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What AI Practitioners Say about Human-AI Trust: Its Role, Importance, and Factors That Affect It

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Trust has become a priority when designing and deploying AI-embedded systems alongside with other Human-Centered AI values, i.e. explainability, transparency, and fairness. However, due to their multifaceted and multidisciplinary nature, these terms can have various context-dependent meanings. Thus, translating these values into design can be a challenge [6]. Trust is not an exception.

Understanding what Human-AI trust is and what factors affect it comes largely from controlled lab experiments or studies with prototypes of AI-embedded systems [3, 7]. However, little is known about how Human-AI trust is addressed in development and deployment of real-world AI products and services. *AI practitioners*, people involved in different aspects of system design and deployment in the field, with roles ranging from AI developers to project managers and policy makers, can shed light on the role of Human-AI trust and what Human-AI trust factors are considered in real organizational settings. Their insights can better detail the needs, challenges, and experiences of different stakeholders when it comes to Human-AI trust.

In this work-in-progress paper, we study how Human-AI trust is addressed in development and deployment of real AI systems. We conduct a series of interviews with AI practitioners who develop and deploy AI-embedded decision support systems in various risk-sensitive contexts (finance, law, management). We specifically focus on these systems, because human trust in AI is especially pertinent for them due to their potential societal impact. The interviews are part of a bigger project around AI practitioners' experiences with Human-AI trust, but in this working paper we report the preliminary findings from the first 5 interviewees (see Table 1). Specifically, we present our preliminary analysis of participants' replies to the questions regarding the role of Human-AI trust in their practices and what factors are considered when establishing it in the context of AI-assisted decision making.

For the results' analysis, two independent reviewers read all the interviews at least two times and independently identified phrases of interests and codes for them, following the thematic analysis approach [1]. Together, they compared and finalized the list of selected phrases, and fine-tuned codes' formulation. By grouping the codes, the reviewers identified three major themes: 1) the role of Human-AI trust in developing and designing AI-embedded decision support systems, 2) importance of Human-AI trust in AI practitioners' work, and 3) what factors AI practitioners believe contribute to establishing trust in their systems.

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Participant	Role	Background	Organization Size	Type of AI	AI Application
P1	Explainable AI implementation and research	Computer Science and Mathematics	Large	Convolutional neural networks	Transport management, paleontology classification
P2	Explainable AI implementation and research	Engineering and Mathematics	Small	Operations research	Task planning
P3	President of the company	Mathematics	Small	Supervised learning (classic and homebacked)	Evaluation of law cases
P4	Senior research project manager	Human-Computer Interaction	Large	Operations research, supervised and unsupervised learning	Project-based
P5	Senior research project manager	Psychology and Human Factors	Large	No data due to interview time constraints	Project-based

Table 1. Characterization of participants, their companies, and AI they work with.

Our preliminary findings firstly indicate that while Human-AI trust is viewed as a **commercial advantage** to retain users (P2, P4), it is left behind as a **research topic for later** with obtaining better system's performance and AI certification as the main focus (P1, P4). Secondly, Human-AI trust plays an important role when there is **risk associated with a decision** and when the **task is complex**. However, the definition of risk remains an open question (P2, P4, P5).

Lastly, AI practitioners consider the following factors when establishing Human-AI trust: **AI performance and error, explainability of AI, Human-Human trust, and interaction with AI over time**. The effect of AI errors on users' trust varies depend on three nuances – *context* (testing phase vs scaled deployment, P1), the errors' *frequency* rather than their existence (P1, P2), and the extent to which AI recommendation is *surprising* (P1, P2). The importance of AI explanations for trust depends on *context* and *users* (P2, P3). For example, explanations truly matter for Human-AI trust when users have doubts about the decision (P2). P1 sees explanations as a tool for developers (but not direct users) to understand their AI models better and, as a consequence, calibrate developers' trust in the AI recommendations. Furthermore, Human-Human trust, for example, *trust between users and developers* (P2, P3, P4) and *between users and model subjects* (those affected by the Human-AI decision making, P2) also affect establishment of Human-AI trust. Lastly, Human-AI trust is not static, it evolves over time as users map out a more *robust mental model* (P1, P4).

These preliminary results have implications for future research directions around Human-AI trust and for design and deployment of AI-embedded systems. Firstly, as risk is one of the prerequisites of Human-AI trust [7, 4], we have to clearly define it as well as understand what other elements could trigger establishment of trust in Human-AI interaction. Nuanced specifications around AI performance and errors (e.g. frequency, surprise) and AI explanations (context- and user-dependent) promise interesting research opportunities and echoes Lai's et al. [5] call for detailing context in experimental studies with AI in a standardized manner. The importance of Human-Human trust for Human-AI one can be further investigated through design concepts like social transparency elaborated by Ehsan et al. [2], where users become aware of the experiences and actions of other users with the same AI system. Additionally, since Human-AI trust evolves over time, it is beneficial to monitor how users' trust in AI changes after deployment on a continuous basis. To further advance our fundamental understanding of Human-AI trust, we plan on interviewing additional AI practitioners as well as other stakeholders of related AI-embedded systems in the context of decision making and beyond.

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