MSBAPM NEWSLETTER
MONTHLY

APRIL 2015

Master of Science in Business Analytics & Project Management

tangible skills today...
innovative solutions tomorrow.

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Contact
MSBAPMClub@uconn.edu

ANNOUNCEMENTS

REMINDER:

Registration for summer classes opened on 2/23. Please make sure you took care of any holds on your account (e.g., immunizations, bursar/financial holds, etc.) or you will not be able to enroll in classes.

For graduating students:

- ✓ Caps and gowns can be purchased from the Co-op at this point in Storrs, CT
- ✓ Please also get your graduation tickets (10 per graduate, bring any extra back to Anna).
- ✓ Please return access badges and parking wands by May 6th.
- ✓ All 2015 Graduates (May, Summer & December) – Please submit your Plan of Study ASAP.

For guidance/Appointments on Courses/Plan of study,
✉ anna.radziwillowicz@business.uconn.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

4/24 ALUMNI PANEL –
Interactive Session with MSBAPM Alumni.
TIME: 4:30pm

5/6 GRADUATION CEREMONY
Spring Graduation
TIME: 5:30pm, Observation Deck, GBLC

5/9 GRADUATES GATHERING IN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS CAFETERIA, STORRS
TIME: 9:30am

5/11 SUMMER TERM BEINGS

HADOOP's small files problem

By Subham Sharma

Subham, Fall-2014 graduate of MS BAPM shared HADOOP's small files problem. He shared the reasons for the problems and possible fixes. The article ends with resources for HADOOP enthusiasts.

While big data isn't exclusively made for big businesses, not all big data platforms are suited for small data needs. Unfortunately, Hadoop happens to be one of them. Due to its high capacity design, the Hadoop Distributed File System or HDFS, lacks the ability to efficiently support the random reading of small files. As a result, it is not recommended for organizations with small quantities of data. But there are some solutions floating around in the industry that still provides a support to this problem.

HADOOP's small files problem

The Hadoop Distributed File System (HDFS) is developed to store and process large data sets over the range of terabytes and petabytes. However, storing a large number of small files in HDFS is inefficient.

Why?

A file is called small when its size is substantially less than the HDFS block size, which is 64 MB by default. Files and blocks are name objects in HDFS and they occupy namespace. The namespace capacity of the system is naturally limited by the physical memory in the NameNode.

Actual problem arises when there are many number of small files stored in the system, these small files occupy a large portion of the namespace. Because storing out all the metadata information of such small files in the memory of the NameNode eats up the memory. Also these small files may run into thousands and cause many issues in production.

Hence Hadoop is not really good at dealing with tons of small files and rather good at handling large files. Also too many small files increase the number of mappers, job coordination effort (task scheduling), less work for each map task and overall processing time.

Available techniques:

Hadoop Archives (HAR)

Hadoop Archives (HAR) can be used to address the namespace limitations associated with storing many small files. A Hadoop Archive packs small files into HDFS blocks more efficiently, thereby reducing NameNode memory usage while still allowing transparent access to files.

Hadoop Archives are also compatible with MapReduce, allowing transparent access to the original files by MapReduce jobs.

Pros - To a client using the HAR file system nothing has changed: all of the original files are visible and accessible (albeit using a har:// URL). However, the number of files in HDFS has been reduced.

Cons - Reading through files in a HAR is no more efficient than reading through files in HDFS, and in fact may be slower since each HAR file access requires two index file reads as well as the data file read. And although HAR files can be used as input to MapReduce, there is no special magic that allows maps to operate over all the files in the HAR co-resident on a HDFS block.

Sequence Files

Sequence files are used as a container to store the small files. Sequence files are flat files containing key, value pairs. A very common use case when designing ingestion systems is to use Sequence files as containers and store any file related metadata (filename, path, creation time etc.) as the key and the file contents as the value.

Pros - Sequence Files are splittable, so MapReduce can break them into chunks and operate on each chunk independently. They support compression as well, unlike HARs. Block compression is the best option in most cases, since it compresses blocks of several records (rather than per record).

Cons - It can be slow to convert existing data into Sequence Files. Unlike HAR files there is no way to list all the keys in a Sequence File, sort of reading through the whole file.

