



The Block Center
FOR TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY



CarnegieBosch
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Current Topics in Privacy Seminar

January 14th 2025

Speaker:

Arvind Narayanan - Princeton University

Title:

How Predictive Decision Making Goes Wrong

Abstract:

Many automated decision-making systems in criminal justice, healthcare, finance, and other domains follow the same logic: machine learning is used to make predictions about people's future — who will commit a crime, pay back a loan, fall sick, etc. — and those predictions are used to make decisions about them. In this talk, I will explain why this type of automated decision making has inherent, recurring flaws, resulting in widespread harm to people. The talk is based on the paper *Against Predictive Optimization* and the book *AI Snake Oil*.

Bio:

Arvind Narayanan is a professor of computer science at Princeton University and the director of the Center for Information Technology Policy. He is a co-author of the book *AI Snake Oil* and a newsletter of the same name which is read by 50,000 researchers, policy makers, journalists, and AI enthusiasts. He previously co-authored two widely used computer science textbooks: *Bitcoin and Cryptocurrency Technologies* and *Fairness in Machine Learning*. Narayanan led the Princeton Web Transparency and Accountability Project to uncover how companies collect and use our personal information. His work was among the first to show how machine learning reflects cultural stereotypes, and his doctoral research showed the fundamental limits of de-identification. Narayanan was one of TIME's inaugural list of 100 most influential people in AI. He is a recipient of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE).