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Big Data: Opportunities and challenges for policy, research and business

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Big Data: Opportunities and challenges for policy, research and business

Big Data provides both opportunities and challenges for research, policy, business and society as a whole. This symposium will investigate some of the key issues surrounding Big Data and consider possible implications for the agricultural economics profession. The first presentation, by Christian Reimsbach-Kounatze, will focus on the societal and policy challenges arising from Big Data from the perspective of the OECD. The second presentation, by Krijn Poppe, will examine how ICT is changing the nature of the farm and present a research agenda on the economics of big data. The final presentation by Mark Keane will consider the wider research opportunities emerging from the use of big data, drawing on examples from his own work in the area.

Speakers

Christian Reimsbach-Kounatze is an Internet economist and policy analyst at the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (STI). Christian has been working in STI on topics related to the Internet and digital economy since 2008. This includes work on assessing the impact of ICTs on society (including on skills and employment) and more recently work on the economics of “big data”. He is now co-ordinating OECD’s horizontal project on “the role of data for growth and well-being”, which is part of a broader OECD project on New Sources of Growth (NSG). Before joining the OECD, Christian worked as a researcher at the Institute for Information and Market Engineering of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and at SAP Research in Germany on topics related to information markets, peer-to-peer systems, and distributed incentive mechanisms. Christian holds a Diploma (Master of Science) in Information Science, Engineering and Management and a Diploma in Economics, both granted by the KIT.

Krijn J. Poppe is a business economist working in the research management of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI) of Wageningen University and Research Centre, located in The Hague, the Netherlands. He is involved in the management of several large, multidisciplinary research projects for the EU. He co-chairs the collaborative working group AKIS (Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems) of the EU’s Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR). His current research interest focuses on agricultural policy issues, monitoring, competitiveness of the European food sector, the agricultural knowledge and innovation system, cooperatives and ICT.

From 2009 – 2011 he worked part-time as Chief Science Officer at the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation. In this role he co-chaired an EU collaborative working group on Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems and edited its report. Krijn J. Poppe was for 12 years (1999-2011) Secretary-General of the European Association of Agricultural Economists. He is honorary secretary-treasurer of the EAAEP Foundation (that publishes the ERAE), chairs the Steering Group of the journal EuroChoices, chairs the foundation eRNAC on research concerning cooperatives. He co-owns a small arable family farm.

Mark Keane is Professor of Computer Science at UCD. He has a BA (1982) in Psychology from University College Dublin, and a PhD (1987) in Cognitive Psychology from Trinity College. He held posts at Queen

Mary College, the Open University, the University of Cardiff and Trinity College Dublin before taking up the Chair in Computer Science at UCD in 1998. At UCD, he has held several positions of responsibility including Head of School, Associate Dean and Vice President, Innovation and Partnerships. From 2004-2007, he held the posts of Director of ICT and Director General of Science Foundation Ireland, being responsible for a research spend of €700M+.

His main areas of research have been in the areas of Natural Language Processing, Case-Based Reasoning and Power Laws in Web Behaviour. This research uncovered power-law regularities in large data-sets for mobile-web usage, web search and social media. These findings raised questions about why such distributions arise and how power-laws in language may reflect population-level opinions. His research has always been strongly multi-disciplinary and he has held posts in Computer Science and Psychology, making research contributions to both disciplines.