A strawman with machine learning for a brain

A response to Biedermann (2022) the strange persistence of (source) “identification” claims in forensic literature


DOI
10.1016/j.fsisyn.2022.100230

Publication date
2022

Document Version
Final published version

Published in
Forensic Science International: Synergy

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Citation for published version (APA):

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We agree wholeheartedly with Biedermann (2022) FSI Synergy article 100222 in its criticism of research publications that treat forensic inference in source attribution as an “identification” or “individualization” task. We disagree, however, with its criticism of the use of machine learning for forensic inference. The argument it makes is a strawman argument. There is a growing body of literature on the calculation of well-calibrated likelihood ratios using machine-learning methods and relevant data, and on the validation under casework conditions of such machine-learning-based systems.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Author contributions

Morrison, Ramos, Ypma: Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing. All other authors: Writing - Review & Editing.

Acknowledgements

The writing of this response was supported by Research England’s Expanding Excellence in England Fund as part of funding for the Aston Institute for Forensic Linguistics 2019–2023.

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