

Wednesday Research Seminars 2019-2020 (Term 1)

2 October 2019

“An investigation of common factors in successful data science projects: A journey of three use-cases”

Krishnadas Nanath, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

With data becoming the new oil of the 21st century, organizations are in constant pursuit of making informed data-driven business decisions. Analytics capabilities have leaped forward in recent years, and the amount of data collected by organizations has grown exponentially. The convergence of sophisticated algorithms, computational power, and cheap storage is fuelling rapid technology advances and business disruptions. However, ‘Data and AI Executive 2019 survey’ reported that only 31% of participating firms were truly data-driven organizations. IBM report also revealed that 87% of the data science projects never made it into the final production stage. This seminar aims at investigating the factors that contribute to the success of data science projects in business. I present my experience with three projects in data analytics that work on a business dataset and data science algorithms for generating efficacious business value:

1. Product Delisting in Retail- Given an option, which product would you remove from the product assortment in a retail store?
2. Keystroke Dynamics- Can your passwords be more secured if machines understand your typing behavior?
3. Park Assist- Can image recognition find your car in the parking lot of a mall in real-time?

The journey of these use-cases, along with the insights from the literature led to the development of a data science project framework. This framework highlights the factors that contribute to the success of data science projects in business. I will be sharing initial results to get feedback that would assist in a broader content analysis research involving a sizable collection of use-cases.

Biography

Dr. Krishnadas is an Associate Professor in Data Science (Computer Engineering and Informatics department) at Middlesex University Dubai. In his previous role @ Majid Al Futtaim (MAF), he was responsible for leading the efforts of enhancing Analytics and Data Science capabilities at MAF as the head of School of Analytics. Before joining MAF, he was teaching Data Science, MIS and Cloud Technologies at Middlesex University Dubai, Institute of Management Technology (IMT Dubai) and IIM Indore. He has executed several corporate training programs and Data Science consulting assignments with prestigious firms in UAE (PWC, Landmark Group, National Bank of Fujairah, UAE Exchange and others). He has been the Keynote Speaker at several forums including Gitex Technology Week IIM Ahmadabad Data Science Summit, Smart Data Conference, Droidcon, Machine Learning Summit, Abu Dhabi Quality Council and several conferences.

He received his Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM K), and his thesis covered the areas of Green IT (Sustainability Analytics) and Cloud Computing. His

career started as a Computer Science engineer (B.Tech CSE), and he had successful professional experiences with Microsoft Research and Honeywell. He won the best paper award (2018) for his research work on "Using Data Analytics to Deliver Dynamic Safety Predictions for Reduction in Traffic Accidents." He was also awarded 'Sustainability Researcher of the Year' award by Dr. Rashid Alleem at Alleem Congress. His other awards include the SAS Ambassador Award, Wings of Excellence award (St. Gallen), Emerald LIS research fund award, and Acer Green Innovation award.

9 October 2019

“A Fresh Approach to Current Ratio with respect to Airline Industry”

Venkatachalam Ramanathan, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Current ratio is the most important ratio in financial statement analysis. Normally the banks and financial institutions expect the ratio should be around 1.5:1. However, what constitutes current assets and current liabilities is really a matter. In order to provide correct information to external users, financial statements of public and private companies should follow the standards prescribed by generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) or International Financial Reporting Standards or Indian Accounting Standards as applicable. However, there is no single law or standard or authority to standardize the formulae to be used in computing financial ratios and the definition of various components being used in the ratio analysis. This is the main reason that various parties use different definitions and in computing the value of different components and use different formulae in evaluating the financial metrics. This paper has highlighted the anomaly in the definition of current liabilities and current assets being used in calculating current ratio in respect of airline industry.

Biography

Dr Venkatachalam Ramanathan is a visiting faculty at Middlesex University Dubai. He received his doctoral degree in Commerce on “Securitization”. He has three decades of experience in accounting and finance, of which for 25 years he worked in banking in areas of relationship management, branch management, risk management and training, in UAE, Saudi Arabia and India. In the UAE, he is a training consultant for Emirates NBD and Emirates Islamic Bank. He is an associate member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, London, The Institute of Management Accountants, USA among others.

