

FACCT 2025

Secondary Stakeholders in AI: Fighting for, Brokering, and Navigating Agency

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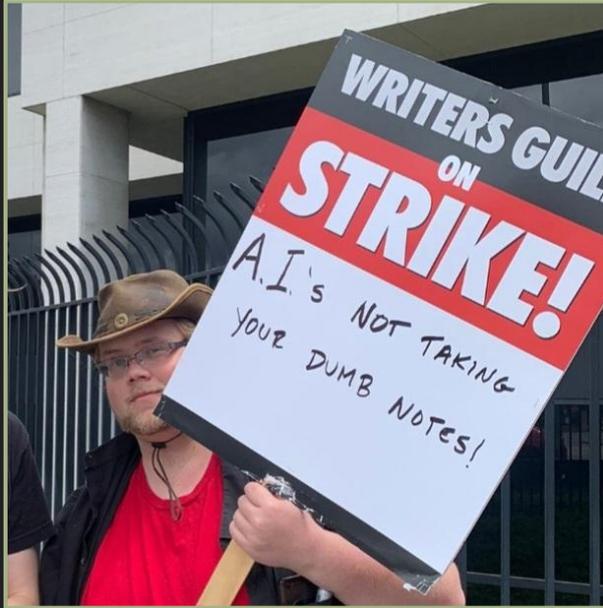
Nuredin Ali Abdelkadir

University of Minnesota

Stevie Chancellor

University of Minnesota

2023



Why artificial intelligence is a central dispute in the Hollywood strikes

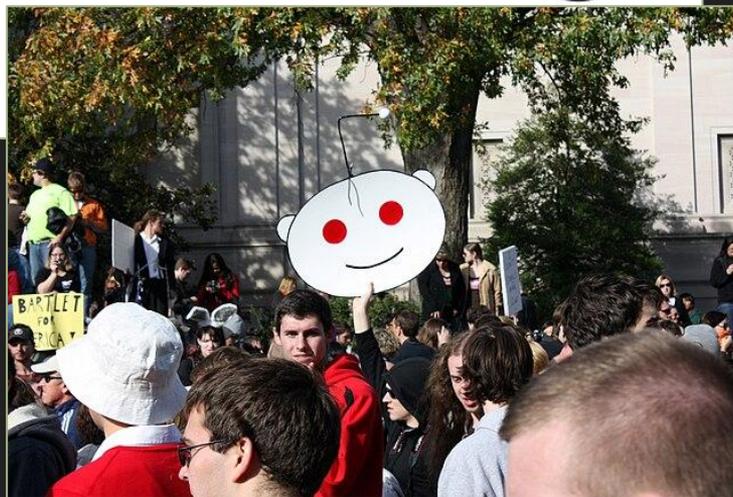
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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE / TECH / COPYRIGHT

Sarah Silverman is suing OpenAI and Meta for copyright infringement

2023

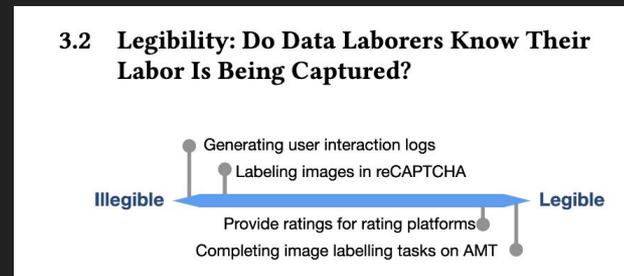
Reddit blackout: Subreddits to go private on Monday



At the same time...

The participatory AI renaissance!

	CONSULT	INCLUDE	COLLABORATE	OWN
PARTICIPATION GOAL	Why is participation needed? To improve the user experience 80/80	To better align AI with stakeholders' preferences and values 52/80	To deliberate about system features 30/80	To shape the system's scope and purpose 8/80
	What is on the table? User interface of the system 80/80	Underlying datasets (e.g., identification, curation, annotation) 8/80	Overall design of system (e.g., task specification, model features) 8/80	Whether and why the system should be built 4/80
PARTICIPATION SCOPE	Who is involved? Stakeholders recruited by the project team for discrete feedback 75/80	Stakeholders recruited by the project team for domain expertise 47/80	Stakeholders designated by the community collaborate in design 6/80	Stakeholders designated by community play central role across project lifecycle 3/80
	What form does stakeholder participation take? Giving input on design ideas via questionnaires and interviews 68/80	Group discussions with project team 49/80	Ongoing collaborative prototyping and decision-making 18/80	Reflexively deciding on the participatory approach 0/80
FORM OF PARTICIPATION				



Delgado et al. The participatory turn in AI design: Theoretical foundations and the current state of practice (EAAMO '23)

