Mechanism Design for Social Good

NEWSLETTER #2 FALL SEMESTER 2021





Dear MD4SG Members,

It is our pleasure to share with you news from the MD4SG community during the past semester! Most notably, we are excited to share updates from the Inaugural ACM Conference on <u>Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO '21)</u> and information about <u>EAAMO '22</u>! In addition, our community has taken on a number of exciting endeavors in the past semester, which we highlight below.

Our community has been incredibly active this past semester in our working groups, hosting regular community socials on Discord, writing Medium articles, and engaging over different platforms (follow us on <u>Twitter</u>). We're excited to share our newest working group, Conversations with Practitioners, led by Matt Olckers and Christian Ramirez, focusing on bridging researchers with practitioners from various disciplines in discussing themes related to improving opportunity for marginalized groups.

The impact and successes we have had so far would not have been possible without consistent work, thought, and support from all of you. We sincerely thank you all for your support of MD4SG!

We wish you and those close to you a wonderful year ahead, and we're excited to share the Fall 2021 Edition of the MD4SG Newsletter.

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Join us ----- 27

EVENTS

We are excited to announce the second annual

ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO '22)

taking in Washington DC, USA on 6-9 October 2022

The conference stems from the Mechanism Design for Social Good (MD4SG) Initiative, and the goal of the conference is to highlight work where techniques from algorithms, optimization, and mechanism design, along with insights from the social sciences and humanistic studies, can improve access to opportunity for historically underserved and disadvantaged communities.

We encourage submissions from across various disciplines and covering domains including civic participation, data economies, discrimination and bias, economic inequality, economic development, education, environment and climate, healthcare, housing, labor markets, and law and policy. Papers will be peer-reviewed by experts in the disciplinary area. The deadline for submissions is March 24th, 2022.

See more details on the track pages:

- <u>Research Track</u>
- <u>Policy & Practice Track</u>

We would greatly appreciate it if you could forward this information to colleagues who may be interested in submitting proposals for participation, especially to those who are working on the use of quantitative methods to improve the well-being of marginalized communities.

For more information, please visit $\underline{\sf EAAMO}\ 2022$



EVENTS

ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO '22)

Organizing committees:

Program Co-Chairs: <u>Elena Falcettoni</u> (Federal Reserve), <u>Dina Machuve</u> (Nelson Mandela Institute), <u>Bryan Wilder</u> (Harvard & Carnegie Mellon University), <u>Angela Zhou</u> (University of California Berkeley & University of Southern California).

General Chair: <u>Sanmay Das</u> (George Mason University)

Executive Committee: <u>Rediet Abebe</u> (University of California Berkeley & Harvard Society of Fellows), <u>Kira Goldner</u> (Boston University), <u>Maximilian Kasy</u> (University of Oxford), <u>Illenin Kondo</u> (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis), <u>Jon Kleinberg</u> (Cornell University), <u>Sera Linardi</u> (University of Pittsburgh), <u>Irene Lo</u> (Stanford University), <u>Ana-Andreea Stoica</u> (Columbia University)



EVENTS

Impressions from the

Inaugural ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO '21)

The Inaugural ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization (EAAMO '21) was held online on Zoom and Gather.town from October 5th to October 9th, 2021. The conference attracted a great deal of interest with over 700 registered researchers and practitioners from a variety of geographic locations and disciplines, including computer science, operations research, economics, social work, law, policy, sociology, and others.

We received over 160 submissions from over 20 countries around the world, 89 of which were accepted as oral or poster presentations, and 19 were published in the <u>ACM Digital Library</u>. We thank our <u>Area Chairs and</u> <u>Program Committee</u> for ensuring a rigorous peer-reviewed process.

EAAMO '21 had a diverse program, including nine <u>keynote speakers</u> presenting state-of-the-art work in areas related to inequality, provisions, just usage of data, education, and equitable mechanisms for allocation. In addition, our <u>policy and practice panels</u> included practitioners in a variety of fields, who discussed topics related to migrants and asylees and Latin America. Our program, together with the various social, mentorship, and networking activities, provided many opportunities for interdisciplinary conversation and connections between researchers and practitioners.