16 October 2019

“Mapping sustainability practices at Middlesex University Dubai”

Belisa Marochi, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

The Institute of Sustainable Development (ISD) at Middlesex University Dubai aims at advancing sustainability on campus and in the community through outreach, research and training. The objectives of ISD are to advocate the UN Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), strengthen stakeholder collaboration and align academic knowledge to professional practice. As a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, Middlesex University Dubai shows its commitment to creating a just and prosperous world by being the first university in the UAE to report campus-wide activities based on sustainability principles. In 2018, the Institute of Sustainable Development presented the Communication on Engagement (COE) Report submitted to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) showing how Middlesex University Dubai embeds sustainable development goals and principles and operations, curricula, research and student experience. To identify best practices and map the current state of sustainable practices on campus, a qualitative study was conducted through a set of semi-structured interviews with faculty and administration. The report shows our excellence in sustainable practices and creates opportunities for future collaboration and engagement between university staff and the wider community.

Biography

Dr. Belisa Marochi is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations and the Head of the Middlesex Institute of Sustainable Development at Middlesex University Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. With a PhD in Social Sciences from Roskilde University in Denmark, a MA Political Science from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and a BA Global Studies from University of California Santa Barbara from USA, her research mainly focuses on stakeholder engagement and urban governance processes. Committed to engaging stakeholders on taking action on women empowerment, Dr. Marochi is active in the committee of the UAE Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Taskforce under the UN Global Compact UAE Network. She has also contributed to UAE National Committee on Sustainable Development Goals policy on the role of Higher Education Institutions in reaching a sustainable world.

23 October 2019

“Official Launch of Student Research Society (SRS) & Student Panel Discussion”

Middlesex University Dubai Student Research Society

Summary

The Middlesex University Dubai Student Research Society (SRS) is an initiative by students, supported by the Student Research Committee. Established in 2019, and comprising students from a range of undergraduate programmes, the SRS aims to support the growing student research culture evident at Middlesex University Dubai. SRS members work alongside faculty to organise events such as the upcoming MDX/BCS Student Research Conference, deliver information and training sessions on research-related issues, and encourage research participation among the wider student body. This seminar, we celebrate the official launch of the SRS followed by an interactive discussion by a panel of current and former MDX Dubai students, who will share their research experiences and insights.

30 October 2019

“A Lonely Planet for Women Travelers”

Heather Jeffrey, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Writing for the Guardian, Linda Kinstler (2018) reported the censorship of advice for women travelers on TripAdvisor, especially when that advice relates to their personal safety. Much of the academic literature centred on women’s travel highlights their own responsibility in safeguarding themselves from dangers abroad. As such this paper aims to widen discussions from personal responsibility to institutional responsibility by honing in on the travel trade press and its promulgation of discourses on women’s travel. Acknowledging that Lonely Planet is an important brand in travel advice, but also that many tourists now turn to internet based advice, this research is centred on a discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972) of the Lonely Planet website’s advice for female travelers. The findings show how Lonely Planet (re)instates spatial segregation and assigns responsibility to potential victims while minimising the importance of harassment and disregarding women’s feelings towards harassers.

Biography

Dr Heather Jeffrey completed her PhD at Middlesex University, London in 2017, her thesis is entitled A Discursive Analysis of Women’s Femininities within the Context of Tunisian Tourism. Heather joined Middlesex University, Dubai after having held faculty positions at the University of Bedfordshire, Middlesex University London, and the University of East London. Heather’s research interests centre on social inequality, qualitative methods, and gender studies and she was pleased to have been invited to become a member of the European Commission-funded International Network for Comparative Analysis of Social Inequalities in 2016. More recently Heather has been invited to become an associate for the non-profit organisation Equality in Tourism, she is also a dissertation reviewer for the Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society. In addition to creating scholarly outputs, Heather has written for the Huffington Post on issues related to tourism, gender and academia.