Groves et al. Going public: the role of public participation approaches in commercial AI labs (FAcCT '23)

Li et al. The Dimensions of Data Labor: A Road Map for Researchers, Activists, and Policymakers to Empower Data Producers (FAcCT '23)

Clearly there's a gap

Participating
with people is a
promising path
for more ethical
AI

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Gap

The “who” to
participate with is
rapidly expanding

Clearly there's a gap

An ethical AI future
is one where
everyone gets their
due data rights

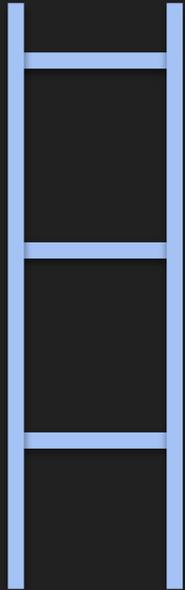
Research Questions

1. What is it like to have an indirect stake with AI?
2. How does this stakeholderhood interact with a participatory AI future?

Methods

- **Purposeful sampling** of people with murky AI relationships
- 60-min **semi-structured interviews** (n = 12)
- **Stratified** thematic analysis based on participant positionality

The Ladder of Meaningful Participation



Rung 3. Agency

Does the stakeholder have the capacity to shape relevant practices and outcomes?

Rung 2. Consent

Does the stakeholder have the opportunity to agree or refuse?

Rung 1. Informedness

Does the stakeholder have sufficient information and understanding to make a decision?

Adaptation of ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein 1969)

What even is a stakeholder?

Complicated in 2025 AI-land!

Secondary Stakeholder

1. Influenced by a firm's decisions
2. Outside of any formal contract

(Clarkson, 1995)

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Scott: Formal contract as an AI developer, but also posts his code on GitHub which gets used as training data

Fiona: Paid content moderator who was never informed her work was training an AI-moderator

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Primary stakeholders of a system

