

Timeline

9:00 -10:30 AM EST

Date

December 09, 2020

Consumer Protection Practitioner's Forum | Building an “Ethical Matrix” for Digital Finance: Beyond Black-Box Algorithms

New data sources and the algorithms that make sense of them are important building blocks for many financial products in emerging markets. These algorithms also raise new risks related to discrimination and ethics, which are not always understood, even by those overseeing them. There is a need to better understand how we can monitor and address ethical issues with algorithms such as fairness and discrimination.

This webinar, hosted by IPA, provided an opportunity to engage with leading voices on ethical use of consumer data for financial services, and learn from their first-hand experiences from work across the globe. This webinar was the third in IPA's [Consumer Protection Practitioner's Forum series](#).

Cathy O'Neil, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Weapons of Math Destruction* and CEO of O'Neil Risk Consulting & Algorithmic Auditing (ORCAA), presented an overview of her research on “weapons of math destruction”—black-box algorithms being used with little or no accountability in decisions that deeply affect people's lives, including financial services. Cathy also introduced the ethical matrix, a flexible approach to identifying and mitigating the harms that can arise from these algorithms.

Jacob Appel, ORCAA Chief Strategist, then dove deeper into the issue of proxy variables—seemingly-neutral data that contain information about individuals that the modeler is not supposed to know. Proxy variables are the reason why simple gender-blind or color-blind approaches are insufficient today. The panelists then discussed a few current technical and policy approaches to dealing with these issues.

To place these questions into the context of financial services, **Malavika Raghavan**, an independent expert on data protection in consumer finance, spoke to how digital financial services can address ethical challenges while still increasing access to financial services in underserved populations.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A moderated by **Rafe Mazer, Director of IPA's Consumer Protection Research Initiative.**

Watch the webinar recording below:

Panelists

- **Cathy O'Neil**, *New York Times Bestselling Author of Weapons of Math Destruction and CEO of O'Neil Risk Consulting & Algorithmic Auditing (ORCAA)*
- **Jacob Appel**, *Chief Strategist, ORCAA*
- **Malavika Raghavan**, *Independent Expert on Data Protection in Consumer Finance*
- **Rafe Mazer (Moderator)**, *Director, Consumer Protection Research Initiative, IPA*

City

Webinar

Country

United States