Michael Murtaugh

The Recognition Machine

A collaboration with photographer Antje Van Wichelen, Rokia Bamba, and the Troubled Archives collective, *The Recognition Machine* takes the form of a photobooth that matches visitors faces with those in the re-photographed portraits based on archival photographs from colonial archives.

A goal of TRM is to draw a parallel between colonial and contemporary surveillance technology and the relation to race. In a colonial context, photography was used in combination with pseudo-science to establish false truths about race that fit a racist agenda. Today, artifical intelligence techniques are used in similarly questionable ways that contemporary critics like Ruha Bejamin have described as a "New Jim Code" (referring to the "Jim Crow" laws of segregation based on race in the United States) and Safiya Umoja Noble have termed "technological redlining", referring to a history of racist practices masked by seemingly "neutral" ways of classification. In TRM, a "ready made" model is used that has been trained on a data set of images pulled from the Internet labelled with emotions. One reason the emotion model is interesting is that it makes the subjective aspect of these labels more apparent: an image appears "happy" or "sad" by who and in what context? For instance, in the data set several images of Barak Obama have been labelled "angry"; these judgements reflect the biases and prejudices of not only those who placed the images online, but the manner in which these images and labels were (semi) automatically gathered using web search engines and automation using code. Rather than reinforce the claims of these data models, TRM wants to trigger discussions about how and why these algorithms work they way they do, and call their use into question.

The photostrip produced by the photobooth shows three pictures, the visitor, the match from the archive, and an image from the data set used to train the algorithmic emotion classifier. Rather than simply giving an "absolute" response (the predominant matching emotional label), the model is used in a relational way. Given an image, the algorithm outputs a set of 7 "weighted probabilities" for each of the 7 possible emotional labels (for instance 33% happy, 27% sad, 8% disgusted, etc.). The archive is then searched to find the image which produced the most similar response. In this way TRM creates a kind of analogical relationship, you are (the visitor is) paired with an image that the

model (problematic as it is) (mis)recognizes in a similar way. Combined with the subjectivity of the emotional labels, the idea is to attempt to construct a kind of solidarity between the visitor and the people whose faces are appear in the archive.

TRM has been exhibited in Cologne, Turin, and will be part of DAKART in Dakar, Senegal, May 2021.

LINK TO TROUBLE ARCHIVES / ROOTS & ROUTES Online Publication

These are Situationist Times

Collaboration with Ellef Prestsaeter and Torpedo Press (Oslo). These are Situationist Times is printed publication and complementary interactive multimedia interface. The interface presents an annotated interface to scans of each of the original 6 magazines with cross linked audio/video commentary from De Jong. In addition to a version online, a tablet-based version has been used in a series of exhibitions (including the Jacqueline de Jong retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum in 2019), and an adapted two screen "cinematic" version at the New York Art Book Fair in the fall of 2019.

Figure 1: Photobooth with FER dataset images, photo strips on wall behind, standing visitors, Noisy Images, Cologne, 2018

Figure 2: Original touch screen and magazine installation, Torpedo Press, Oslo, 2018

Figure 3: Installation at the New York Art Book Fair, Brooklyn, 2019

Figure 4: Touch screen installation, Pinball Wizard, Stedelijk Museum 2019

Need: Images / spreads from the publication

Figure 5: White gloves were added to signal the preciousness of the original publications on display

Kurenniemi

Imagine an image. . .

Collaboration with Nicolas Maleve, first in a series of works (to become the Institute for Computational Vandalism) looking at the ways algorithms can be used to provide alternative ways to give access to (image) archives.

Documenta

Citation / link Publication MIT Press Book.

Constant

Schaarbeeksetaal? Archipels.be Toneelstof?

Active Archives

Algorithmic Arabesques: A Vandalist Coloring Book

Oslo 11 Orderings

Archive

KWF Videodagboek MIT Media Lab: JBW