



Posted by u/Fireflite 2 years ago

[D] Lawsuit alleges fabricated results at Pinscreen led by Hao Li

Discussion

The filing can be found [here](#).

These are very serious allegations: generated models results were blatantly fabricated for academic papers as well as public demonstrations. In addition, there's some pretty awful allegations of worker abuse, including an attack on the plaintiff when they attempted to confront Li about the academic misconduct.

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↑ where_else 52 points · 2 years ago

↓ page 21, top screenshot:

anyways ... it's important that we know exactly who is using the webcam to generate the avatar

since we are just using pre-cached avatars

it's called SIGGRAPH "Real Time Live" not "Pre-Cached Live" ... this is bad

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↑ CuriousKittyXoXo 2 points · 1 year ago

↓ The amended complaint shows that this sentence was said by Jens Fursund, the CTO of Pinscreen:

[196](#). [July 24, 2017] Fursund: "Anyway... It's important that we know exactly who is using the webcam to generate the avatar"

[197](#). [July 24, 2017] Fursund: "Since we're just using pre-



↑ edwardthegreat2 40 points · 2 years ago

↓ Probably the tip of the iceberg. Lots of "AI" companies are just mechanical Turks under the guise that they're gathering training data.

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↑ PresentCompanyExcl 1 point · 2 years ago

↓ I guess it's important to be more skeptical of academic claims, especially if there's a startup involved. Even if they come from someone at a respected institution.

↑ havetolearn 60 points · 2 years ago

↓ Oh my god :(Sad sad behavior. Plus, I always suspected some people make academic literature forcibly hard..here is an example: Page 83 of the document, by Li "We need to make sure that people cannot easily implement it" "maybe we add a lot of things about the hair cutting etc." So much for reproducibility :(

↑ QuesnayJr 9 points · 2 years ago

↓ They really don't, though, in general. One man's clear explanation is another man's "WTF is this shit?" Explaining things clearly is a skill, and not a skill that is widely distributed.

Also, people write for their peers, since that is going to be most of the audience for their paper.

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↑ FujiwaraMokou 16 points · 2 years ago

↓ Now that reads extremely bad. If anything this kind of "fake it till you hopefully make it" is really a big issue for research in such a competitive corporate setting.

↑ Rainymood_XI 33 points · 2 years ago

↓ I was going to highlight stuff like



[February 4, 2017] Li: "One of our tasks is to map segmented hair images to 3D hairstyles"

[February 4, 2017] Li: "Here is a paper that is kinda related"

[February 4, 2017] Li: "But not exactly what we want"

[February 4, 2017] Li: "Don't share it"

[February 4, 2017] [...]

[February 4, 2017] Li: [c118-f118_2-a523-paper-v1.pdf]

[March 3, 2017] Li: "Don't share this paper"

[March 3, 2017] Li: "It's under review"

This is ... bad ... so weird because this guy seemed like a respectable academic.

↑ jeffbell 7 points · 2 years ago · *edited 2 years ago*

↓ Isn't it normal to ask that a prepublication draft not be leaked until it has been accepted?

EDIT: Ooops. I misunderstood the messages exchanged. Thanks to [/u/netw0rkf10w](#) for setting me straight.

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↑ netw0rkf10w 17 points · 2 years ago

↓ It seems that some people didn't read the PDF before commenting. Maybe it's too long. So here's the link to a **visual TL;DR**: <http://sadeghi.com/dr-iman-sadeghi-v-pinscreen-inc-et-al/#visualtldr>

↑ tobyclh 11 points · 2 years ago

↓ This literally cannot get more SIGGRAPH.

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Comment deleted by user · 2 years ago

↑ edwardthegreat2 44 points · 2 years ago

↓ Established Professor and CEO of startup fakes his results to



IMO browsing through the raw evidence without the legal narrative is the easiest way to get an idea of the data fabrications:

<http://sadeghi.com/Exhibit-E-Li%E2%80%99s-and-Pinscreen%E2%80%99s-Data-Fabrication-and-Academic-Misconduct.pdf>



alexmlamb 13 points · 2 years ago

Pinscreen damaged Sadeghi's personal property remaining at Sadeghi's desk at Pinscreen's office. In storing it negligently, Pinscreen broke Sadeghi's handmade sculpture, which has sentimental value

Okay now I want to know what his sculpture is.



judgedeadd 7 points · 2 years ago

Mickey Mouse. <http://sadeghi.com/dr-iman-sadeghi-v-pinscreen-inc-et-al/#p150>



edwardthegreat2 19 points · 2 years ago

Really sad, I took this Prof Li's graphics class last year. He seemed like a fine person ethically. :(



hurt_and_unsure 20 points · 2 years ago

Oh boy! Do you have surprises in your future. :(Sorry.