S3DistCp is a utility provided by Amazon for distributed copying of data from S3 to ephemeral HDFS or even other S3 buckets. The utility provides the capability to concatenate files together through the use of groupBy and targetSize options. This is useful when you have thousands of small files stored in S3 that you want to process using Amazon EMR.

Pros - S3DistCp kills two birds with one stone by concatenating many small files and making them appear in faster, ephemeral HDFS storage. There have been reports of as much as 15x performance improvement using this mechanism.

Cons - This solution is only available for users of Amazon EMR.

Already have lots of data in these more traditional formats and small files, but want to work with Hadoop? No problem!

Possible solutions

1. forqlift - If you use Hadoop to process binary data, chances are you store that data in SequenceFile archives. SequenceFiles are nice, but they can be unwieldy at times. forqlift makes it easier to manage SequenceFiles. forqlift is a command-line tool that lets you:

a. Create SequenceFiles from files on your local filesystem (just like creating an archive with tar or zip). Ship binary and whole-file data to a Hadoop cluster for processing.

b. Set compression (none, bzip2, gzip) and value types (text or binary). Compress to save bandwidth and storage space. This is especially useful if you're shipping data back and forth to Amazon's Elastic MapReduce.

c. Extract the contents of a SequenceFile back to the filesystem. Now that Hadoop has processed your data, extract the archive and see the results.

d. convert popular archive formats -- tar (including tar.bz2 and tar.gz) and zip -- to and from SequenceFile format.

2. filecrush - A highly configurable tool by Edward Capriolo to "crush" small files on HDFS. It supports a rich set of configuration arguments and is available as a jar file ready to run on your cluster. It's a sophisticated tool - for example, by default it won't bother crushing a file which is within 75% of the HDFS

3. Consolidator - Hadoop file consolidation tool from the dfs-datastores library, written by Nathan Marz. There is scant documentation for this -just one paragraph,.It has fewer capabilities than filecrush

4. S3DistCp - Created by Amazon as an S3-friendly adaptation of Hadoop's DistCp utility for HDFS. Don't be fooled by the name - if you are running on Elastic MapReduce, then this can deal with your small files problem using its --groupBy and --targetSize options for aggregating files

For Hadoop enthusiasts here are some upcoming conference in the cities nearby -

SQL and Machine Learning on Hadoop using HAWQ (New York) - Tuesday, April 7

http://bit.ly/1DPLYaY

War Stories from the Hadoop Trenches (New York) - Wednesday, April 8

http://bit.ly/1yiE5bZ

Apache Drill Workshop (New York) - Wednesday, April 8

http://bit.ly/1IQNt6t

April Presentation Night (Cambridge) - Wednesday, April 8

http://bit.ly/1EgPeuB

How to make people like you?

By Neha Agarwal

Neha shared with us, research backed tips on how to make people like you..

So you want to know how to make people like you? It's easier than you think.

Here are six research-backed tips:

Encourage people to talk about themselves

It gives their brain as much pleasure as food or money:

Talking about ourselves — whether in a personal conversation or through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter — triggers the same

sensation of pleasure in the brain as food or money, researchers reported Monday...

"Self-disclosure is extra rewarding," said Harvard neuroscientist Diana Tamir, who conducted the experiments with Harvard colleague Jason Mitchell. Their findings were published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. "People were even willing to forgo money in order to talk about themselves," Ms. Tamir said. [The Wall Street Journal]

To give feedback, ask questions

If you use questions to guide people toward the errors in their thinking process and allow them to come up with the solution themselves, they're less likely to feel threatened and more likely to follow through.

It's not you searching for problems; it's him searching for gaps in his thinking process. You want people to look for assumptions or decisions that don't make sense upon further reflection...The more you can help people find their own insights, the easier it will be to help others be effective, even when someone has lost the plot on an important project. Bringing other people to insight means letting go of "constructive performance feedback," and replacing it with "facilitating positive change." [Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long]

Here's more on feedback.

Ask for advice

Stanford professor Jeffrey Pfeffer, persuasion expert Robert Cialdini and many others have all recommended asking for advice as a powerful way to

influence others and warm them to you.

