Stephen Paff

Title: Integrating Anthropology and Data Science

Abstract

Data science has become increasing popular in the last several years, connected with recent advancements in data collecting and machine learning technologies. As both an anthropologist and data scientist, I will examine strategies for leveraging both to help address pressing complex societal issues. This paper will explore potential strategies to develop a comprehensive theory to reformulate the disciplinary relationship between data science and anthropology, integrate data science work into ethnographic projects on a practical level, and conceptualize the “sociality” of machine learning algorithms. Finally, I will synthesize my experiences merging anthropology, data science, and other forms of technological thinking as a backdrop to reflect on what it means to be an anthropologist in the data science field and technology industry more broadly.