Secondary stakeholders of AI

Three Archetypes



The Data Contributor

Navigating
participatory
ideals with little to
no agency



The AI Activist

Fighting for
participatory
ideals on behalf
of others



The Practitioner

Brokering
participatory
ideals with others

Three Archetypes



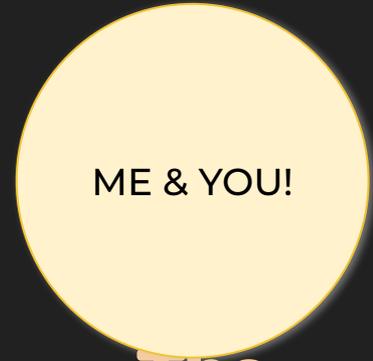
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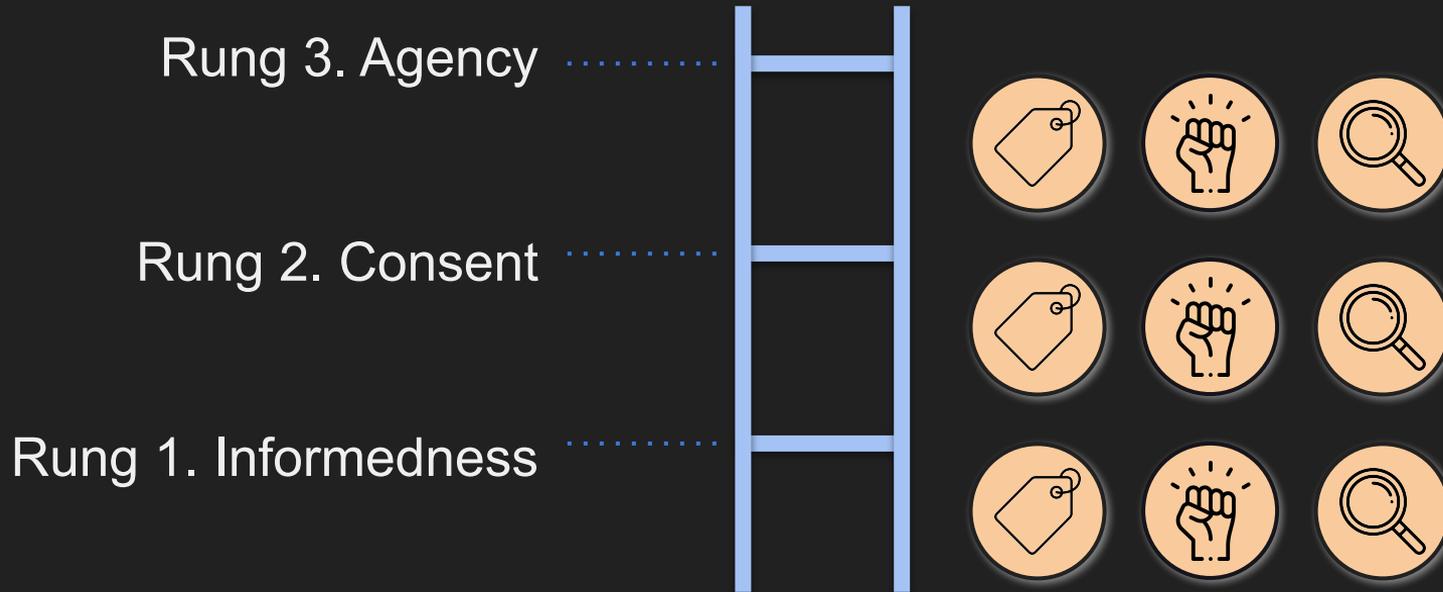
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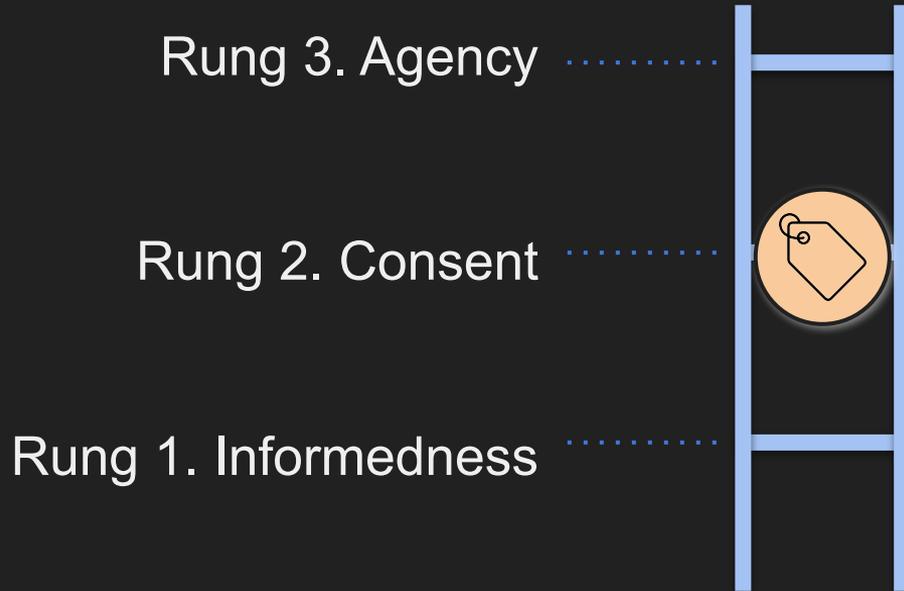
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Data Contributors



Continuing to
participate but not
consensually



Sabrina

Volunteer Moderator
for 5+ years

“It’s like you can opt out of the community, or you can be relinquished to having your data used to train AI. Those are the only two options.”

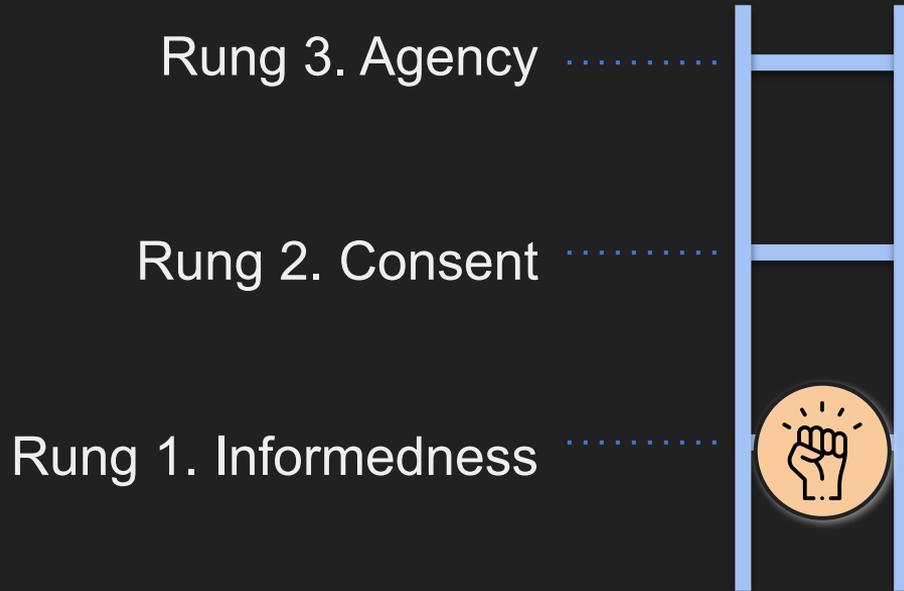


Sabrina

Volunteer Moderator
for 5+ years

“I’m a **reluctant** participant in
this.”

