Explore Topics: Cultural Lens

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General Instructions

1. For each page, synthesize the reading and research by writing in complete sentences in essay format.
   a. Use the green instructions in the notes below each page to focus your research and writing.
   b. Write about each question, prompt, or process provided in those notes.
   c. Write a full page of text with lots of detail (about 250 words).
      i. Don’t generalize so much that your writing is devoid of detail.
      ii. Don’t repeat yourself.
   d. Cite each source by adding a hyperlink in the Title of the Article or law.
   e. Do not change the template:
      i. Text must be 14 point Lato left-justified type.
      ii. Refrain from adding extra margins or double spacing.
      iii. Do not bullet the paragraphs. Write in essay format only.
   f. Add additional pages if you need more room.

2. Add all sources to the Bibliography page.
   a. Include author, year, title, publisher, and URL.
   b. Number or bullet them using the list button.

When in doubt, write to the instructor for clarification using the Canvas Inbox.
In bridging the Digital Divide, it is important to understand the constraints that are standing between civilization and accessibility to useful technology. One of the solutions to improving access to technology lies in designing technological infrastructure that is inclusive to all—regardless of culture, class, or ability. However, creating inclusive design is hinged on social awareness and understanding of the barriers between people and technology. Even more difficult, social constructs are incredibly dynamic. Each assessment of social paradigms only presents a snapshot of society, which can be perceived and interpreted in a multitude of ways, depending on time, setting, and composition of the audience. What may be widely accepted now, may not be the norm later.

In order to devise an inclusive strategy, it is important to know which groups of people are vulnerable to discernment and why. In order to facilitate a better understanding of these dynamics, Oregon State University Professor Pam Van Londen created [The Cultural Lens (n.d.)](#). One of the most resonating forces behind exclusive design is the concept of Insularity. Insularity addresses a lack of interest or empathy in the lives of others. Insularity displays a lack of initiative in identifying barriers to technological accessibility. Without this interest in seeking-out differences in people and the challenges they may face, the outcome is a technological platform that is only inclusive to one group of people.
A more preferred platform would be one that is inclusive by design. The benefits of inclusive and universal designs are presented by Kat Holmes in her essay for *Fast Company*, titled *The No. 1 thing you’re getting wrong about inclusive design (2018)*. In her essay, Holmes creates a scenario where a lack of inclusive design would be detrimental to the global perspective. The scenario creates hypothetical barriers to story writing, where stories can only be shared by those who have “a keyboard, computer screen, and fluency in English (Holmes, 2018).” It is easy to assume how the global perspective can be enhanced by eliminating these barriers.
Creating a more inclusive and diverse industry requires people in leadership positions to challenge the factors that go into decision making. One such factor that may implicitly affect decisions is the acceptance social norms. Transitivity, one can assume that in order to introduce a diverse perspective to a growing industry, leaders should challenge norms that seem to oppress specific demographics. When it comes to more implicit, intuitive decision making, decisions can only be made based on the availability of information available to the decision maker. A 2018 essay by Jonah Sachs for *Fast Company*, titled *If Investors Really Listen To Data, They'd Be Investing In Women (2018)*, the notion of intuition-based decision making is confronted with data that could be more inclusive to women in the field of technology.

In a case presented in the article, it was realized that investment decisions were made by gathering applicable data, then making a decision that factored the data, compounded with the instinct of the investor. In the cases where data and intuition conflicted one-another, decision makers sided on the value of intuition.

In order to create a more convincing argument on behalf of data, the writer presents valuable statistics that investors may be missing when making executive decisions. One such statistic reveals that companies who employ women into leadership positions experience higher profit margins (Sachs, 2018). Additionally, returns on investments from ventures lead by women were greater than their male counterparts. Despite this, fewer investments are being made on women. This phenomenon is called “the Leaky Pipeline,” where women and minority
groups experience more obstacles in their professional pursuits in the tech industry, compared to men. Given this data, why hasn’t there been a noticeable paradigm shift in the tech industry?

Returning to the idea of insularity, it may be that there is a lack of interest in pursuing the data. While this data shows the potential for revolutionary change in investments and entrepreneurship, its acceptance (or lack-thereof) is on-track for a more evolutionary rate of change.
Artificial intelligence algorithms have been incorporated into many modern business models. These algorithms have the potential to categorize each potential consumer into a pre-determined group, decided by the inputs of the computer algorithm. Furthermore, the quality of inputs when creating an algorithm is constrained by any biases held by the creator. With this, it’s easy to infer that people are hesitant to trust these computer-based strategies. This relationship between consumers and AI algorithms is covered in-depth in *Popular Science’s* article *Algorithms aren't all created equal (2019)* by Martin Erwig.

The article aims to rationalize the distrust between consumers and AI Algorithms. One example used to display the danger of widespread distrust in technology is the vitality of the anti-vax movement, which bases a personal “irrational fear” (Erwig, 2019) of vaccinations to rationalize its endangering of society.

In this article, two types of algorithms are defined. The first of which is one that is “*machine-learned,*” which are driven by computer logic. The other type of algorithm presented is “*human-created,*” which are manually programmed by humans. The perceivable difference between the two is that the human-created algorithms are readily translatable by humans, while machine-learned algorithms are not. These human-created algorithms are more vulnerable to flaws, due to a lower level of inherent precision and bias compared to machines. However, due to the design, human-created algorithms are more readily repairable.
Bias in Artificial Intelligence (AI) (continued)

Machine-learned algorithms must be introduced to new data and “re-learned” to correct any discrepancies. However, the presentation of new data creates the potential for an uncontrolled variance in the outcome.

Because human-created algorithms can be repaired and redirected on-demand, the author concludes that it’s the machine-learned algorithms that people are hesitant to trust.
Veterans represent a vulnerable social class that face a high level of homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide. Many of these experiences come from a difficulty assimilating into a different lifestyle. For veterans, their service was not only a means of employment, but came bestowed with an identity, purpose, and level of performance that are difficult to match in the private sector.

In an effort to engage veterans and reconnect them to their sense of purpose and identity, many employers have implemented a Veteran’s Preference program, which makes veterans more competitive candidates for employment. Military.com presents an explanation of this system on their page, Veteran's Preference Points (n.d.). Not only does the program offer competitive advantages to veterans, it also provides resources for finding employment in places where Veteran’s Preference is offered.

Personally speaking, I can attest to the difficulties of finding a sense of purpose in a post-military life. It took nearly 4 years and multiple career reassessments to find where I felt that I could continue contributing to a greater good in society. Those 4 years may have been the most mentally challenging times in my life. More-so than the combined 3 years I spent overseas and forward-deployed. While my current employer does not have a rigid Veteran’s Preference program, the company values the ethics and sacrifices of veterans, giving them a competitive advantage in hiring decisions. Although this program does not offer much to explicitly deterring discrimination to other vulnerable groups, I believe that it offers a great value to society.


