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Data Management to Social Science and Back in the Future of Work

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Abstract

How will we work, live, and thrive in the post-pandemic future? The rapid mushrooming of online job markets has been transforming the definition of work and workplaces. After the pandemic, as we “cope with the new normal”, the future world of work may change forever and become predominantly virtual. This makes an unprecedented pool of talent available at our beck and calls to work on “gigs” that disband when the job is over; this also is the time of destabilization and changing nature of job security. As scientists, we have a big responsibility and a tremendous opportunity in shaping the Future of Work (FoW) post pandemic, by designing effective platforms that support productive employment, mitigate social costs, and provide an effective and safe learning environment.

A research agenda for FoW must mobilize the participation of various scientific, regulatory and miscellaneous stakeholders [10]. We will ask the questions: what is the role of Data Management (DM) in shaping research on FoW? Is now a ripe time to get Economics, Labor Theory, Psychology of Work and AI to help put DM research and technology at the center of research on FoW? Are we at all interested? The panelists will debate two complementary views: *A pessimistic view on whether FoW will tend to see humans as machines, robots, or low-level agents and use them in the service of broader AI goals vs. a more optimistic view, where AI and Social Science will help DM to develop technologies that empower humans for future workforce and workplaces.*

CCS Concepts

• Information systems → Crowdsourcing.

Keywords

Future of Work, Human Factors, Peer Learning, Gig Work, Working From Home

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1 Significance

This proposal is motivated by a 3-day Shonan Meeting organized by the moderators in September 2019 that brought together researchers in human-in-the-loop Big Data, AI, and practitioners to connect the latest research findings to real-world questions and examine their impact on FoW. Follow up publications:

- i. **Shonan Report**: “Human-in-the-loop Big Data and AI: Connecting Theories and Practices for a Better Future of Work” [1].
- ii. **SIGMOD blog**: “Imagine All the People and AI in the FoW”¹.
- iii. **IEEE DEB Special Issue (Dec 2019)**: “Imagine All the People and AI in the Future of Work” [3].
- iv. **SIGMOD record article**: “Data Management Research and More: Making AI Machines Work for Humans in FoW” [6].
- v. **IEEE DEB article published (Sep 2020)**: “An ML-Powered Human Behavior Management System” [4].

2 Topic of Debate

The panelists will discuss the relevance of DM research to FoW. They will comment on the need for DM backends and for declarative languages to store and query work and workers, as well as the rising computational challenges, and how AI/ML will help design and optimize those backends.

1. How might Social Science help DM capture human capabilities and social processes? We envision that some of the critical challenges will lie in understanding different human roles in future jobs that are heavily AI-driven, modeling the inherent uncertainty in human behavior and adapting to their changing perceptions and needs. The development of interaction methodologies to provide onboarding and upskilling for workers, as well as enabling social interaction among workers would be of significant interest to the community.

2. How might AI enable capturing and adapting to different stakeholder requirements? The ability for all stakeholders in the new ecosystem, including regulators for policies and AI workers, to specify their requirements is another major challenge that must be achieved with declarative and high-level tools to express needs and expectations.

3. How can we design appropriate DM ecosystems, benchmarks and metrics for FoW? FoW will require overhauling the design and engineering of job platforms for collection, storage, retrieval, and analysis of the data deluge about workers, jobs, and their activities. This needs adaptive approaches to evolve the design of platforms and enhance computation capabilities. Benchmarking and development of appropriate metrics to measure system performance as well as human aspects (e.g., satisfaction, capital advancement, equity) is an additional challenge.

¹<https://wp.sigmod.org/?p=293>

4. How can DM enforce multi-stakeholder fairness? Regulations and policies should be developed to ensure the possibility of workers to unite and demand rights such as choosing among compensation mechanisms, and getting paid vacation. Similarly, platforms and job providers need to be given the means to safeguard themselves from abuse. Granting those rights implies the detection and reduction of discrimination in algorithmic decisions, especially in job allocation and exposure, through auditing processes and compliance to regulations [2].

Confirmed Panelists

Our (confirmed) panelists will be invited to defend or debunk established and upcoming theories on FoW and on which research community will be best known for addressing FoW challenges:

- **Lei Chen** is a Chair Professor and the Director of HKUST Big Data Institute. Lei is a world expert in crowdsourcing-based data processing.
- **Krishna Gummadi** is a scientific director at the Max Planck Institute for Software Systems (MPI-SWS) in Germany. Krishna’s research interests are in the measurement, analysis, design, and evaluation of complex Internet-scale systems. His work focus is on enhancing fairness and transparency of data-driven decision making in social computing systems.
- **Saiph Savage** is Director HCI Lab, WVU. She studies AI systems to help workers develop their digital skills to access better jobs and fight disinformation. Saiph was named one of the 35 Innovators under 35 by the MIT Technology Review for her civic tech research.
- **Jaime Teevan** is Chief Scientist for Microsoft’s Experiences and Devices, and this past year coordinated the company’s research efforts to understand how people’s work practices have changed since the start of the pandemic: <http://aka.ms/newfutureofwork>.
- **Koichiro Yoshida** is the CEO of CrowdWorks (the largest crowdsourcing company in Japan, went to public in 2014). He will bring his expertise as a practitioner and a proponent of workers’ rights in online marketplaces.

Moderators

- **Sihem Amer-Yahia, CNRS, Univ. Grenoble Alpes, FRANCE** is a CNRS Research Director in Grenoble and the scientific deputy director of the Grenoble Computer Science Lab. Her interests are exploratory data analysis and fairness in job marketplaces. Before joining CNRS in 2012, she was Principal Scientist at QCRI, Senior Scientist at Yahoo! Research and Member of Technical Staff at at&t Labs. Sihem was Editor-in-Chief of the VLDB Journal, is co-chairing HILDA 2020, SIGMOD Demos 2020, ICDE 2021 and EDBT Demos 2021.
- **Senjuti Basu Roy, NJIT, USA** is an Assistant Professor at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Her broader research interests lie in the area of data and content management with the focus on designing principled algorithms for “human-in-the-loop” systems. Senjuti co-chairs an IEEE international workshop on Human-in-the-loop Methods and Human Machine Collaboration in Big Data and has organized an NSF

workshop on converging human and technological perspectives in crowd-sourcing research.

- Sihem and Senjuti published numerous papers on online job marketplaces [7–9, 11–16], presented a tutorial at VLDB on the topic [5], and co-organized the Shonan Workshop on FoW in September 2019.

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