6 November 2019

“The marginal propensity to consume for different socio-economic groups”

Zara Canbary, Brunel University London

Abstract

This paper investigates the marginal propensity to consume for UK households across different socio-economic groups. It uses the Family Expenditure Survey, a repeated cross-section of British Households, which reports expenditure, income, and household characteristics from quarter 1 of 1986 to quarter 1 of 2016. Since each household is interviewed only once we construct pseudo panels based on the socio-economic status of the household head. We find that households with higher socio-economic status have a

lower marginal propensity to consume. We also find that the marginal propensity to consume increased after the 2007-2009 financial crisis. This study supports the hypothesis that credit constraints are more serious for lower-income groups.

Biography

Zara Canbary has recently submitted her PhD in Economics at Brunel University London. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Finance and Accounting from Brunel University London, and MSc in International Business, from the Australian University of Wollongong in Dubai, and BSc (Hons) in Business and Economics from Tehran University, Tehran, Iran. Her research mainly focus on empirical issues relating to consumption using household-level data. She has gained extensive experience investigating microeconomics, behavioral economics, and micro-econometrics using “Big Data”. Her thesis includes three papers examining households’ responses to different types of income shocks.

She has presented her research in different seminars and conferences such as “Family Finance Surveys User Conference, 2018” and “Brunel University London Economics and Finance Symposium, 2017, 2018, 2019“, and the 3rd International Conference on Advances in Business and Law (ICABL) 2019 in Dubai (upcoming).

13 November 2019

“Using Immersive Virtual Reality to Become Einstein”

Sameer Kishore, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Several studies over the past few decades have shown that people tend to react to situations in Virtual Reality (VR) as they would if that event were happening in real life. Concepts such as Presence, Place Illusion and Plausibility Illusion refer to the feeling of ‘being there’ in the virtual environment and believing that the events taking place in VR are really happening. Taking advantage of this phenomenon, experiences have been developed in VR for several applications: Treatment of phobias (fear of spiders, fear of public speaking, etc.), social psychology studies (bystander effect, racial bias, etc.) and even medical treatments, such as stroke rehabilitation. In this talk, after a brief overview of the technology and various interesting applications, I will talk about a recent study that we published, where we developed an application that was used to treat people with a fear of heights (acrophobia). The results were very positive in terms of improving the level of fear of the participants and were published in The Lancet. In addition, I will also talk about how owning a virtual body in VR tends to influence higher-level behaviour and implicit biases. I will provide certain examples from past research, and then talk about a study we carried out where we ‘embodied’ university students in the body of Albert Einstein in order to see if that would improve their cognition. We observed that ‘becoming’ Einstein improved their performance in a cognitive task and reduced their implicit bias against older people.

Biography

Dr Sameer Kishore is a senior lecturer at Middlesex University Dubai. His main research interest is human-robot interaction with a specific focus on studying the effects of having an illusion of body ownership over a humanoid robot. Dr. Kishore completed his PhD in 2016 at the University of Barcelona. He was awarded a three-year pre-doctorate grant from the Government of Spain for carrying out his PhD and received an additional award for

successfully completing and defending his thesis. He spent a year as a post-doctoral researcher involved in a project funded by the Government of Spain, regarding higher-level cognitive functioning and implicit behaviours in immersive virtual reality. He has worked with state-of-the-art technological systems and carried out several studies, which were published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and conferences such as *The Lancet Psychiatry* (Impact Factor 2018: 18.329), *IEEE Computer Graphics & Applications* and the *ACM Symposium on Virtual Reality Software and Technology*. His work has received widespread media coverage, including channels such as the BBC, *The New Yorker* and *The Guardian*. Dr. Kishore has a Master's degree in computer graphics and computer vision from University College London, UK and a bachelor's degree in computer science engineering from Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Dubai.