Most people are believed, respected, revered, and/or financially rewarded based on the strength of their reputations, which leads to some folks wanting to maintaining these reputations at all costs. People rationalize the "end justifies the mean" mentality, and many times get away with it, which only reinforces these behaviors.



pdxMLDev 3 points · 2 years ago

oh sweet summer child



katkat1212 1 point · 2 years ago



speechless. Deeply disappointed.



↑ Lambdaa-- 9 points · 2 years ago · *edited 2 years ago*

↓ [Here's](#) the SIGGRAPH 2017 RTL demo in question



SkiddyX 14 points · 2 years ago



<https://imgur.com/a/TOQpemm>

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↑ MementoMori000 6 points · 2 years ago

↓ One part I don't understand though is if/how Sadeghi hopes to come out cleanly from this. He was on the stage of SIGGRAPH presenting the allegedly fake hair reconstruction. He may have felt a conflict doing it, and now regrets it, but that did not stop him from being the man giving credibility to the whole thing due to his hair work. If he really wanted to do the right thing, why not stopping things before they happened? And if he was ok with it at the time, buying into the "fake it until you make it" philosophy, what's the real reason for turning against the company later on? That he was eventually fired? Or was he worried that someone would expose pinscreen and jumped off the boat before too late?



katkat1212 0 points · 2 years ago



Yeah, why indeed. Because Pinscreen's / Hao's work is not fake. And it's obvious if you check it out. Iman Sadeghi got fired and is now out for blood. Check out Petrenuk's comment.



[deleted] 4 points · 2 years ago



Looking at how his bio is written <http://www.hao-li.com> I am a little surprised that he is an assistant professor at USC.



ConfuciusBateman 9 points · 2 years ago



Wow. So this company must be completely fucked now right?



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happyhammy 8 points · 2 years ago



I'm curious what would happen, since their app is now actually able to do the avatar generation in "seconds", albeit after the faked RTL demo.

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petrenuk 7 points · 2 years ago



Hi everyone! I could not just stand by, I know Pinscreen because at the time I worked for the competing company and we also did automatic 3D avatars.

I don't really believe in these allegations, we usually tried all the Pinscreen apps and demos the first day they came out (because, obviously, we were interested in our competitor's tech). They worked pretty much as advertised. I generated a few avatars myself, and they turned out alright, including the skin texture, hair and animation. Their pipeline is based on machine learning so like every learned solution it is definitely possible to break. But it was certainly good enough for demos, entertainment apps etc.

I've heard they are coming up with some new amazing tech soon, just look at the SIGGRAPH 2018 teaser

<https://youtu.be/nj-3ipY4u58?t=25>

A well known AI researcher Ian Goodfellow also posted about this recently:

https://twitter.com/goodfellow_ian/status/1026904656117678080

If you don't believe a modern day AI can solve problems like this, just download one of their apps and try yourself. It's very difficult to do, but it's definitely possible!

So not every bad thing said on the internet is true. I'm pretty sure this one is fake news. apparently some auy got fired and



Now even if the app is working, the result in the paper could still be fake, unless they release the code or some 3rd party can reproduce those result in the paper to prove otherwise. Not claiming anything, just saying it's still a possibility.



for-th3-time-being 5 points · 2 years ago



The evidence alledging fraud as well as labor law violations, seems damning. Oof.

However, after reading through the alleged events, I'm not sure that the claims of battery and false imprisonment amount to quite that, presuming what's there is true to the word. Was he not harboring property that was not his, being the laptop? Since when do employees have rights to 'remove personal data' from company hardware, and return it at their convenience?



Deeppop 8 points · 2 years ago · *edited 2 years ago*



Pinscreen's Dr Hi had every right to demand the immediate return of all of Pinscreen's property upon terminating Dr Sadeghi. They could have asked the assistance of the office building's physical security to obtain this. Just the presence, outside the conference room, of a security guard is enough to keep things smooth. It's standard procedure recommended by HR consultants.

