

FAIR AI SCRUM

Nina van Liebergen, Quirine Smit, Eliza Hobo, Cor Veenman
The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)
eliza.hobo@tno.nl

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an approach to describe and address complex and nuanced forms of discrimination that result from interconnecting forms of oppression (e.g. racism, (cis)sexism, ableism, colonialism), and the unique harm people experience based on their multiple intersecting identities.

Intersectional fairness in AI is a holistic framework to understand and address the harms experienced by individuals due to the intersecting and often marginalised aspects of their identity. These harms, often based on compounding AI biases, lead to disproportionate disadvantages in AI-driven decisions.

Scrum for intersectionality

Scrum is well-suited for an intersectional approach because:

- It is **non-hierarchical**
- There is room for **reflection and discussion**, allowing teams to take the time to hear all perspective
- **Openness and courage** are two of the Scrum values.
- The **iterative and adaptive** process fits working with multiple disciplines.

Working with Intersectional Fairness: A Handbook for Scrum Teams

Intersectionally fairer AI cannot be achieved with a checklist

- We propose a handbook with tools and starting points to support Scrum AI teams integrating fairness.
- Using the handbook does not guarantee an intersectionally fair product but guides intentional progress toward it.

Because:

- Intersectional fairness is not a fixed outcome. It cannot be achieved simply by following a checklist.
- It requires ongoing dialogue, reflection, and adaptation.
- This process can be difficult and uncomfortable.

Sprint Planning

- Invite various people from various disciplines to give feedback on your ideas and planning.
- Invite community stakeholders to participate
- Make sure everyone is able to give feedback on the planning: even if increments are technical, make sure that people without a technical background can understand
 - ...

First few Sprints

- Dedicate time and effort to create a psychologically safe environment
 - Reflect on the diversity of disciplines in your team and try to incorporate other disciplines.
- Take time to develop a common language between disciplines
- Evaluate whether a technical or AI solution is necessary. Would a non-tech solution be better for the problem at hand?
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Developer team

- Invite community members as developers
- In the first retrospective write a positionality statement. In subsequent retrospectives, reflect on it, and identify potential new relevant positions.
- Appreciation for qualitative research
 - ...

Next: Evaluation with Scrum Teams
Get in touch!

References:

1. Vethman et al. (2025) Fairness beyond the Algorithmic Frame: Actionable Recommendations for an Intersectional Approach. ACM Facct, forthcoming