Jahna Otterbacher

Short Biography: Jahna Otterbacher received her doctorate from the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA), School of Information. She is currently Associate Professor at the Open University of Cyprus (OUC), School of Pure and Applied Sciences. Jahna coordinates the Cyprus Center for Algorithmic Transparency (CyCAT) at the OUC, funded by the H2020 Widespread Twinning program. The CyCAT seeks to promote transparency and accountability in algorithmic systems that people routinely use, but that are rather opaque to them, through three types of interventions – data-, developer- and user-focused. In addition to her post at the OUC, Jahna holds a concurrent appointment as team leader of the Transparency in Algorithms Group at CYENS, a new center of excellence and innovation in Nicosia, Cyprus, in collaboration with two international Advanced Partners, UCL and MPI.

Presentation Title: Computer Vision in the Social World: On fairness and fairness perception in image tagging algorithms

Abstract: Automated image tagging is proving to be a boon to applications where user modeling, personalization and adaptation are required. From e-stores, where image recognition is used to curate a "personal style" for a shopper based on previously viewed items, to dating apps, which can now act as "visual matchmakers," the technology has gained increasing influence in our digital interactions. However, most models remain black boxes, with many social and ethical issues surrounding their use in contexts where people can be harmed. In this talk, I discuss our work in analyzing proprietary image tagging services (e.g., Clarifai, Google Vision, Amazon Rekognition) for possible gender and racial biases when tagging images of people. I will present our techniques for discrimination discovery in this domain, as well as our work on understanding users' perceptions of fairness. Finally, I summarize key findings thus far, taking into consideration the larger socio-technical picture of how these services are used by third party developers.