Instead, Dr Hi allegedly lost his temper, assaulted Dr Sadeghi physically and verbally (hence the battery complaint) then ordered Pinscreen employees to tackle Dr Sadeghi and hold him down (hence the false imprisonment complaint). I can't understand either how those employees complied, if this were a normal office environment. How does this compare to the above procedure ?

The CFO advising Dr Hi to stop at the time was probably hearing the ka-ching! of liability.

With the alleged video recording supporting this this should



... met both of them at SIGGRAPH Asia 2018. In Tokyo, I asked Li about the lawsuit and asked him about the context of his use of word "cheating" which he has already admitted in the USC Annenberg Media interview. Li got visibly angry and frustrated and said its all lies and refused to give the context.

Dr. Sadeghi on the other hand was friendly, down to earth and answered all of my questions patiently. One of the friendliest (and well dressed!) people I got to talk at the conference actually. We also talk about his rendering research, his travels and his vision of the future of virtual reality and AI. It was a pleasure talking to him overall.

If I was the jury, it would have been an easy decision between the two.

Pinscreen's demo at SIGGRAPH Asia 2018 Real-Time Live was not as impressive as their allegedly fabricated demo at SIGGRAPH 2017 Real-Time Live either. Also I was not sure if it is my iPhone's issue that their app always crashes on me but it also crashed during their demo as well. It was embarrassing to be honest. They had to force close it and restart it again. They mainly focused on changing props and other non research related stuff which I didn't care about.

Also, even-though I am not a trump supporter, but I found it unprofessional to call the president "orange head". It was obvious they are trying too hard to be obnoxious and "cool". I thought it was tasteless and no one laughed at their inappropriate jokes.

Oh Also, Dr. Sadeghi told me he would make the assault battery security camera footage publicly available on his website when Pinscreen produce it through discovery. That would make it obvious who is lying but I have a feeling most people already know the answer.

I have read both the original lawsuit and the amended one. The amended one has all the identities of Pinscreen employees who were involved in the data fabrication. I found it more



If the allegations are true, a civil lawsuit holds no meaning in academic settings, partly because the parties usually settle outside court without disclosing the settling terms. As far as holding Prof Li accountable for academic misconduct is concerned, there are two things that should be done: 1. file a complaint with IEEE, where the alleged cheating paper was sent, for possible misconduct, 2. file a complaint with USC's academic committee, where the Prof Li is associated with.



lesiw 1 point · 2 years ago



A complaint to USC could be further complicated by the allegation of mistreating students. The students have a person interest of completing their PhD degree, which strongly depends on their advising professor. In case they lose their advising professor, they will 1. "lose" the time they spend under the advising professor 2. lose their source of income 3. must find another professor or lose the ability to continue research and possibly lose their visa to stay in the US. In this situation, they may overturn their previous complaints against the professor, which weren't recorded in a reliable source and were taken without their knowledge.



lesiw 1 point · 2 years ago · *edited 2 years ago*



On the other hand, without knowing either parties in real life or their intentions, a skeptic might believe the bad press and the settlement is what the suer looked for, giving the suer the maximum leverage on financial gain, without stepping over the other party's bottom line.



Siref 1 point · 2 years ago



Was this the presentation from the lawsuit's page 2?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Plp1-XZRZ_Y



junmedia 1 point · 2 years ago



Words are easier to fabricate than the results. If you don't believe Pinscreen, just look at the amazing progress they have



trojans_united 1 point · 1 year ago

I just read the whole thing! Quite shocking and entertaining to be honest :-P

Lots of updates on the lawsuit page since the OP .. such as all names and social media IDs of everyone involved in the data fabrication:

>> <http://sadeghi.com/dr-iman-sadeghi-v-pinscreen-inc-et-al/#timeline>

Most important update IMO is that Hao Li has admitted to the media that the chat screenshots are AUTHENTIC:

>> <http://sadeghi.com/USC-v-Dr-Hao-Li-Truth-Challenge.pdf>

Anyone in Ludwigsburg, Germany can somehow find and contact Leszek artist who allegedly created some of the hair models? Or maybe he is a fictional character hahaha I had no luck tracking him down ... 8-/

I seriously hope Hao Li has convincing answers to all allegations and comes out CLEAN :-)



katkat1212 2 points · 2 years ago

You do realize you can verify Pinscreen's work yourself. I hope you all do your own due diligence rather than lazily relying on the rantings of this stalker Iman Sadeghi. This guy is a violent, disgruntled ex-employee of Pinscreen, out for vengeance. It's pathetic and sad.