

Muhammad Imran (PhD)

Research Scientist

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

I am interested in analyzing the role of microblogging platforms such as Twitter during time-critical events by using big data analysis techniques such as data mining, machine learning, and deep neural networks. Moreover, I'm interested in developing novel computational techniques and technologies useful for stakeholders gain situation awareness and actionable information to enhance critical decision-making for better emergency response.

Keywords: *Social computing, crisis informatics, data mining, time-critical information retrieval, machine learning, crowdsourced stream processing*

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Computer Science

November 2009 – March 2013

University of Trento, Trento, Italy.

Concentration: Computer Science

M.Sc. Computer Science

September 2005 – September 2007

Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Concentration: Computer Science

B.S. Computer Science

January 2000 – December 2003

Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Concentration: Computer Science

AWARDS, HONORS, AND GRANTS

Best Paper Award (2016): Received the Best Paper Award at the 13th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM) in 2016, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Role: First Author)

Best Paper Award (2013): Received the Best Paper Award at the 10th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM) in 2013, Baden-Baden, Germany. (Role: First Author)

Grand Prize Winner in Open Source Software World Challenge (2015): AIDR¹ project awarded the Grand Prize in the Open Source Software World Challenge 2015 competition. (Role: Team Leader)

Winner of the WISH Innovation Competition (2016): AIDR-SMS wins the innovation competition by World Innovation Summit for Health 2016.

Start-up Grant Winner (2015): Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP) selected and granted our AIDR project to be launched as a start-up. (Role: Team Leader)

Awarded on the World Intellectual Property Day by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce Qatar and Qatar University (2017) for the impactful utilization of the AIDR technology for improving lives.

¹<http://aidr.qcri.org/>

PhD Scholarship Winner (2009-2013): awarded by the University of Trento for PhD studies (2009-2013).

Distinguished Position holder in MSc (2007): achieved 1st position in Master of Science (Computer Science) in 2007.

**MEDIA,
MAGAZINE, AND
JOURNAL
COVERAGE**

New Scientist² features our joint work with UNICEF on SMS classification to understand public health issues and queries in Zambia.

WIRED Magazine³ mentions various aspects of the deployment of our technologies (AIDR & MicroMappers) during the 2013 earthquake in Pakistan.

Nature Journal⁴ covers the use of our machine learning and crowdsourcing technologies (AIDR & MicroMappers) during the typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

Forbes⁵ discusses about the research and development of our machine learning for humanitarian computing work at QCRI.

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)⁶ asks Patrick Meier (a former colleague) about how social mapping provides rescue teams with a detailed, data-driven map generated by our humanitarian technologies developed at QCRI during typhoons in the Philippines.

Mashable⁷ highlights the successes of our humanitarian technologies (AIDR & MicroMappers) during various typhoons in the Philippines.

Voice of America⁸ features our AIDR and MicroMappers technologies and describes how AI, tweets and texts speed up relief efforts in Nepal during the 2015 earthquake.

Automated Traders⁹ features AIDR deployment during Nepal Earthquake 2015 and discusses how machine learning helps humanitarian agencies turn big data into informed, decisive action.

Brookings¹⁰ explains how AIDR and MicroMappers technologies are useful for digital humanitarians and disaster response.

²<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2083044-ai-helps-answer-thousands-of-health-queries-in-zambia-via-sms/>

³<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2013-09/30/digital-humanitarianism>

⁴<http://www.nature.com/news/crowdsourcing-goes-mainstream-in-typhoon-response-1.14186>

⁵<http://www.forbes.com/sites/skollworldforum/2013/05/02/crisis-maps-harnessing-the-power-of-big-data-to-deliver-humanitarian-assistance/#4d2e3f111533>

⁶<http://www.wsj.com/video/social-mapping-helps-rescuers-in-philippines/F4510A7D-9040-4D89-8852-2F142A7827A2.html>

⁷<http://mashable.com/2015/02/06/digital-humanitarians/#6G78o2Z9xkqU>

⁸<http://www.voanews.com/content/drone-pilots-artificial-intelligence-tweets-and-texts-speed-up-relief-efforts-in-nepal/2744051.html>

⁹<http://www.automatedtrader.net/headlines/153695/nepal-earthquake-deploying-ai-in-disaster-relief-efforts>

¹⁰<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/techtank/posts/2015/02/19-digital-humanitarians-meier>

Gulf Times¹¹ publishes the news of the Grand prize award of our AIDR technology in the Open Source Software World Challenge.

The Peninsula¹² featured our Grand prize award won by AIDR technology in the Open Source Software World Challenge 2015.

HBKU¹³ publishes the news of our Grand prize win in the Open Source Software World Challenge.