Activists



Fighting for
informing the
public while
reducing harm

“I’m incredibly in favor of AI literacy... but with what other product do we ask people to have to be that literate?”



Kayla

AI ethics researcher &
activist

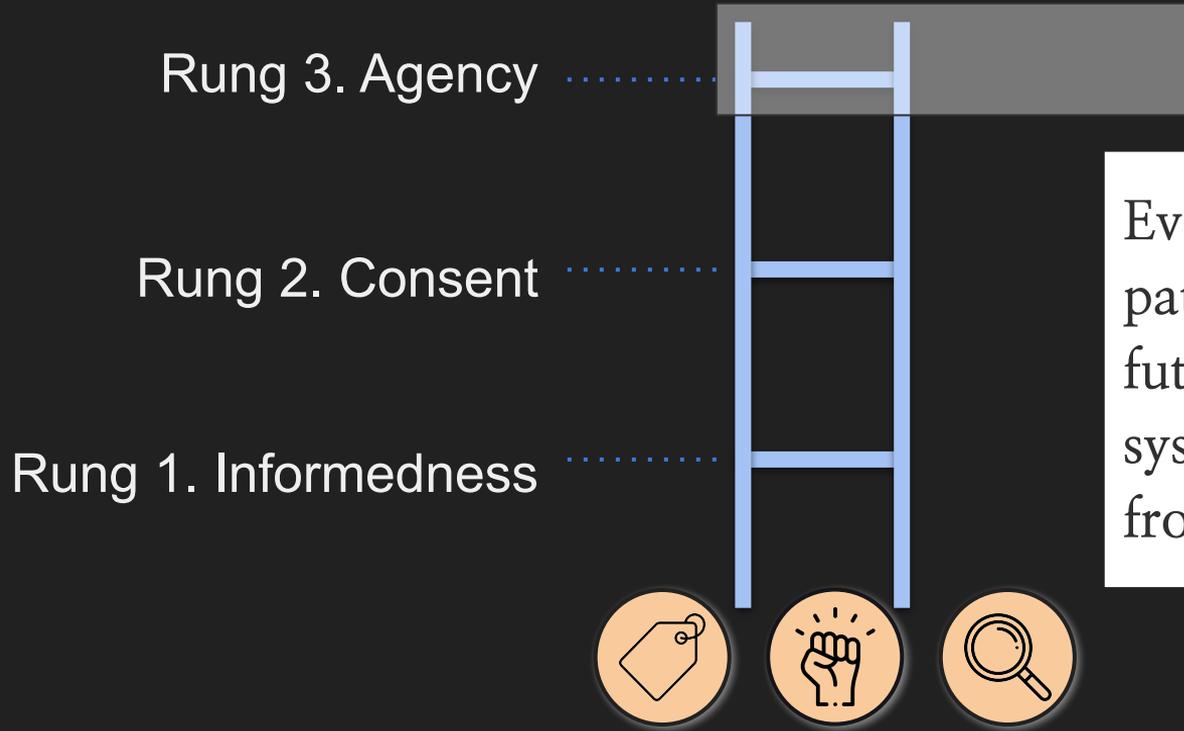
“We don’t expect ourselves to be fully literate about our kitchen appliances”



Kayla

AI ethics researcher & activist

Ethical Glass Ceiling



Everyone can see the path to a participatory future... but is systemically blocked from achieving it

Practical Recommendations

- Default opt-in data consent procedures
- Inviting activists to research venues
- Longer project timelines to incorporate participatory processes

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NOT NEW

Contribution

A participatory AI future

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is beyond any one person or community

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is beyond any one person or community

demands better systems and institutions

Calls for Systemic Change



Tackle the impossible questions like consent and informedness at scale



Invest heavily in AI literacy and regulation

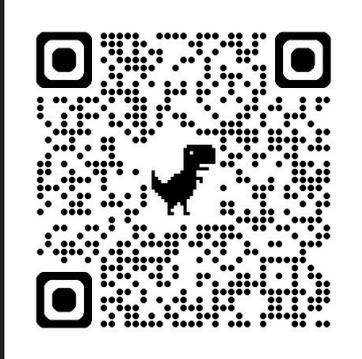


Agency around one's relationship with AI as a normative pillar of FAccT

Thank you!

 ajman004@umn.edu

Pdf of paper at
leahajmani.com



 I'm on the job
market starting Sept
2025!



A participatory AI future...

- Is beyond any one person or community
- Demands systemic and institutional change