Call for Papers

Track 04. The Data Revolution and Sustainable Development Goals

Track chairs
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Overview of the research area
Many have pointed to a "data revolution" occurring in business, science, and politics. As ever-more and ever-faster information is available about trends, patterns and processes, then related decision/action systems will be significantly affected. This track focuses on these changes in the context of international development, given the Sustainable Development Goals agenda includes a greatly increased role for data. Research and innovation are required to overcome challenges of data invisibility and data inequality, with new standards needed to improve data quality and avoid data abuses in a rapidly-changing data ecosystem. To address these issues, new partnerships and network mechanisms are emerging such as formation of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.

The proposed agenda on data and development will require new knowledge including:
- **Technical research** on new techniques specifically required for capture, input, storage and processing of developing country data.
- **Socio-technical research** on the specific issues that arise in analysis and presentation/visualisation of developing country data.
- **Socio-organisational research** on the developmental value of new data, and on the transformation of development processes and systems that new data can enable.
- **Critical research** on the politics and discourses of the data revolution.

Exemplar topics for papers
We identify four main strands within the data revolution, which papers for this track might address:
- **Big development data**: the emergence of very large datasets relating to phenomena within developing countries. Main sources have been mobile phone call and social media records but there are growing numbers of survey-based, transactional and other large datasets that can offer new insights into development.
- **Open development data**: the greater availability of developing country datasets for general use. By far the biggest growth area has been open government data which is particularly linked to improvements in transparency, accountability and service delivery. But open data can apply equally to private sector firms, markets, NGOs, and other development actors and systems.
- **Real-time development data**: the availability of developing country data in real time. To date, lagged models have been dominant within developing country data and decision-making, with data becoming available months or years after the events that it describes. The growing diffusion of ICTs within developing countries is reducing this lag significantly as crowdsensing – everything from humans reporting via their mobiles to field-based sensors – becomes a reality. The use of (near) real-time data for development decisions could enable a move to agile methods in development.
- **Other data trends**: open, big and real-time data are three main elements to the data revolution but there will be others that form part of the SDG agenda. These include increases in geo-locatable data, mobile data, bottom-up data, and qualitative data.

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Important dates

Paper submission:	November 15, 2016
Acceptance notification:	January 31, 2017
Resubmission:	February 28, 2017
Conference:	May 22-24, 2017

Conference co-chairs

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