



EXperimental
Learning

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Big Data and Social Analytics certificate course

MODULE 8 UNIT 1
Video 3 Transcript

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MIT BDA Module 8 Unit 1 Video 3 Transcript

Speaker key

AP: Alex Pentland

HY: Hapyak

AP: So, we're already in Module 8, end of the course. I hope the previous weeks have really taught you a lot, and now we're going to finish off with talking about big experiments, living labs, ways to prove out ideas using these sort of social physics ideas.

00:00:26

The notion of a living lab is a group of people that are actually living under some different conditions that are things you design and that you've instrumented them, so you know what they're doing and how they're responding to this new way of living things.

So, the idea that started when I had what we call the borg collective, people wearing computers back in 1994, 1995. And we discovered that when people had computation on their body they put off all sorts of signals, and that's the origin of sort of big data today. When cell phones became available we then used that idea to study what happens when people are given rewards for changing behavior, what causes them to change their behavior, and so forth.

00:01:16

Using cell phones, using credit cards, using other sorts of data you can get many different types of networks. Proximity networks, co-location networks, friend networks, call networks, co-purchase networks. They're not just like Facebook, these are all sort of networks where you're likely to see similarity between people because they're learning from each other, either directly or because they have some of the same experiences. And by measuring all these networks, these types of networks, what you can do is get a great idea about all of the interactions that are happening in the society and you can begin analyzing those to figure out what to do to change behavior in the way that you'd like to change. And we've done this in many different ways. We've done it for entire countries the last several times for Cote d'Ivoire, did it for London, did it for the entire country of Senegal, did it for Northern Italy, and did it for the country of Andorra which is a small country between Spain and France.

HY: Describe, in your own words, what constitutes a living lab.

The notion of a living lab is a group of people that are actually living under some different conditions. These conditions are things that you've designed and instrumented, so you know what they are doing and how they are responding to this new way of living.