, organizes the Career Network and Conference for early-stage AI researchers, sponsors recognized AI awards, supports AI journals, provides scholarships to its student members to attend conferences, and promotes AI education and publications through various forums and the ACM digital library. See <https://sigai.acm.org/> for more information.

Format and Eligibility

The ACM SIGAI Student Essay Contest is open to all ACM SIGAI student members at the time of submission. (If you are a student but not an ACM SIGAI member, you can join ACM SIGAI before submission for just USD 11 at <https://goo.gl/6kifV9> by selecting Option 1, even if you are not an ACM member.) Essays can be authored by one or more ACM SIGAI student members but each ACM SIGAI student member can (co-)author only one essay. Essays should be submitted as pdf documents of any style with at most 5,000 words via email to sigai@member.acm.org. The deadline for submissions is 11:59pm on March 1, 2017 (UTC-12). The authors certify with their submissions that they have followed the ACM publication policies on "Author Representations," "Plagiarism" and "Criteria for Authorship"

(<http://www.acm.org/publications/policies/>). They also certify with their submissions that they will transfer the copyright of winning essays to ACM.

Judges and Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged by a panel of leading AI researchers and ACM SIGAI officers. Winning essays should argue, convincingly, why the proposed issues are pressing (that is, of current concern), why the issues concern AI technology, and what position or steps governments, industries or organizations (including ACM SIGAI) can take to address the issues or shape the discussion on them. Winning essays will be selected based on depth of insight, creativity, technical merit and novelty of argument. All decisions by the judges are final.

Prizes

All winning essays will be published in the ACM SIGAI newsletter "AI Matters." ACM SIGAI provides five monetary awards of USD 500 each as well as 45-minute skype sessions with the following AI researchers:

Murray Campbell (Senior Manager, IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center)

Eric Horvitz (Managing Director, Microsoft Research)

Peter Norvig (Director of Research, Google)

Stuart Russell (Professor, University of California at Berkeley)

Michael Wooldridge (Head of the Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford)

One award is given per winning essay. Authors or teams of authors of winning essays will pick (in a preselected random order) an available skype session or one of the monetary awards until all skype sessions and monetary awards have been claimed. ACM SIGAI reserves the right to substitute a skype session with a different AI researcher or a monetary award for a skype session in case an AI researcher becomes unexpectedly unavailable. Some prizes might not be awarded in case the number of high-quality submissions is smaller than the number of prizes.

Questions?

In case of questions, please first check the ACM SIGAI blog for announcements and clarifications: <https://sigai.acm.org/aimatters/blog/>. You can also contact the ACM SIGAI Student Essay Contest Organizers at sigai@member.acm.org.

Nicholas Mattei (IBM)

Albert Xin Jiang (Trinity University), ACM SIGAI Education Officer

ACM SIGAI Student Essay Contest Organizers

with involvement from

- Sven Koenig (University of Southern California), ACM SIGAI Chair
- Sanmay Das (Washington University in St. Louis), ACM SIGAI Vice Chair
- Rosemary Paradis (Leidos), ACM SIGAI Secretary/Treasurer
- Eric Eaton (University of Pennsylvania), ACM SIGAI AI Matters Editor-in-Chief
- Katherine Guo (Lockheed Martin), ACM SIGAI Membership Officer
- Benjamin Kuipers (University of Michigan), ACM SIGAI Ethics Officer
- Amy McGovern (University of Oklahoma), ACM SIGAI AI Matters Editor-in Chief
- Larry Medsker (George Washington University), ACM SIGAI Public Policy Officer
- Todd Neller (Gettysburg College), ACM SIGAI Education Officer
- Plamen Petrov (IBM), ACM SIGAI Industry Liaison Officer
- Michael Rovatsos (University of Edinburgh), ACM SIGAI Conference Officer
- David Stork (Rambus Labs), ACM SIGAI Award Officer