Wharton professor Adam Grant breaks down the science behind it:

New research shows that advice seeking is a surprisingly effective strategy for exercising influence when we lack authority. In one experiment, researcher Katie Liljenquist had people negotiate the possible sale of commercial property. When the sellers focused on their goal of getting the highest possible price, only eight percent reached a successful agreement. When the sellers asked the buyers for advice on how to meet their goals, 42 percent reached a successful agreement. Asking for advice encouraged greater cooperation and information sharing, turning a potentially contentious negotiation into a win-win deal. Studies demonstrate that across the manufacturing, financial services, insurance and pharmaceuticals industries, seeking advice is among the most effective ways to influence peers, superiors, and subordinates. [Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success]

The two-question technique

Ask them about something positive in their life. Only after they reply should you ask them how they're feeling about life in general.

Sounds silly, but this method is based on research by Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman.

A positive answer on the first question will lead to them feeling more positive about their life in general when you ask the second question:

The same pattern is found if a question about the students' relations with their parents or about their finances

immediately precedes the question about general happiness. In both cases, satisfaction in the particular domain dominates happiness reports. Any emotionally significant question that alters a person's mood will have the same effect. [Thinking, Fast and Slow]

More on this powerful technique here.

Repeat the last three words

Active listening has incredible power, and hostage negotiators use it to build rapport. What's the quick and dirty way to do active listening without training? Social skills expert and author Leil Lowndes recommends simple repetition: "...simply repeat — or parrot — the last two or three words your companion said, in a sympathetic, questioning tone. That throws the conversational ball right back in your partner's court."

It shows you're listening and interested, and it lets them get back to telling their story. You've got to be slightly savvy about this one, but it's surprisingly effective.

Surprisingly effective?

Yes, it is.

It is?

Research shows repetition is effective in negotiations as well.

Gossip — but positively

Research shows what you say about others colors how people see you. Compliment other people, and you're likely to be seen positively. Complain, and you're likely to be associated with those negative traits you hate:

When you gossip about another person, listeners unconsciously

associate you with the characteristics you are describing, ultimately leading to those characteristics' being "transferred" to you. So, say positive and pleasant things about friends and colleagues, and you are seen as a nice person. In contrast, constantly complain about their failings, and people will unconsciously apply the negative traits and incompetence to you. [59 Seconds: Change Your Life in Under a Minute]

Scholarship Awards and Networking Event with VLink

On April 2nd, MSBAPM held a VLink scholarship awards and networking event at the Graduate Business Learning Center that featured speakers Dr. Vaneeta Grover and Vanitha Patil. The evening began with recognizing VLink- and MSBAPM-sponsored scholarship recipients. 25 scholarships were awarded to well-deserved recipients (listed below).

Dr. Vaneeta Grover, Consulting Statistician at DuPont was the event's keynote speaker. She gave a speech on 'Choice when at cross roads', sharing her experience in choosing and excelling at a chosen career path. Dr.Grover delivered an interesting speech that ranged from choosing career path, importance of people and project skills while at work. She also shared her experiences in the academia as a researcher and in practitioner

world as a Consulting Statistician at DuPont.

Vanitha Patil, a Probono Attorney at International Institute of Connecticut, presented a session on rules and regulations of curricular practical training (CPT) and optional practical training (OPT) and legal aspects to be take perspectives on visa sponsorship and internship programs.

Scholarship Recipients	
Cheng-Ping Huang	Nanditha Sree
Christina Mrachek	Narayanaswamy, K
Christine Wakefield	Patricia Urso
Chun Yu Liu	Pavan Kumar Kunchala
Durgesh Bhargava	Richard Hintz
Dylan Blanchard	Tony Mitri
H. Vasanth Munnamgi	Vijayaraghava Kattamudi
Hao Zhu	William Philbrick
Haolun Wu	Yi Chen
* Hui Liu	Yingqi Yang
* Jennifer Eigo	Yue Liang
John Cunningham	Zijie Li
Kun Peng	

*** V-Link Scholarship**

(MS BAPM Scholarship Recipients with their professors)

(Above: V-Link Scholarship Recipients with V-Link Professionals)

Alumni Spotlight: Mohith Paleti

ALUMNI PROFILE:

NAME: Mohith Sundar Reddy, Paleti
GRAD. DATE: Fall 2014
HOMETOWN: Tirupati, India
UNDERGRAD: Bachelor of Technology, SRM University, Chennai, India

I hail from a pilgrimage and cultural city, Tirupati, India and did my undergrad in Chennai, the fifth-largest city in the country, where I worked for TATA Consultancy Services, a leader in the global marketplace and among the top 10 technology firms in the world. I signed up for postgraduate education at UConn and came to the USA in Fall 2013.