The day before the conference officially kicked off, we hosted a networking session between researchers and practitioners. Researchers had an opportunity for discussion with representatives of private and non-profit companies such as Avela Education, City of San José (USA), Internews, Women at the Table, Chilean NGO OptIA, and EPIC's AI and Human Rights Project. Please find all of our recorded talks and panels on our <u>YouTube channel</u>.

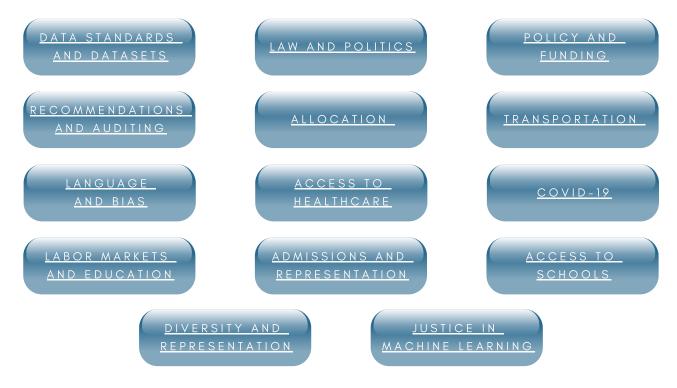


In addition, we had table discussions and other social events on a daily basis. Discussions were grouped through affinity, region or research topics of participants.





Please find videos from EAAMO '21 sessions below:



In addition, EAAMO '21 included 40 accepted posters, presented in two poster sessions, on Gather.town during the conference, fostering robust discussions and brainstorming for future projects.

We thank our wonderful sponsors, the Sloan Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and Cell Patterns, whose support enabled us to provide financial assistance for registration costs and data plans. We were able to provide over 100 registration fee waivers and almost 50 data plans to students, researchers, and practitioners from a variety of countries.



We are thrilled to share the following awards given at EAAMO '21:

Best Paper Award:



- <u>Can Shared Service Delivery Increase Customer Engagement? A Study of</u> <u>Shared Medical Appointments</u> by Nazli Sonmez, Kamalini Ramdas and Ryan W. Buell
- <u>Algorithm is Experiment: Machine Learning, Market Design, and Policy</u> <u>Eligibility Rules</u> by Yusuke Narita and Kohei Yata

Best Paper with a Student Presenter Award:

- <u>Dropping Standardized Testing for Admissions Trades Off Information</u> <u>and Access</u> by Nikhil Garg, Hannah Li and Faidra Monachou
- <u>Mitigating Racial Biases in Toxic Language Detection with an Equity-</u> <u>Based Ensemble Framework by Matan Halevy, Camille Harris, Amy</u> <u>Bruckman, Diyi Yang and Ayanna Howard</u>

New Horizons Award:

- <u>Facing an Adult Problem: New Datasets for Fair Machine Learning</u> by Frances Ding, Moritz Hardt, John Miller and Ludwig Schmidt
- <u>Project 412Connect: Bridging Students and Communities</u> by Alex DiChristofano, Michael L. Hamilton, Sera Linardi and Mara F. McCloud

Most Popular Poster:

- <u>A Data-Driven Simulation of the New York State Foster Care System</u> by Yuhao Du, Stefania Ionescu and Kenneth Joseph
- <u>On designing and operating Vote-by-Mail processes</u> by Carmen Haseltine, Adam Schmidt and Laura Albert

Tweet honorable mention:

<image><text><text><text><text><image><image><image>

Best Tweet Award:

None of this would be possible without the fantastic group of people who helped organize EAAMO '21, as well as Virtual Chair and the ACM who provided their support in organizing the conference.