20 November 2019

“Rhythm and the Short Story”

Louise Edensor, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

The beginning of the 20th century in Britain was a period of paradigmatic shifts in technology, science and culture. The human experience of living through such changes was reflected in the literature of the period, particularly literature that sought new ways of representing and contextualising the effects of change on the self. Much of this literature was published in ‘little magazines’ which were pervasive and popular. One such magazine was *Rhythm*, a magazine that would ‘be the rhythmical echo of the life with which it is in touch’. Its editor, John Middleton Murry, was a critic of some renown, but had little experience in commissioning and publishing short stories. Nevertheless, *Rhythm* became a haven for new (and established) literary talent that could encompass and narrativize the aims and ideals of the magazine. Scholarly interest in the artwork published in *Rhythm* (it was the first magazine in Britain to publish sketches by Picasso) has been thorough but little critical attention has been directed towards the short stories in the magazine. The stories, however, represent a rich tapestry of aesthetic approaches, narrative techniques and experimentation with style, sometimes deliberately reworking the genres of the fin-de-siècle. Drawn from a recently published book chapter, this seminar paper seeks to illustrate how the short stories in the magazine absorbed and re-textualised human concerns with the zeitgeist of early 20th century Britain. In so doing, these stories connected with and exemplified the artistic and rhetorical framework established by Murry’s conceptualisation of how a ‘little magazine’ could push the boundaries of the avant-garde to create unique and innovative artforms. I will show how the short stories are functional, utilised not simply for their own artistic tenets but as a tool whose form is exploited in order to underscore the foundations upon which the magazine was determined to set itself.

Biography

Dr. Louise Edensor has a PhD in English Literature from the University of Northampton, UK. Her thesis explores the work of the short story writer Katherine Mansfield and the development of literary techniques that could accommodate her thoughts on matters of the self. Louise has published papers and book chapters on Mansfield and her associates. Louise’s current research interests extend to the little magazines of the early 20th century and she is currently re-writing her thesis to prepare it for publication.

27 November 2019

“IoT and Smart Services”

Maha Saadeh, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

The Internet of Things (IoT) has been introduced recently as the future of the Internet that provides different services in wide range of applications such as smart monitoring, navigation and route planning, healthcare, etc. It connects billions of objects which are different in their capabilities, size, and functionalities. Recently human lifestyle is influenced by the development of different IoT applications. These applications support different humans' daily activities such as transportation decisions, traffic and healthcare monitoring, route planning, elderly and children supervision, and many more. In order to motivate people to use different IoT applications and be part of the new connected world, it is important to provide some security services such as authentication. People would not be convenient to share and exchange their data and personal information unless efficient protection schemes are used to prevent any malicious behavior. Therefore, efficient security and authentication provisioning are necessary for the development and deployment of IoT applications. The diverse nature of numerous IoT objects creates several challenges that should be considered in the development of authentication schemes such as heterogeneity, mobility, scalability, and constrained devices.

In this seminar I will talk about the Internet of thing; components, importance and challenges. In addition to that, I will present recent studies that we published related to IoT smart services mainly, objects' authentication and smart transportation.

Biography

Dr Maha Saadeh holds a PhD in Computer and Networks Security and has both a BSc in Computer Science and a Master's in Computer Science from the University of Jordan. Her teaching and learning interests include Information and Network Security, Artificial intelligence, Robotics, Machine Learning, IoT, Computer Networks, Cloud and Fog Computing and Programming Languages. Her work has been published in leading journals and conferences.

4 December 2019

“An international exploration of what truly matters for student engagement”

Dawn England, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Join in a discussion of student engagement, where we will attempt to uncover the universals to student engagement globally. We will discuss contemporary perspectives on student engagement in the literature and highlight a new perspective on the importance of belongingness and career relevance to students. Research will be presented on a 4 year longitudinal research project in Guatemala examining what makes elementary school children drop out of school, followed by a multi-university intervention study in the UK to

understand Black and Minority Ethnic student attainment in higher education. We will then review data from students at Middlesex University to explore extracurricular activities and lecture strategies that make them feel engaged. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of student engagement, pushing past the dogmatic and relatively boring approaches commonly paraded in education to attempt to understand what truly matters and how to best engage students of all ages across all levels of education.