I attended the UConn School of Business to pursue Master of Science in Business Analytics & Project Management (MSBAPM). Additionally, I am a two-time

'Certificate of Professional Development' recipient for two consecutive academic terms 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, recognized and awarded by the Associate Vice Provost & the Dean and Professor of Mathematics in the Alumni Association at UConn Storrs campus. I also received 'Soft Skills & Career Management Award' from the School of Business. I conducted a workshop to an international class of 30-35 Business Analytics graduates at UConn School of Business during March 2014.

I view MSBAPM as a lighthouse in the ocean of analytics with powerful beam of bright light to help and serve national and international students who have the burning desire, unwavering focus and undivided attention to realize their goals after graduating from one of the finest universities in the world. I'd like to thank Dr. Ram Gopal and Dr. Jose Cruz for going to the edge of their capabilities to provide support to many highly-motivated data science aspirants. I'd like to thank Ms. Anna and Ms. Kathy – a pillar of strength and a character of support, for being with us in our endeavors right from enrolling the courses to enriching the career. MSBAPM shows a way to the students with different academic backgrounds to deeply delve into complex business datasets that contain mixed data types involving steps from cleaning to formatting to exploring to describing to modeling to visualizing to presenting the data.

MSBAPM helped me get a worldly view by giving opportunities to work in data science, leadership and management projects, in which I worked with people from Africa, China, India, Poland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and the USA. MSBAPM allowed me to pursue internships, where I worked with people from Brazil, Canada, China, France, Italy and the USA. Within 2 years of my stay in the United States of America, I volunteered for more than 12 events, with organizations such as ING, IRS, United Way, DirecTV, Dress for Success Worldwide, and Milan USA.

During mid-Fall 2013 and Spring 2014, I worked as a Quantitative & Statistics Tutor under the tutelage of Asst. Prof. Tong Zhu in Department of Mathematics, UConn School of Engineering. I spent my summer in the west coast as Data Scientist Intern at Travoom in Santa Monica, California, by working with two other grads from Stanford University and UCLA. I returned to the east coast in Fall 2014 for my last semester at UConn and started working as Data Analyst Intern at Pcdata, Inc. in their Sales & Marketing office. I received another exciting opportunity to work under Brian Brady, Director of Stamford Learning Accelerator (SLA), where we closely worked with the CEO and the President of a company based out in the State of Connecticut. A team of six research consultants and I were 'Director Direct Reports' at SLA. Mr. Brady helped us develop our client-facing skills during this international consulting engagement.

In 2015, I started working as Senior Data Scientist at Mattel, Inc., one of the Fortune 500 companies and an iconic American company. I work with award-winning nationally recognized senior marketing and business insights executives in Global Brands Team at Sales and Marketing office with a rich portfolio of CPG products and brands such as Barbie, Hot Wheels, Fisher-Price, American Girl, UNO, WWE and the house of other toys that go from girly princesses to bulky wrestlers. I am applying and improving the knowledge that I bagged from our MSBAPM program, which showed me the potential of state-of-the-art analytics' tools and applications. I was taught up-to-the-minute courses such as Predictive Modeling and Advanced Business Analytics by Dr. Gopal, Ph.D., who is the Department Head of Operations & Information Management. I was taught R, which is lingua statistica (The Language of Statistics), by the man himself, Ronald Pearson, who is a Senior Statistician and the author of a rich variety of Statistics books that are widely popular on Amazon.com.

My interest includes learning about Marketing. I like binge-reading on anything and everything about Marketing. "Marketing is my word, thought and action." I am now an official member of Marketing Science Institute. "I surround myself with great people who are always pumped up with energy and enthusiasm to do 'small things in a great way' and 'great things with visionary thinking'."