Program Co-Chairs:

- Rediet Abebe, University of California Berkeley & Harvard Society of Fellows
- Irene Lo, Stanford University
- Ana-Andreea Stoica, Columbia University

General Co-Chairs:

- Illenin Kondo, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- Francisco Marmolejo-Cossio, Harvard University

Area chairs:

- Hamsa Bastani, University of Pennsylvania
- Michael Best, Columbia University
- Abhijnan Chakraborty, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi
- Eric W. Chan, Babson College
- Sanmay Das, George Mason University
- Maria De-Arteaga, University of Texas at Austin
- Fernando Delgado, Cornell University

Executive Committee:

- Rediet Abebe, University of California Berkeley & Harvard Society of Fellows
- Kira Goldner, Columbia University
- Maximilian Kasy, University of Oxford
- Jon Kleinberg, Cornell University
- Illenin Kondo, the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- Sera Linardi, University of Pittsburgh
- Irene Lo, Stanford University
- Ana-Andreea Stoica, Columbia University
- Elena Falcettoni, Federal Reserve Board of Governors
- Nikhil Garg, University of California Berkeley
- Robizon Khubulashvili, University of Pittsburgh
- Vahideh Manshadi, Yale University
- Sam Taggart, Oberlin College

►

- Yixin Wang, University of California Berkeley
- Matt Weinberg, Princeton University
- Bryan Wilder, Harvard University
- Angela Zhou, University of California Berkeley

None of this would be possible without the fantastic group of people who helped organize EAAMO '21, as well as Virtual Chair and the ACM who provided their support in organizing the conference.

Social Chairs:

- Lily Xu, Harvard University
- Logan Stapleton, University of Minnesota

Geographical Inclusion Chairs:

- Michelle Gonzalez Amador, UNU-MERIT and Maastricht University
- Sandro Radovanovic, University of Belgrade
- Benjamin Otieno, Kibabii University

Accessibility Chair:

• Sara Kingsley, Carnegie Mellon University

Proceedings Chairs:

- Paul Gölz, Carnegie Mellon University
- Anson Kahng, Carnegie Mellon University

Poster Chairs:

- Jessie Finnochiaro, University of Colorado Boulder
- Edwin Lock, University of Oxford

Registration and Grants Chairs:

- Chinasa Okolo, Cornell University
- Jakob Jonnerby, University of Oxford
- Sandro Radovanovic, University of Belgrade

Policy & Practice Chairs:

- Christian Ramirez, Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola/ SEMICOM
- Matthew Olckers, UNSW Sydney

Social Media Chairs:

- Alex DiChristofano, Washington University in St. Louis
- Mir Masood Ali, University of Illinois at Chicago

Mentorship Chairs:

- Mobin Yahyazadeh Jelouda, Stanford University
- Renzhe Yu, University of California, Irvine



SELECTED MD4SG RESEARCH

ACM CONFERENCE ON ECONOMICS AND COMPUTATION TUTORIAL

FAIRNESS AND DISCRIMINATION THROUGH THE DUAL LENS OF MECHANISM DESIGN AND MACHINE LEARNING



JESSICA FINOCCHIARO UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER



EDWIN LOCK



FAIDRA MONACHOU STANFORD UNIVERSITY



MANISH RAGHAVAN CORNELL UNIVERSITY

MD4SG members Jessie Finocchiaro, Edwin Lock, Faidra Monachou, and Manish Raghavan organized a tutorial on Fairness and Discrimination in Mechanism Design and Machine Learning at the ACM Conference on Economics and Computation (EC) 2021.

This tutorial aimed to bridge notions of algorithmic fairness between the machine learning and mechanism design communities, particularly in resource allocation. While mechanism design is often used in inherently social and human domains, such as matching and admitting students to schools, machine learning algorithms tackle similar problems, but often from a different perspective involving largescale automation of decisions using Big Data.

Motivated by applications in labor, education and other settings, the tutorial gave an overview of classic and recent results in the economics of discrimination, then discussed applied research questions where mechanism design and machine learning can be applied to mitigate discrimination or detect bias. The tutorial discusses the connections between two emerging research directions: sharing economy and (online) labor markets and equity and fairness in education.

<u>read More</u>



SELECTED PROJECT

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE DONATE TOWARDS COVID-19 VACCINES?



SIMON FINSTER

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



MICHELLE GONZÁLEZ AMADOR UNU-MERIT AND MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY



EDWIN LOCK UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Many countries cannot afford or access vaccines and rely on donations or surpluses from richer countries. Vaccine inequity endangers the health and livelihood of communities around the globe, as <u>91.7%</u> of the population in resource-poor countries did not receive at least one dose in 2021.

