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UCT's eResearch Africa conference on data science for development

In a research-intensive environment, data scientists contribute to real-world problems in public health, education, sustainable energy, climate change, economic development, and many other areas. The University of Cape Town's (UCT) eResearch is hosting its bi-annual conference at UCT from the 15 to 18 April 2019. The theme of this year's conference is data science for development and focuses on the work of data scientists in solving the world's so-called wicked problems.

Limited press passes are available, and media are invited to key presentations including:

- Astronomy as a platform for skills development: Skills like statistics, programming and mathematics are foundational for entry into data science careers and are core skills for building knowledge economies. While these subjects can be notoriously 'dry' and difficult to teach, astronomy's inspirational qualities make it a potential gateway into these subjects. (Wednesday 17 April 2019, 12h00 to 12h30, LT3B, Snape Building, Upper Campus, UCT)
- The role of big data, analytics, technology and impact on society: The delivery of social services in the Republic of South Africa is a challenge for local municipalities, provincial governments, and the national government. In 2018, there were a number of protests by the residents of various municipalities due to the residents' view that the social service deliveries were insufficient or non-existent.
- Remote sensing data, machine learning and citizen science for development in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): Most of sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA) population live in rural areas and rely on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Access to land, security of tenure and reform are some of the pertinent issues at the core of raising agriculture incomes. Yet, there is a "statistical tragedy" in Africa wherein governments do not have the technical and financial capacity, as well as the political will to provide objective and reliable data for use by researchers and policy makers. We apply a Support Vector Machine (SVM) Learning algorithm on Landsat imagery to generate agricultural data that we use to answer development questions.

Please see the full programme here.

Please note press access is limited and journalists interested in attending any of the presentations must please contact Natalie Simon (0741910945) before Wednesday 17 April to register their attendance.

ENDS

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