

Advancing the Delicate Issue of Ethics and Privacy for Learning analytics

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ABSTRACT: Stakeholders need systematic procedures to walk through and address the different issues of ethics and privacy for learning analytics, moving beyond the DELICATE checklist first presented at the LAK16 conference. This paper presents a process- and role-based framework for managing a structured discourse on these issues. The Toolkit supports groups in setting up a process identifying perspectives and concerns, exploring issues through a systematic walk-through of the learning analytics processes cycle specified in the ISO/IEC 20748 standard.

Keywords: Learning analytics, ethics, privacy, data protection, data management

1 INTRODUCTION

The DELICATE checklist, presented by Drachslar and Greller at LAK16, has been acknowledged by the learning analytics (LA) community as a useful means to “to support educational organisations in becoming trusted Learning Analytics users” (Drachslar & Greller, 2016). The DELICATE checklist is now outdated. When designing a new “reflection aid” (ibid.), it is our view that one should leave the checklist approach as this does not support communication on complex issues (Catchpole, 2015). This paper is the first step to develop a scaffold for systematic discussion on ethics and privacy for LA.

2 INITIAL DESIGN OF THE EP4LA TOOLKIT

The aim of this design is to develop a set of tools that allow different stakeholders to explore ethics and privacy issues related to LA and to contribute to solutions. We see this as part of a continuous quality assurance process for LA, in which the principle of data protection by design and by default (European Commission, 2016) is followed, and examining of ethics and privacy issues are carried out on a regular basis. The ethics and privacy for LA (EP4LA) toolkit will be useful in different settings, from occasional workshops organised by the LA research community to more structured institutional processes implementing new LA solutions.

The following steps and tools are suggested for further testing:

1. Who do you represent? What are your aims? The first step is to clarify stakeholder perspective and interests. Identifying loyalties and aims are essential steps in both the ROMA approach (www.roma.odi.org) and in the Potter Box approach (Backus & Ferraris, 2004).

2. Agreeing upon main concerns about ethics and privacy related to LA? As privacy is seen as a major stumbling block to large-scale implementation of LA (Hoel, & Chen, 2016) all kinds of issues may be of concern to stakeholders. Therefore, the point of this step is to agree on an issue to start

the exploration. It does not need to be the most crucial threat to privacy, what is sought is more the concern that will kick off the discussion.

3. Brainstorm and map issues related to perspective and concern against the LA process model. In the third step, the discussants will use a template (step III, Figure 1), one per concern.

From the chosen stakeholder perspective, the concern under study is examined using six LA processes as prompts. The idea is that the group brainstorm issues on post-it notes and move them around on the template printout to connect to the different LA processes.

4. Collating concerns and barriers into a first problem space description. When brainstorming issues is reaching saturation the next step is to move the discussion forward towards solutions or policy actions. Again, it is important to decide upon unit of analysis to keep focus, e.g., institution, regional or national level, or a specific stakeholder group. The output of this last step IV (Figure 1) will be a collection of concerns or issues, and the barriers that must be overcome to solve these issues. Ideas for solutions may also be touched upon in the brainstorming that took place in the previous step.

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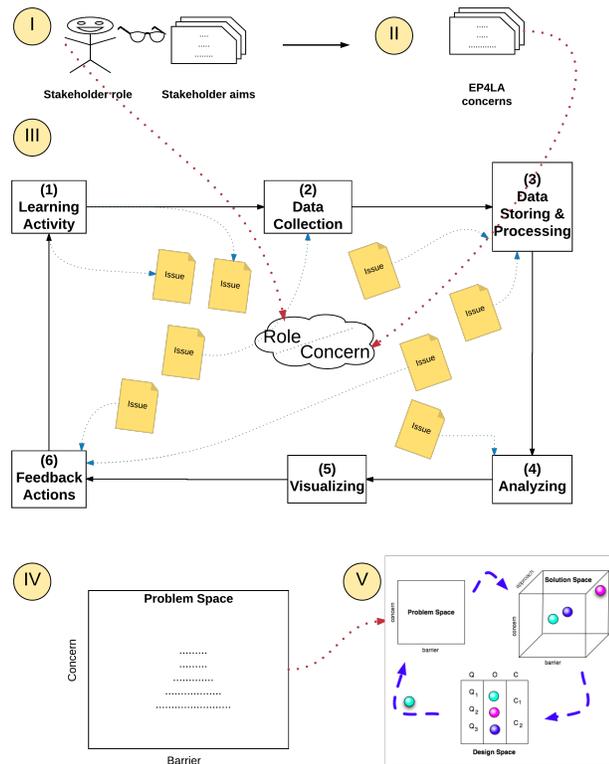


Figure 1: EP4LA toolkit, version 1.0