

Ethics in the voice recreating technology of Lyrebird

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Abstract—Technology is growing rapidly, especially the explosion of artificial intelligence in recent years has raised many concerns about the danger of the development itself. In 2017, a technology start-up called Lyrebird announced that they could disguise anyone’s voice with “just a single minute of sample audio”. In the past, there were also many synthesized voices systems doing the same thing, but the most notable here is the “one-minute” number, because collecting a person’s voice in a minute is a lot easier than collecting an hour’s data set audio. This raises important question if the system can pretend to be anyone, become a tool for bad guys, such as tricking the verified identity of a software, and bring more unhappiness than happiness. Along with the appearance of Deepfake, the question is become more and more need to be answered. The problem is that if Lyrebird should continue to develop this technology, and to be more extend, should anyone else use or develop this technology. Despite all of that problem, we believe this technology can be used for creativity and entertainment, make human’s life more colorfully. One of Lyrebird’s solutions is that they will public the technology so that “everyone will soon be aware that such technology exists”. That way, they say, the damage will be lesson and therefore, we agree with such solution. In our opinion, this technology should be public and should be developed more to make it a safe tool for everyone to use.

I. INTRODUCTION:

In Australia, there is a kind of bird named lyrebird with the ability of copy other species’s voice. There’s also a Lyrebird in humankind, a start-up established in 2017 with the technology allow human to recreate another human’s voice with only one minute of sameple audio [1]. At the first look, it may sound great but the problem is not just about technical, it lie in human’s life.

In 1987 when Photoshop appear people just focus on it’s potential and do not think about how harm it can be. Until the internet explode with the rise of fake photo made from Photoshop and the appearance of a hot-trend technology : Deepfake, people start wonder how technology will be harm to privacy. Lyrebird is not an exception, and soon people will question about it too. Photoshop steal your body, Deepfake steal your face and Lyrebird steal your voice, three of them may become an unstoppable trio. In the present, Photoshop became popular in human’s life and Deepfake still remain harmful, but both of them cross the line between good and bad. Only lyrebird remain unclear, will it become stable like Photoshop or dangerous like Deepfake ? That leads to more ethical question: should we public it ? And why ? Here is our answer.

II. ETHIC PERSPECTIVE

As you may know, the voice technology become more and more popular in human’s life. For example, if you’re an android user, you must know about the voice security system in android, that you can unlock the phone by just say “Hello Google” to Google Assistance. They are fast, convenient to use and also, can be harm by those natural voices created by Lyrebird. Under ethical perspective, a question can have many answer and here, we must find an ethical answer for the question: should Lyrebird public their technology into free Api?

A. *Kantianism*

One of the PhD students developing the deep learning tech, told TechCrunch: “Not publishing the technology because of those potential misuses do not make sense to us as we think that the positive aspects overcome the bad ones (a hammer can be used to build but also to break). If we do not publish the technology ourselves, others will do it in the future (and, contrary to us, they might have bad intentions, maybe hiding it from a part of the population).” [2]. They did release them with good intention that they want to aware people such technology exit and those thing like voice recording or oral will are less reliable than before [3]. Therefore, this action can be consider morally right in Kantianism.

B. *Social contract*

Since the they shows no problem with the law when publish this API and only the users who agree with the term of agreement provide them their voice, so this is also morally right in the social contract.

C. *Utilitarianism*

“Want an elegant British woman to offer advice? Or a street-talking millennial? Any type of voice is within reach.”, and they done that, recreate Obama or Trump’s voice, not so real but enough to trick people through telephone and they will be more real in the future [4]. Soon, people will know that their voice security will be threat by such voice create technology and then they will become uneasy or anxious. And of course, there will have people that use that technology to steal people’s information and privacy, or to create fake audio to lower other people’s dignity. Of course, the technology has good side too, those impressive voice recording which resulted from the

technology can be used for disability people or used on game industry but they are not natural enough to be more popular in those subject. Instead, they are good enough for bad people to use. A nuclear explosion caused by fake Trump's voice may happen and need to be considered [5]. For many people, this technology may open a new dark era, where human's privacy is gone and then, the total happiness of human will decrease fast. The disadvantages outweigh the advantages, so it's not too much to say that it's morally wrong in utilitarianism.

However, this will be different if we talk about the future. Like Lyrebird said, increase people's awareness is very important and with the fast development of the technology today, a voice creating technology like Lyrebird is hard to avoid. Lyrebird also have a solution, that they use the freemium business model, means that the user must pay for important features, and we personally agree with their solutions [2]. We also agree that this technology should be published globally, consider what may happen in the future: the security system will be more advance and the people, instead of being uneasy they will know how to deal with the technology. There will be more natural voice recording in the future, and that will be used to increase human's creativity. We believe there will have more independent studio and more single users that use this technology in many creative way like how they had done with Photoshop many ears ago. So that, when consider the future, we think that this technology is morally right.

III. OPINION AND CONCLUSION

Since the action is supported by three ethical rule, we will conclude that public the API is the right thing to do. And we also believe that the API should be public and develop to increase the security system and to make the human's life more colorful. And instead of thinking how to stop the technology since it's hard to do that, we should think how to use to appropriately and if we can, use the law beforehand so that it will not become a second Deepfake.

The technology is just two years old, so we can not sure anything, both in ethics and reality. But if Lyrebird keep their promise about the technology then i think it will be something that can be expected. And to those technology like Lyrebird, we should "Release to control".

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