"My Mother and Father are my motivation; Teacher, Friend and God are my inspiration for what I am today." All in all, I say to our Huskies that MSBAPM is the coolest degree program that resonates with the hottest datum profession.
Go Global - Mo Global (Mohit's tagline)

Alumni Spotlight: Neeraj Nagendra

ALUMNI PROFILE:
NAME: Neeraj Nagendra
GRAD. DATE: Fall 2014
HOMETOWN: Bangalore, India
UNDERGRAD: Bachelor's in Engineering, Information Science, NMAM Institute of technology, Mangalore, India

MSBAPM is one of the most joyful learning experiences that I ever had. Attaining the Master's degree has made me realize, learn and explore the extremes in and about analytics. I obtained my Bachelor's degree in Information Science from NMAM Institute of technology, Mangalore, India in 2011. I then worked for Infosys Limited where I was exposed to Business Intelligence and SAP. My job gave me an opportunity to perceive the industry through data and application development. During my tenure at Infosys, I developed eagerness and curiosity to learn and research on trends in the world of data science and analytics. It is then that I decided to join the MSBAPM program in Fall 2014. I graduated in Fall 2015, during which I was also the President of the MSBAPM Club.

As we know, a lot of universities across United States offer Business Analytics as a graduate program. There are some aspects about MSBAPM, I believe, sets it in a league apart from the other courses. The marriage of Analytics and Project Management being the most important one. I feel this is a very rare and complementing combination because concepts learnt in project management are highly valued in the industry. One might call oneself, a technical resource and might not realize the importance of Project Management, but, in the Data world, things are different. As a Data Analyst/Scientist you are a consultant to the business where soft skills and Project Management tools and concepts are widely in practice.

MSBAPM as a program is structured very well with its core courses and focus on cutting-edge analytics tools. It exposes students to the world of analytics and helps setting a right career path. Courses like Data Mining and Business Intelligence, Visual Analytics, Big Data with Hadoop, Project Risk and Cost Management and more, help students assess their own area of expertise. These courses helped me in deciding which my area of strength in Business Analytics/Intelligence and the domain and industry that where I can do the best. Further, narrowing down an area/ domain of expertise, I believe, gives students an opportunity to target the right jobs and fare well in the interviews. My choice has been to concentrate on Data Visualization, Analysis and Project Management.

Moving from academics to the practitioner world was quite challenging. My passion to work on data made things easy and stress-free. I am currently working at Evariant. We have a product for Data Analytics and Visualization that helps hospitals across the United States understand and analyze their services. Healthcare data is neither clear nor freely available, which makes work more challenging and at the same time enjoyable. Thanks to the foundation laid out by professors at MSBAPM and the networking events organized by the program management, the transition has been a smooth and hassle-free process.

Be passionate and enjoy what you do. Working on data has always excited me and I'm sure there are a lot of you who feel the same. Explore the various applications in data world but try to be specific about your career path. Getting a job is easy, but getting a job you love needs dedication and effort. I would like to thank all the professors for guiding me throughout the program and also the program management for their consistent support.

Student Spotlight: Liliane Elawar

STUDENT PROFILE:
NAME: Liliane Elawar
GRAD. DATE: May 2015
HOMETOWN: Enfield, CT
UNDERGRAD: BS in Management Information Systems, UConn

Q. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

LE I've worked for United Technologies Corporation since June 2012. I am an alumnus of the Information Technology Leadership Program (ITLP) since as of October 2014. Currently, I manage a global optimization project for Building & Industrial Systems that focuses on cost reduction.

Q. WHAT BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS MSBAPM PROGRAM?

LE I heard about the MSBAPM program through some of my colleagues at UTC. This opportunity seemed like the perfect next step to continue my career advancement. Since big data analysis is increasing in popularity throughout large corporations, I decided that coupling my IT background with business analytics would provide me with a comprehensive skillset that many companies would value.

Q. TELL US A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF

LE My biggest passion in life is to travel and experience different cultures and lifestyles. I've visited seven countries so far!

Q. WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS THIS PROGRAM MADE IN YOUR CURRENT WORKFORCE?

LE The MSBAPM program has taught me invaluable analytics skills that I use regularly. The program has challenged the way that I tackle business problems and also provided me with great tools to succeed as a project manager.

Q. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE CURRENT MSBAPM STUDENTS?

LE The biggest word of advice I have for current students is to challenge the status quo – successful leadership can start with a great idea. If you can drive innovation and influence others to achieve a goal, you're heading towards success.