Biography

Dr. Dawn England aims to apply the power and insight of research to innovations in education and human development, with a firm commitment to the idea that where you are born should not dictate what you become. She has collaborated with scholars in 17 countries over the past decade on research involving educational attainment in low- and high-income countries, including serving as Principal Investigator on a \$300,000 grant to study educational attainment in elementary and middle school across 5 countries and a position as Academic Lead for a HEFCE funded intervention to reduce the attainment gap in higher education across 3 UK universities. She holds a PhD from Arizona State University in Family and Human Development and an MBA from Hult International.

11 December 2019

“Conducting experimental research with emerging communication technologies: from virtual reality to social robots”

Laura Aymerich-Franch, Pompeu Fabra University

Abstract

My research promotes the positive applied uses of emerging communication technologies, principally with virtual reality and social robots, to enhance the human well-being. In this talk, I will review the principal research projects I have conducted in the last years. First, I will address the project conducted at the Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Stanford University, as a Fulbright postdoctoral scholar. In that project, I manipulated the appearance of avatars in immersive virtual reality in order to reduce social phobia. Next, I will explain the robot embodiment project, funded by the European Commission through the prestigious Marie Curie IOF grant, which was conducted at the CNRS-AIST Joint Robotics Laboratory (Japan) and at the EventLab, Barcelona University. In this project, we created a humanoid robot avatar and demonstrated that humans are able to experience these avatars as if they were their own body. I will discuss the potential applications of these findings in the area of wellbeing. Finally, I will talk about my current research projects, including the collaborative project being conducted at the MIT Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in which we use social robots to promote human psychological well-being through coaching experiences. The results of all these projects have been published in highly ranked JCR journals including the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, the International Journal of Social Robotics, Consciousness and Cognition, Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, and many others, and presented at international conferences several times including the International Communication Association General Conference.

Biography

Dr. Aymerich-Franch is currently a Ramón y Cajal senior research fellow at Pompeu Fabra University. She was a visiting scholar at the MIT Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2018/19). Previously, she was a Marie Curie IOF postdoctoral fellow (funded

by the European Union) at EventLab, Barcelona University and at the CNRS-AIST Joint Robotics Laboratory, Japan (2014/17). Previously, she was a Fulbright postdoctoral scholar at the Virtual Human Interaction Lab, Stanford University (2012/14). She earned a PhD cum laude on Audiovisual Communication from the Autonomous University of Barcelona (2010). She has also been a visiting scholar at the iCinema, Centre for Interactive Cinema Research, University of New South Wales (2009). Laura has a background in Media & Communication (BA), Digital Communication Technologies (MRes), Behavioral Psychology (MRes), Media Psychology (PhD), Positive Psychology, and Life Coaching. Her research promotes the use of virtual reality and social robot for the enhancement of the psychological wellbeing.

18 December 2019

“Innovation in Marketing”

Matthew Brown, Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

“Innovation in Marketing” has seen significant interest in recent years. Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) has decided that so critical is the topic of Innovation to marketing and business success that a compulsory module on their Diploma in Marketing was created. This seminar aims to introduce concepts of innovation in marketing to an audience that may not be familiar with the discipline and illustrate through real-world case studies the innovation activities that are already in common usage. The study utilizes a range of contemporary theories and case studies to demonstrate how theory is being applied to modern business, in a variety of sectors. This include full process of innovation, from idea generation, change management, creating a creative environment, approach to innovation and implementation of innovation products and services.

Biography

Matthew Brown is currently a Lecturer in marketing here at Middlesex, after spending two years as Director of Professional Studies at the University of Buckingham in the UK and a visiting lecturer at London Metropolitan University, lecturing on MBA programmes at both institutions, specialising in digital marketing and marketing innovation. Matt has a wealth of commercial experience before entering academia; he was the Head of Global Business Development for the Linguaphone Group, an international language training organisation and an independent marketing consultant working largely in the Middle East with organisations such as Samba Bank in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar Petroleum, Doha. Before that he was Regional Education Manager for the Chartered Institute of Marketing, running the operations for CIM throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Matt began his career in politics as Association Chairman for the Liberal Democrats in the UK. Matt is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and a Fellow of both the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Matt has a master degree in Management from London South Bank as well as Professional Postgraduate qualifications from the CMI and CIM.