While pledging some support for access to vaccines for resource-poor countries, most resource-rich countries ordered <u>twice the number of vaccine doses</u> needed for their population, and global supply is constrained.

Equitable vaccine distribution reduces not only the number of deaths and economic hardship associated with COVID-19 isolation measures, but also the occurrence of viral mutations that prolong the pandemic and destabilize health advances.

Vaccine redistribution makes sense both from an altruistic and a self-interested perspective. Their study aims to understand how these motives influence individuals' willingness to donate.

Our members will conduct an online experiment to determine influencing factors on vaccine sharing behaviour of individuals in resource-rich countries. They want to investigate how providing narrated information on the current global health situation affects people's willingness to donate towards vaccine equity.

Their goal is to develop guidance for the design of a global vaccination strategy, supported by data on individual sharing behaviour. Ultimately, they wish to lay a foundation for policy and outreach.

<u>READ MORE</u>



MD4SG Community Building

SOCIAL EVENTS

The MD4SG Community Team organizes events not just to talk about MD4SG related research, but also to connect with new MD4SG members and to spark conversations around topics like navigating graduate school. Recently, our social events have been held on a new platform, Discord, in order to increase accessibility for participation in MD4SG events.

During summer 2021, our Community Engagement Team organized several Discord meetups discussing various topics. We examined the effects of algorithms and algorithmic decision making on everyday life, as well as their impact on society and justice in general. Our group also discussed several books, including "Redesigning AI" by Daron Acemoglu and "Design Justice" by Sasha Costanza-Chock.





Furthermore, at the ACM Conference on Economics and Computation (EC '21), we hosted a Reflections Meetup. We have had informal discussions sharing some of our favorite papers, posters, tutorials, and experiences this year!

See our curated schedule <u>MD4SG @NeurIPS 2021</u> including papers coauthored by members of our community.

We welcome and encourage feedback from the MD4SG community about additional steps we can take to make social events accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs). Please email <u>community@md4sg.com</u> with any questions and recommendations. We hope to have you join us at our next event!

If you want to learn more about our social events, please join us.

We would like to hear about your interests. Please <u>fill out this form</u> if you have any questions or suggestions for future colloquium speakers.



MD4SG SELECTED READINGS AND VIDEOS

EAAMO '21 KEYNOTE TALKS



DATA FOR SERVICE

DIRK BERGEMANN YALE UNIVERSITY

RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY



ELLORA DERENONCOURT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



ASHISH GOEL STANFORD UNIVERSITY FAIRNESS IN SOCIAL CHOICE AND PUBLIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION



EAAMO '21 KEYNOTE TALKS



MARY GRAY MICROSOFT RESEARCH MORE THAN FAIR: HOW TO BRING COMMUNITIES, COMPUTER SCIENCE, AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES TOGETHER TO BUILD FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

FAIRNESS IN MULTISIDED / MULTISTAKEHOLDER ONLINE PLATFORMS



KRISHNA GUMMADI MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR SOFTWARE SYSTEMS



AVINATAN HASSIDIM BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY NEED VS. MERIT: THE LARGE CORE OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS MARKETS



EAAMO '21 KEYNOTE TALKS



RADHIKA KHOSLA UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD <u>SUSTAINABILITY</u> <u>TRANSITIONS IN A</u> <u>CHANGING CLIMATE</u>

NEW APPROACHES TO PUBLIC POLICY DESIGN IN EDUCATION: THE THRUST TOWARDS INCLUSION, QUALITY AND JUSTICE IN MEXICO (IN SPANISH)



SYLVIA ORTEGA SALAZAR NATIONAL COLLEGE OF VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING



TROOPER SANDERS BENEFITS DATA TRUST FUSING CODE AND PROSE: BLENDING AND BALANCING THE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE IN ADVANCING EQUITY



INTERVIEW WITH SWAPNA REDDY

MATTHEW OLCKERS AND THE CONVERSATIONS WITH PRACTITIONERS WORKING GROUP



SWAPNA REDDY



MATTHEW OLCKERS

Swapna Reddy is the co-founder and co-executive director of Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP), a non-profit organisation that strives to improve the lives of asylum seekers in the United States. Our Mechanism Design for Social Good (MD4SG) working group, Conversations with Practitioners, had the pleasure of interviewing Swapna.

