Surveys, "Big Data," and Machine Learning: Bringing Methods together to Solve Difficult Problems at Scale

Curtiss Cobb

(Survey Scientist and Manager, Demography and Survey Science Group, Facebook)

13.06.2018, 17:00 (s.t.)
Seminarraum, Institut für Statistik

Abstract:
The hype that exists in research communities for "big data" and machine learning have led many to speculate about how "big data" may eliminate the need for survey research in the near future—often time using Facebook and its "big data" resources as an example for why surveys are no longer needed for understanding demographic trends or public opinion. At Facebook, we view "big data" methods and survey research as complimentary tools rather than competing and often bring both together to solve some of our most difficult problems. This talk will share two examples: (1) how survey research is leveraged for evaluating and improving machine learning model input and output; and (2) how machine learning models are helping Facebook overcome declining response rates in surveys.

About Curtis Cobb:
Curtiss Cobb leads the Demography and Survey Science Team at Facebook, a quantitative focused research team that works across Facebook and the family of apps to identify and share best practices and methodological innovations in demographic and survey research. His team oversees the collection of millions of survey responses a day from around the world using mobile, web, face-to-face and other methods. Prior to Facebook, Curtiss was Senior Director of Survey Methodology at GfK and consulted on survey studies for clients such as the Associated Press, Pew Research Center, CDC, U.S. State Department and numerous academic studies. Curtiss received his B.A. from the University of Southern California and has an M.A. in Quantitative Methods for Social Sciences from Columbia University. He holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Stanford University.