

Editorial

As always, I start my editorial by complimenting ourselves. We are once again proud to publish yet another issue of our journal time. Many journals that are considered to be of higher quality do not have the turnaround time we have (about 45 days per version and the ability to perform three iterations per paper before publishing) and still publish their issues in due time.

After the self serving paragraph, there is a more serious issue to ponder, which is the relationship between academia and the society at large.

We are living in strange times. Humanity has never had so much scientific progress at the tip of its hands, but still anti-scientific movements, such as flat-earthers, anti-vaxxers and evolution deniers seem to abound.

I believe that the fault is not in the stars, but in ourselves. As scientists, we need to strive to better communicate the information to society and also, to stop isolating ourselves in our ivory towers and effectively solving problems that concern the society.

It is tempting to close ourselves in our small world, especially when the researcher has tenure (or the equivalent perk). Nevertheless, there are real problems that need to be addressed thoroughly as a "marketplace solution". For instance, the world does not need yet another forecasting and classification solution that improves marginally the previous results in benchmark datasets. On the other hand, there are several real world areas that would really benefit from a practical classification/forecasting solution that could be readily used with their data.

This does not mean as an attack to exploratory or theoretical science. As a fellow scientist, I recognize their utmost importance. Nevertheless, one should really ask oneself how many times your students actually do some research that might become something really useful and how many times the research was perfunctory, with the self serving goal of inflating statistics and getting a diploma.

If we do not start criticizing ourselves harshly but lovingly, we are leaving the field open for those who hate science and that thrive on obscurity. In an age where money is becoming scarce, those ignorance-mongers will be as happy as possible to divert money to other causes, while spreading the latest anti-scientific falsehood.

Let us continue with theoretical and exploratory science, but let us also work toward solving those specific problems that afflict the society. Let us integrate our efforts with the business community, with the NGO community and with other socially meaningful communities. They have a lot of problems that really hinder their development and that might be deemed as very interesting for masters and Phd students.

This integration will be benefic for both sides. They will have their problems solved, hopefully improving society as a whole and we will get new perspectives and new problems, that might allow us to find new insights and form new

understandings of the techniques that are dear to our hearts and minds.

Benchmark tests are great to begin with, but let us not restrict ourselves to them. Let us go into the world, as knights in shining armors, both for science and for society sake.


Ricardo Linden
Editor in chief