We filtered out the most important things, but we encourage you to read the whole interview.

"Taking direction from the impacted community"

"Next week is too late"

"Novelty is not as important on the ground as in academia"

"Go full circle when you conduct surveys"

- Swapna Reddy

CHECK OUT THE MEDIUM POST



MEDIUM PUBLICATION

DANIEL FIREBANKS-QUEVEDO AND CHARLES CUI

DEPRECIATING LICENCES

Daniel Firebanks-Quevedo and Charles Cui wrote a summary of Anthony Lee Zhang's talk on Depreciating Licences, given at the MD4SG Environment and Climate working group.

Many natural resources like water and timber are scarce, because they are in high demand for human consumption and limited in supply. The property rights of such scarce resources, such as fishing rights and land use, must be allocated for a variety of uses. Given the scarcity and importance of such resources, it is essential that they are allocated properly, to avoid waste and make the best use of them. Currently, the most widely adopted approach to sell property rights uses licences via market mechanisms like auctions. A central question for policy-makers and market designers is the design of such licences and mechanisms. Different mechanisms provide different incentives for potential users, which in turn stipulate their strategies for competing to use these resources, and consequently affect the sustainability and welfare of the resources.



RESOURCES THAT A LICENSE GIVES THE RIGHT TO. TOP LEFT: LAND, TOP RIGHT: SPECTRUM, BOTTOM LEFT: OIL DRILLING, BOTTOM RIGHT: DOMAIN NAMES

CHECK OUT THE MEDIUM POST



MD4SG Organization 2021-2022

ORGANIZERS



REDIET ABEBE



WANYI DAI LI



FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO-COSSÍO



GEORGE OBAIDO



ANA-ANDREEA STOICA



LILY XU



MD4SG INITIATIVE-WIDE LEADS



Jessica Finocchiaro is a PhD candidate in the CS Theory group at CU Boulder. From March 2020-August 2021, she was a working group co-organizer for the Discrimination and Bias working group. She currently is a Community Engagement co-lead alongside Logan Stapleton.

JESSICA FINOCCHIARO

Nikhil Garg is an assistant professor of Operations Research and Information Engineering (ORIE) at Cornell Tech. He received his PhD from Stanford University in 2020. He has been serving as the co-lead of the MD4SG working groups since November 2020.



NIKHIL GARG



LOGAN STAPLETON

Logan Stapleton is a PhD student in computer science at the University of Minnesota. He served as the Social Co-Chair for the EAAMO '21 and workshop MD4SG '20 and has served as the Community Engagement Co-Lead since October 2020.

Bhushan Suwal is currently studying for a PhD in computer science at Boston University. He is interested in statistics and computational social science. He is a recent graduate of Tufts University, where he majored in computer science.



BHUSHAN SUWAL



BRYAN WILDER

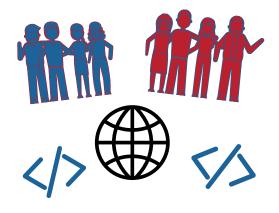
Bryan Wilder is a Schmidt Science Fellow at Harvard School of Public Health and Carnegie Mellon University. He has been serving as a co-lead of the MD4SG working groups since September 2019 and was previously an organizer of the MD4SG Inequality working group.



MD4SG LEADERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP:

- Kehinde Aruleba (New Membership)
- Sritej Attaluri (Website)
- Charles Cui (WG Membership)
- Kweku Kwegyir-Aggrey (New Membership)
- Ifeoma Okoh (WG Membership)





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Sakina Hansen (Regional Europe)
- Corinna Hertweck (Regional Europe)
- Sara C. Kingsley (Subcommunity)
- Aaron Redda (Subcommunity)
- Ofentse Rice (Regional Africa)
- Renzhe Yu (Mentorship)
- Roozbeh Yousefzadeh (Regional Middle
- East and North Africa)

SOCIAL MEDIA:

- Alex DiChristofano (Medium co-manager)
- Mir Masood Ali (Twitter manager)
- Sandro Radovanovic (Communication)
- Christian Ramirez (Communication)
- Amita Shukla (Medium co-manager)

Medium





WORKING GROUPS

The MD4SG Civic Participation working group addresses a key issue in the social and community context domain. Civic participation encompasses a wide range of formal and informal activities. Examples include voting, volunteering, participating in group activities, and community gardening.

