Insight into Code Critical Studies (CCS)

Why We Must Read the Code: The Science Wars, Episode IV
Mark C. Marino

Gosh, what an interesting chapter! Marino brings to light a whole practice, Code Critical Studies, that I had never heard about. Before reading this chapter, I do not think I had given code much thought (only a little due to media). To explain his argument Marino uses real-life examples in which **code has diverged from social standards/discourse.**

I just want to go into further detail about **code diverging from social standards** because think that is an unexpected line that encapsulates a lot of the Science Wars and what Marino is trying to break down. Do you expect code to fit into a social standard? Should it? Initially, when I started reading the chapter and making notes, I asked myself those questions and held no opinion. However, as Marino went further into detail, elaborating on the problem of "yellowgirl" code, Annakournikova Worm and adding more instances of code's social influence I started to think about code in my life. Then obviously It clicked into place, the role social media algorithms have on me is Code Critical Studies. The action of googling a sweater then 20 ads popping up on Instagram is something I am very familiar with. Someone out there has designed a code with the intent of reading people's search actions and using that data to structure media ads. This breakdown of where code comes from, what is its intention, what's its social influence and how it operated is what CCS aims to do. All code is designed, and Marino uses an example of a piece of code they initially assumed completely random until further investigation proved that it was not.

I'm just going to quote Marino, here to support my above

explanation:
"By treating code as something that is not an inevitable, natural, or purely objective structure, it moves beyond the progress narrative of pragmatics, asking what forces, social and material, shaped the development of the code."

I suppose that completely illustrates the importance of CCS — because if someone is behind the root of any code, then it can never be apolitical, right?

I want to bring in the whole Cambridge Analytica scandal. Now, this is obviously a huge example of how code is created by people and used to influence others, it is the exact opposite of apolitical. This chapter was written before the Cambridge Analytica scandal, but it is a good example of why code ethics is important and where humanities and code meet. Code does not just live in the programming world, it has to be studied in the humanities because it affects people and people's daily lives.

I also just wanted to mention how amazed I was at this transborder immigrant tool Code can be seen as a poetic work — transborder immigrant tool. I thought this was great — I definitely still do not understand how it works, but I am impressed. It is a mobile tool that guides individuals crossing the U.S/Mexico border to any water points nearby. It also provides poetry for emotional support. "The project was never distributed to its intended users," but "it still succeeded in confounding systems of political control, creating a call to action that resonated internationally, and using poetry to "dissolve" the US-Mexico border." This was a good example to illustrate how code is political and the positive role it can have on people's lives.

Works Citied

Marino, Mark C. "13. Why We Must Read the Code: The Science Wars, Episode IV." Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016.

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