

Data for Users: A Democratic Account of Values in Science

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Increasingly, scientists are being asked to produce data that can help support social decision making. To ensure such data is appropriately used, scientists should be responsive to relevant social needs, value systems, and decision frameworks. In many areas of science, however, what this responsiveness might involve in practice is often not articulated in detail. In this talk, I analyze one such area of climate science – known as climate services – and develop an account that specifies how to consider the needs of users in the provision of data. The account is based on inductive risk: it involves understanding which errors in climate service products would have particularly negative consequences from the users' perspective and then prioritizes the avoidance of those errors. At first glance, this account is at odds with much of the extant philosophical literature examining whose values should be used in science and appears open to the criticism that it is socially pernicious or anti-democratic. I defend the account by developing a deliberative democratic notion of political legitimacy fit for scientific contexts and then demonstrating that legitimate deliberative systems might best operate when science appeals to users' values.