Student Spotlight: Heather McLarney

STUDENT PROFILE:
NAME: Heather McLarney
GRAD. DATE: Dec 2016
HOMETOWN: West Hartford, CT
UNDERGRAD: BS in Aerospace Engg, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY; MBA UConn

Q. WHY DID YOU JOIN THE MS-BAPM PROGRAM?

HM The basic reason is, I enjoy learning and I am always striving to improve myself personally and professionally. Having worked as a Project Manager in the Aerospace Industry for almost 15 years, I am looking to update my skills and learn new tools. In recent years, I took on a Program Controller, giving me exposure to the power of data, and I wanted to learn more. So, when I

came across the MSBAPM program, I knew it would be a perfect fit.

Q. Tell us something about your new job.
HM I start next week for a company called Genpact, and I am looking forward to it! Genpact is a multinational business process outsourcing and information technology services company with locations worldwide. Here in Connecticut, so far we are focused on engineering solutions and services. I will be acting as Project Manager and Customer Liaison/Coordinator between our clients and Genpact Program and Executive Management, as well as helping to grow our Hartford site.

Q. Do you think MSBAPM helped in any ways to get you this job?
HM Yes, Genpact values bringing on quality people who strive to build on their knowledge and competencies. Also, offering Business Analytics solutions is part of our future goals for the Hartford area.

Q. Tell us something about the vegetarian meet-up group you started.
HM It is a social and networking group with a vegetarian/vegan theme, and we already had a fun and successful first meeting at Taste of India in West Hartford in March! Although I started out inviting the Spring '15 MSBAPM class, I invite MSBAPM, MBA, Alumni, Faculty (and guests) to join! We also welcome meat-eaters, but the rule is you must order a veg meal during the meet up. Besides, it is a great opportunity to

try some tasty veg dishes you might not otherwise choose! ☺

Q. How do you plan to take this further?
HM Above all, I want the group to be run by its members. Everyone has already made great suggestions about future activities, including the chance to have a home-cooked Indian meal by one of our fellow students! We also plan to go to the New England Veg Fest in Worcester in a couple weeks.

Q. How did you come up with the idea of veg meetup?
HM I relocated back to the Hartford area from Germany last summer, and was seeking people to explore local vegetarian places (actually, I am vegan). I also enjoy getting together people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and sharing stories and experiences. I see the group as a great opportunity to learn about and network among our international peers.

Q. Do you have any experience living or working in a cross-cultural environment?
HM Yes, I lived and worked in Germany from 2008-2014, and it was an amazing experience! I was not only exposed to the German culture, but the Aerospace companies I worked for were very international and my colleagues were from many different countries. There is not enough room in this article to tell all of my ex-pat stories (yes, some involve Oktoberfest!), but I welcome anyone to contact me if they want to hear about it, or if they want advice about overseas opportunities. I used

to think it was almost impossible to get a job overseas, but it is possible!

Heather welcomes anyone to contact her regarding the MSBAPM Veg meet up group, advice on working overseas, to network, or just to say hi, at hmclarney@gmail.com

Knowledge Sharing Sessions

Workshop on R
Parth Kulkarni conducted a workshop on R that recorded an attendance of 50 students. He discussed about features and capabilities that made R popular. Parth covered topics that included using R with emphasis on RStudio, Installing and Using R packages; syntax, objects and data types in R. He then gave a basic overview of running statistical models in R and performing Visual Analytics in the language. We noted a very good feedback from student who found the session informative.

Workshop on Excel
Excel workshop was conducted by Aarthi Vemuri. Around 30 students attended the session. The workshop dealt with tips on performing analytics using excel and also highlighted some useful add-ins for data analytics. Students were given a brief on creating pivot tables, charts and slicers for analyzing and summarizing data. Students appreciated the session to be both informative and crisp. As per feedback, incorporation of a case study in such excel workshop is planned in the future sessions.

MSBAPM & Alteryx Data Challenge

Alteryx partnered with the Business Analytics and Project Management program (MSBAPM) at the University of Connecticut – School of Business to host a data challenge. The Data Challenge kicked off on March 30th, 2015 with a presentation and tool-tutorial by the Alteryx team at GBLC. We had Neil Ryan, Garth Miles – Content Engineering Manager, Jim Schattin – Solutions Engineering and Training, to take students through details of the challenge, as well as provide hands-on Alteryx training, from data acquisition to analytics to visualization. This was 3-hour interactive session. The deadline for project submission was determined to be April 6th, 2015 with final judging on

campus on April 10th, 2015. Finalists were selected to present to a distinguished panel of judges including Dan Putler, Chief Scientist; Amy Holland, Vice President of Content & Applications; Jim Schattin, Senior Director of Solutions Engineering and Training; and Garth Miles, Manager of Content Engineering.