<u>CIVIC</u> Participation

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>PAUL GÖLZ</u> <u>ANSON KAHNG</u> <u>THEIA HENDERSON</u>



The MD4SG community aims to bridge research and practice, but researchers have few opportunities to connect with practitioners. The aim of the MD4SG Conversations with Practitioners working group is to learn from practitioners. We want to know their stories, understand their challenges, and discover if tools from mechanism design apply to their domain.

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>MATTHEW OLCKERS</u> <u>CHRISTIAN RAMIREZ</u> <u>ROMERO</u>

The MD4SG Data Economies working group aims to better understand the challenges that arise across the data pipeline from creation, ownership, accessibility, and sharing to data analysis and use. We are especially interested in understanding how access and sharing affect the benefits of the global data economy, and whether benefits are distributed evenly among communities in the Global North and South.



WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>ALI ALKATIB</u> CHARLES CUI



WORKING GROUPS



The MD4SG Development working group fosters collaboration and discussion amongst practitioners and academics to understand and tackle issues pertaining to the role and application of technology in addressing challenges in emerging nations and under-resourced settings. We study how techniques from algorithm and mechanism design, computational social science, and optimization can inform and help advance existing development policies and practices.

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>tejúmádé àfònjá</u> Illenin kondo

Algorithms are often used to supplement or make decisions in a way that "optimizes" some objective; often, these decisions are made under limited resource constraints specific to the given domain. The MD4SG Discrimination working group focuses on understanding how these optimization choices, constraints, and mechanisms impact different stakeholders of algorithmic systems.

DISCRIMINATION

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>samuel galler</u> <u>Richard lanas philips</u>

The MD4SG Environment and Climate working group aims to address environmental challenges, particularly those that exacerbate the climate crisis, through the lens of computational and economic lenses. We are a diverse group of researchers from a variety of academic disciplines and geographic locations.

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS <u>WANYI DAI LI</u> <u>CRISTINA CRESPO MONTAÑÉS</u> <u>LILY XU</u> <u>STEVEN YIN</u>







WORKING GROUPS



The MD4SG Inequality working group studies how optimization, incentive design, and machine learning can mitigate or magnify social and economic inequality. We are especially focused on provision and targeting of social programs: when and how should resources be directed specifically to the most vulnerable members of the population? How should these individuals be selected?

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS

<u>SERA LINARDI</u> <u>SAMUEL TAGGART</u> <u>CHIKA OKAFOR</u>

The MD4SG Latin America and Caribbean working group aims to develop a new topical focus on issues relevant to the region. This semester's focus will be on addressing challenges through a social cohesion and integration lens. Major themes include migration (especially the Venezuelan diaspora), crime (with a focus on youth crime), and education.



WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO-COSSÍO MICHELLE GONZÁLEZ AMADOR TILSA ORÉ MÓNAGO JUAN FELIPE PENAGOS



The MD4SG Algorithms, Law and Policy working group focuses on this complex relationship between algorithms and mechanisms on the one hand and law and policy on the other hand. Some of the topics the group will work on include but are not limited to free speech, content moderation, antitrust, the use of "black box" machine learning models, data-driven algorithms, and decisionsupport tools.

WORKING GROUP ORGANIZERS DOAA ABU-ELYOUNES FERNANDO DELGADO



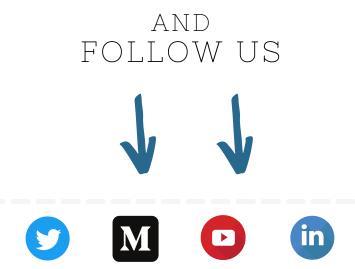
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS MISSION

<u>JOIN US</u>

(MAYBE THIS PODCAST WILL MOTIVATE YOU)

For any questions or thoughts, contact us at organizers@md4sg.com and share your suggestions for future colloquium speakers at this link.

<u>SUBSCRIBE</u> TO OUR MAILING LIST



Designed by:

Christian and Sandro