Summary EUNIS Online workshop
"AI implementations, results and effects"

Quick recap

On 29 October 2024, the workshop focused on the implementation of AI in higher education, featuring presentations on various AI initiatives and tools developed by universities. Discussions covered topics such as the use of large language models, privacy concerns, and the potential impact of AI on education and society. The conversation ended with plans for future workshops and information about a new AI special interest group within the EUNIS community to explore inclusive and sustainable AI practices.

AI Implementation and Challenges Discussed

Thorsten Küfer discussed the implementation and use of artificial intelligence in the higher education community, highlighting the need for information on the topic. He mentioned that the workshop was part of a series that started in Athens at the annual congress. Thorsten, who is one of the chairs of the InfoSec special interest group (SIG), emphasised the risks and challenges associated with the use of artificial intelligence, such as deep fakes and the technology's impact on society. He also mentioned the formation of a new AI special interest group in the EUNIS community. Denise Dittrich, lead of Cloud Management SIG, introduced the first speaker,

(Open-Source) AI Interfaces for Universities

RWTHgpt
Bernd Decker (RWTH Aachen University, Germany), presented the architecture and implementation of RWGTHgpt, the challenges faced, and the lessons learned. RWTHgpt provides access to various GPT versions for the university's employees using a self developed interface connected to Azure OpenAI services. By using the interface as an additional layer between OpenAI and the user, it provides features like anonymization, integration with vector databases for RAG (retrieval-augmented generation), budget control or prompt limitation and allocation of costs to institutions. The interface will be available open source soon. The session concluded with a Q&A session.

HAWKI
Vincent Timm (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Hildesheim/Holzmingen/Göttingen, Germany) presents an open-source AI interface called HAWKI developed for universities in Germany. The interface provides access to OpenAI and other open-source language models in a privacy-compliant manner. HAWKI has been adopted by over 40 universities and offers

features like chat history encryption, integration with vector databases, and group chats with AI assistance. The modular architecture allows universities to develop custom extensions. Vincent highlights the importance of user experience design for adoption and discusses future plans like retrieval-augmented generation and large-scale evaluation. Asked about increased responsibilities for governance, now that HAWKI is used widely, Vincent emphasises the benefits of collaboration and shared resources among universities for developing innovative AI tools aligned with academic needs.
English documentation: https://github.com/HAWK-Digital-Environments/HAWKI

On-Premise Large Language Model Deployment

Jonathan Radas (University of Münster, Germany) discussed the deployment of an on-premise large language model at their university, citing reasons such as control over the models, financial considerations, and privacy concerns. He presented a live demo of the chat UI front end, which they adapted and is open source. The high-level architecture includes a front end that communicates with a back end running text generation interference. They are considering adding new models and features, and have seen a significant increase in usage, with 12% of the university's population using the model. They are also considering offering large language models as a service.

During the discussion about which LLM is safe to deploy on-premise, "Safe Tensors" format was explained by Malte Dreyer (Humboldt University Berlin).
Link: https://github.com/huggingface/safetensors

University's AI Initiatives and Challenges

Karl Rammo from the University of Tartu provides an update on their AI initiatives in education. The university allows all members to use Microsoft Co-pilot, but feedback has been mixed compared to newer tools like ChatGPT. They have set up Azure OpenAI services for research groups to access, with usage steadily growing. A virtual assistant has been created using their IT help documentation, receiving positive feedback. Going forward, the university is exploring tools like ChatGPT and evaluating self-hosting options. They are also assessing privacy risks around Microsoft 365 Co-pilot accessing sensitive data. Additionally, training materials are being developed to educate sceptical users on AI capabilities.

AI Implementation and Collaboration Strategies

In the meeting, Thorsten Küfer led a discussion about the implementation of AI and language models in various organisations. The group discussed the importance of considering the use case and purpose of AI, as well as the potential for collaboration and learning from each other. They also touched on the need for personnel and qualifications to maintain self-hosted

language models. Also discussed: the potential for collaboration and learning from each other in the development of guidelines and regulations.

The topic of prompt engineering will be covered in the next online workshop on the 19th November.

The conversation ended with Giuliano presenting an overview of a new special interest group EUNIS is launching:

https://eunis.org/blog/featured/launch-of-the-eunis-inclusion-sustainability-in-ai-ai4all-special-interest-group/

New SIG on Inclusive and Sustainable AI Discussion

Giuliano Pozza introduced the concept of inclusive and sustainable AI, emphasising the need for both sustainability and inclusion for AI to be accessible to all. He highlighted the potential negative impacts of current AI models, such as increased bias and the digital divide, and proposed two scenarios for the future of AI: one where services are not inclusive and the other where ethics and privacy are embedded in AI. The goals of the special interest group include exploring and explaining the deep connections between inclusion, sustainability, and the future of AI. Giuliano also outlined a call to action, which includes learning about AI, engaging with people, and defining the priorities of the group.

Future activities and mailing list new SIG AI4ALL

Giuliano and Bonaria Biancu present plans for an AI working group within Eunis. The group aims to organise an online event in early 2025 and a pre-conference workshop in Belfast in June 2025. They invite others to join the mailing list. Thorsten expresses enthusiasm for the initiative and suggests connecting it with existing AI groups at universities. Bas explains how to join the mailing list. Just send an email to guiliano.pozza@eunis.org.
EUNIS website information on AI4ALL: https://eunis.org/task-forces/ai4all/

Save the date - workshop Prompt-engineering 29 November 2024

Towards the end, the organisers annopunce a hands-on workshop in November on prompt engineering for large language models like ChatGPT, presented by Asbjørn.
As soon as the workshop programme is complet, registration for this event will be opened.

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