MSBAPM students from Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 ardently took part in the challenge to design processes that analyze, model and visualize datasets using the Alteryx software. Teams picked data from various categories and sources like Kaggle, Amazon Web Services, Google Web Services, Twitter, etc. to design and predict business outcomes.

The six finalists chosen to present their projects were Data Huskies, Data Knights, Dylan Blanchard, The A Team, OmgData and Outback. The event kicked-off with Data

Huskies showcasing their project creating a scoring model to rate the credit card companies on how well they are handling the complaints. The model provided a decision support system to assist customer on choosing the rights product. The second team, the Data knights, performed Sentiment Analysis on recent tweets gathered from Twitter on various topics and scored the overall polarity and general sentiment of US states toward the topics. They visualized their results on Tableau and generated a word cloud of sentiments. Third participant, Dylan Blanchard used google location services to capture his location through a period of four weeks to predict his weekly schedule by the use of cluster analyses. The fourth team, The A Team, showcased an app, which they named the Alteryx Detective, to detect unauthorized and suspicious activity in user accounts. They made use of data blending and mathematical tools available on Alteryx to calculate exact locations of events and captured time stamps to detect anomalies in user activities. Fifth team to present was OmgData who analyzed Walmart store sales in the past and created an app to predict future sales of stores, using some of the predictive modeling tools on Alteryx and time series forecasting. Final team, the Outback team, presented their project on Predictive Analyses on Adult Diabetes to predict the current trends in the United States. They analyzed estimated data and modeled it using the best fit to match the actual results of current situation of adult diabetes in United States. They presented a good demonstration of their app.

The judges seemed extremely impressed by the quality and detail of work presented to them. They asked questions after each presentation and commended the teams on the highlights of their projects. The judges announced the winners of the MSBAPM & Alteryx Data Challenge. Third place went to Dylan Blanchard for predicting his weekly schedules using Google location services. The second place went to The A Team for Alteryx Detective and the first place was taken by the Outback for Predictive Analysis on Adult Diabetes. It was a great end to the event and well deserved by the winning teams. The grand prize of $1000 was awarded to Hao Zhu and YingQi Yang of the Outback. The team was invited to display their project poster at Inspire 2015, Alteryx's annual analytics conference. The A Team won admission to Inspire 2015. All the three winning teams earned interviews for open positions at Alteryx.

ABOUT MSBAPM CLUB

UConn MSBAPM Club - An Introduction

We live in a digital age wherein there is rapid diffusion of information across multiple channels, industries, and spheres of life. This has led to the exponential growth of information commonly referred to as Big Data. Today's critical business challenge is translating this information into long-term business value. Individuals who understand the value of analytical thinking will play a key role in influencing the direction and growth of business.

The UConn Master of Science in Business Analytics & Project Management (MSBAPM) is a top-ranked graduate degree program that aims to prepare students for the Big Data challenges of the digital age. The UConn MSBAPM Club was formed in 2011 to enhance the academic and professional environment within the program. The vision and mission statements for the club are presented below.

Vision Statement

To help UConn MSBAPM students meet the changing demands of the highly competitive global workplace by empowering them with the professional skills that will set them up for success in the business world.

Mission Statement

The mission of the UConn MSBAPM program is to help students meet their goals. This will be accomplished by:

1. Providing current students with professional development opportunities to complement their coursework in business analytics and project management.

2. Serving as an advocate for the MSBAPM student body to ensure their voices are heard by the MSBAPM Program Staff and the wider University of Connecticut School of Business.

3. Assisting the MSBAPM Program Staff with career development initiatives and special projects on an as-needed basis

MSBAPM FACULTY:

Program Director: Dr. Jose Cruz
Department Head: Dr. Ram Gopal
Program Manager: Anna Radziwillowicz

MSBAPM CLUB MEMBERS:

VP of Alumni: Paridhi Valecha
VP of Communication: Parul Kholia
VP of Finance: Monica Ashokan
VP of Operations: Vasanth Munnamgi
VP of Marketing: YiJing(Marcia) Xing
VP of Technology: Lamia Nafees