Transcript: ACCA Data & AI – Charles Radclyffe EthicsGrade

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

esg, ethics, acca, ai, data, impact, negative impact, realised, organisations, engineers, centres, journeys, recognising, ethical considerations, supercomputer, gpu acceleration, machine learning, digital, negligible, malmo

Hello, my name is Charles Radclyffe, and I'm a partner at ethics grade. At ethics grade, we help investors align capital with their values. And we have a particular focus on corporate digital responsibility, especially AI ethics. A decade ago, I was running a successful data analytics firm, and serving some of the biggest organisations in the world. It was a privilege to work with really smart engineers and to solve our client challenges using their data. But as we grew, I became increasingly concerned about the darker side attack and the potential negative impact our work might be having. I spent the last 10 years or so writing and speaking on the subject of digital ethics, and I'm delighted to see that organisations like the ACCA, are now recognising, they're not just that the membership will benefit from training and accreditation or machine learning skills. But also, to quote from their recent report, that with any technology with power comes responsibility. And in the case of machine learning, ethical considerations are never far away. I can't imagine that any ACCA member needs much of an introduction into ESG. But have you considered how AI ethics itself is an ESG issue? Let me start with a few examples to explain why the governance of technology systems, also known as corporate digital responsibility ought to be considered in the context of your ESG strategy. Elon Musk has recently brought the issue of the energy consumption of computers to a mainstream audience. But it's not just the energy efficiency of algorithmic systems, that should be a consideration. One well known satellite navigation platform realised that one of the greatest operational expenses was caused by the electricity usage of their data centres. To reduce this, they realised that the calculation of their customers journeys could be pushed down to their devices. And not just the journeys of that user. But indeed, every device connected to that app would operate as a node in a vast computational array. And that's very smart to help them not just reduce their costs, but also on the surface their co2 emissions also. But in fact, the co2 impact of their business would have actually risen. because well, Put simply, an iPhone is just not as efficient as a supercomputer. Where your computation gets processed really matters. If you have engineers in Mumbai, perhaps your GPU acceleration of your ml model should be done in your data centres. in Malmo, the Swedish electricity grid is at least for now, less polluted than that of India. And these aren't the only environmental impacts of AI. Even something simple like whether you use virtual backgrounds for your zoom meetings, has an impact on the workload of your PC. at an individual level, the impact might be negligible, but multiplied by millions of people simultaneously during this, then it's all contributing to making it harder to achieve our sustainability goals.