

High Tech Insights Into Human Behavior

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A*STAR and SMU collaborate on a new research center focused on interdisciplinary research that brings the latest technology to bear on human behavior.



AsianScientist (Jun 20, 2014) – The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and the Singapore Management University (SMU) will establish a Center for Technology and Social-Behavioral Insights (CTSBI) to tap on high performance computing technology, big data analytics and behavioral sciences to study people-centric issues and human behavior.

Such information can be used to enhance planning and address issues in different areas such as retail, logistics, urban planning, education and community development.

For example, it would be possible to trawl millions of websites online to find out popular fashion trends or customers' affinity for certain designs, and analyse and filter this information in real-time to allow retailers to customise their marketing strategies accordingly. The Center could also be used to study crowd movements to facilitate urban planning or feedback to enhance the delivery of public services.

The Center leverages the advanced computational modelling and data analytics expertise of A*STAR's Institute of High Performance Computing (IHPC), the integrative information technology capabilities of A*STAR's Institute for Infocomm Research (I2R) and the in-depth scientific expertise on human behaviors of SMU's Behavioral Sciences Institute (BSI).

To be officially operational from 1 July 2014, the CTSBI is funded by A*STAR's Joint Council Office, which supports R&D that brings together multidisciplinary capabilities. SMU will also contribute manpower and other research resources. The Center will be helmed by two co-directors, Dr. Victor Tong from A*STAR and Prof. David Chan from SMU.

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“In today’s connected world, everyone can express views and offer information about events in real time and at a rapid pace. This creates a large volume of dynamic data that is potentially very useful, but it is often difficult to figure out the critical ideas embedded in the data,” said Dr. Victor Tong, who is Director of the Social & Cognitive Computing Department at A*STAR’s IHPC

“One of the goals of our collaboration is to develop better ways to extract meaning and value from the large amounts of data collected from social software such as internet forums and blogs, and their related technologies. This can be effectively accomplished by bringing together the relevant top expertise in both social computing and behavioral sciences.”

Source: A*STAR.