Added Value from Data - For Business and Society: DFKI Founds New Research Department for Data Science

With "Data Science and its Applications", the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI) is establishing a new research department in the interdisciplinary field of data science. The department, which will be based in Kaiserslautern from 1 December, will be headed by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Vollmer. The focus is on the application of data science in combination with AI and machine learning methods in medicine, bio- and social sciences, industrial and business processes, as well as in the development of open source tools and methods that facilitate these applications and improve the knowledge gained from data.

Data is the "gold of the digital age" - What has long been considered the paradigm of the 21st century is much more far-reaching in its scope. Data is perhaps even more valuable. Because unlike a natural raw material like gold, data can be utilised in many ways and as often as desired. Patterns and insights can be extracted from it, which can be used for prediction, process optimisation and decision support in almost all areas. Data science is the interdisciplinary scientific discipline that deals with the methods that can unearth these treasures. It combines scientific approaches from mathematics, statistics and computer science to extract just such knowledge from data. Under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sebastian Vollmer, the new DFKI Research Department explores the use of artificial intelligence methods, for example machine learning, in data analysis and for the development of new methods for data science applications, e.g. in the health sector, in the context of smart cities, for industry and non-profit projects.

Sebastian Vollmer has been a university professor in the Department of Computer Science at the Technical University of Kaiserslautern since October. He studied mathematics at the Georg-August University in Göttingen and the University of Warwick/England, where he completed his doctorate with distinction under Fields Medal winner Prof. Martin Hairer and Prof. Andrew Stuart. This was followed by a post-doctoral phase and a lectureship at the University of Oxford. Most recently, he was an associate professor in the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Statistics at the University of Warwick. He has also held senior positions at the Alan Turing Institute in London, where he was Co-Director of the Health and Medical Sciences Programme and Director of the Data Studies Groups. In 2019, he brought the internationally successful Data Science for the Social Good (DSSG) initiative to the UK for the first time, which equips high-calibre young scientists with the skills to lead data science projects with positive social impact.

DFKI CEO Prof. Dr. Antonio Krüger: "We are pleased to have Sebastian Vollmer, an excellent and outstanding data scientist of international renown, to establish the new research department, who already has extensive research and teaching experience at a young age. His research focus, the interdisciplinary approach between computer science, mathematics, social sciences and natural sciences as well as the ambitions to develop data science for social good fit perfectly into the strategic expansion of our competence profile and the research philosophy of DFKI."

Prof. Dr. Andreas Dengel, Executive Director of DFKI in Kaiserslautern: "The fact that Sebastian Vollmer has chosen DFKI and TU Kaiserslautern in view of many offers also underlines the charisma of the IT science location. His research topics are an ideal complement and an extension of our long-standing expertise in machine learning. As a link between
theory and practice, Data Science is key to ensuring that science can have an impact in real-world applications. Artificial intelligence, especially machine learning, is predestined to improve data analytics and open up new fields of application. With the new DFKI research area, we look forward to making technologies from this promising field usable for society and the economy."

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Prof. Dr. Sebastian Vollmer is head of the new DFKI Research Department Data Science and its Applications.
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