Coded Bias
Discussion about implications of design, AI, tech ethics, and representation
“Algorithms” & AI

How would you describe an algorithm to someone who is unfamiliar with the technology?

Have you ever encountered one of the algorithms described in Coded Bias? If so, which one?

What issues raised in the film were surprising to you?
Joy Buolamwini’s research challenged the idea that technology is a neutral decision maker and immune to human bias.

What is bias?

How did Buolamwini’s work help to expose AI bias?
Joy Buolamwini describes Amazon’s response to her research on bias in its products as “a continuation of the experiences I’ve had as a woman of color in tech. Expect to be discredited. Expect your research to be dismissed.”

Is this an experience you can relate to in your work? Why or why not?

How is the tech industry doing when it comes to promoting inclusion in the workforce? What more needs to be done to ensure that everyone has a fair opportunity to work in tech?
Policies and Tech Solutions

What civil rights are at stake when it comes to automated decision making?

What protections do we need to safeguard as AI continues to develop?

What are some policy or technical solutions for the issues raised in the film? What are their pros and cons?
What can we do?

How are the issues raised in the film related to the topics seen in CS230?

What promising practices have you seen in tech ethics education? In efforts to increase student inclusion in computer science programs?
Now it’s your turn!

Your job is to build an algorithm that helps determine the order in which students will get to select their housing. To simplify things, we’re going to use a point system.

- Students are awarded a number of points based on a variety of factors.
- Students with the most amount of points get first choice at housing.

This real approach is used by many universities. For example, consider the following real point system used by another liberal arts college in the United States:

- Current Freshman: 1 point
- Current Sophomore: 2 points
- Current Junior: 3 points
- Current Senior: 4 points
- 23+ Years of Age: 1 point
- Full-Time, Off-Campus Program Credit (e.g. student teaching): 1 point
- Academic Probation: -1 point
- Possible Academic Suspension: -2 points
- On Disciplinary Probation at Any Point during the Academic Year: -3 points

So a junior (3 points) who is 23 years old (1 point) would have priority over a senior (4 points) who is on academic probation (-1 point). Your goal: Create an algorithm that assigns points to students in order to prioritize them in housing selection.