Qatar News Agency¹⁴ covers the news of the Grand prize award of our AIDR technology in the Open Source Software World Challenge.

Gulf Times, Arab News, Al Arab, Marhaba Newspaper, Qatar Tribune, The Peninsula, Raya, Qatar News Agency (QNA), Qatar is Booming, Fana News, and QANA¹⁵ featured the news of winning the WISH competition by our AIDR-SMS technology developed with UNICEF Zambia.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

1. Muhammad Imran, Sanjay Chawla, Carlos Castillo. A Robust Framework for Classifying Evolving Document Streams in an Expert-Machine-Crowd Setting. In proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Data Mining (ICDM), December 2016, Barcelona, Spain.
2. **(Best Paper Award)** Muhammad Imran, Prasenjit Mitra, and Jaideep Srivastava: Cross-Language Domain Adaptation for Classifying Crisis-Related Short Messages. *In the 13th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)*, 2016, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
3. Muhammad Imran, Patrick Meier, Carlos Castillo, Andre Lesa, and Manuel Garcia Herranz: Enabling Digital Health by Automatic Classification of Short Messages. *In proceedings of the 6th ACM International Conference on Digital Health (DH)*, 2016, Montreal, Canada.
4. Koustav Rudra, Siddhartha Banerjee, Niloy Ganguly, Pawan Goyal, Muhammad Imran and Prasenjit Mitra. Summarizing Situational Tweets in Crisis Scenario. *Accepted for publication at the 27th ACM Conference on Hypertext and Social Media (HT)*, 2016, Halifax, Canada.
5. Ferda Ofli, Patrick Meier, Muhammad Imran, Carlos Castillo, Devis Tuia, Nicolas Rey, Julien Briant, Pauline Millet, and Stephane Joost: Combining Human Computing and Machine Learning to Make Sense of Big (Aerial) Data for Disaster Response. *Accepted for publication at Big Data Journal*, 2016.
6. Muhammad Imran, Prasenjit Mitra, Carlos Castillo: Twitter as a Lifeline: Human-annotated Twitter Corpora for NLP of Crisis-related Messages. In Proceedings of the 10th Language Resources and Evaluation Conference (LREC), 2016, Slovenia

¹¹<http://www.gulf-times.com/story/465584/QCRI-wins-top-prize-for-its-technology>

¹²<http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com/news/qatar/361216/qcri-system-wins-open-source-software-world-challenge-2015-grand-prize>

¹³http://www.hbku.edu.qa/en/News/view_news/169/7/index

¹⁴<http://www.qna.org.qa/en-us/News/15120700400062/QCRI-Humanitarian-Technology-Wins-the-Open-Source-Software-World-Challenge-Grand-Prize>

¹⁵http://mimran.me/misc/media_coverage_AIDR_WISH2016.pdf

7. Muhammad Imran, Carlos Castillo, Fernando Diaz, and Sarah Vieweg: Processing Social Media Messages in Mass Emergency: A Survey. *ACM Computing Surveys*. 47, 4, Article 67 (June 2015), DOI=10.1145/2771588
8. Muhammad Imran, Carlos Castillo. Towards a Data-driven Approach to Identify Crisis-Related Topics in Social Media Streams. *Social Web for Disaster Management (SWDM'15)*, 2015, Florence, Italy.
9. Muhammad Imran, Carlos Castillo, Ji Lucas, Patrick Meier, and Jakob Rogstadius. Coordinating Human and Machine Intelligence to Classify Microblog Communications in Crises. *11th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)*, 2014. Pennsylvania, USA.
10. Muhammad Imran, Carlos Castillo, Ji Lucas, Patrick Meier, and Sarah Vieweg. AIDR: Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response. In *Proc. of the 23th International Conference on World Wide Web (WWW) Companion*, 2014, Seoul, Korea.
11. Muhammad Imran and Carlos Castillo. Volunteer-powered Automatic Classification of Social Media Messages for Public Health in AIDR. *Public Health in the Digital Age workshop in the 23th International Conference on World Wide Web (WWW)*, 2014, Seoul, Korea.
12. Sarah Vieweg, Carlos Castillo and Muhammad Imran. Integrating Social Media Communications into the Rapid Assessment of Sudden Onset Disasters. In *Proc. of the 6th International Conference on Social Informatics (SocInfo)*, 2014.
13. **(Best Paper Award)** Muhammad Imran, Shady Elbassuoni, Carlos Castillo, Fernando Diaz and Patrick Meier. Extracting Information Nuggets from Disaster-Related Messages in Social Media. In *Proc. of the 10th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)*, May 2013, Baden-Baden, Germany.
14. Muhammad Imran, Shady Elbassuoni, Carlos Castillo, Fernando Diaz and Patrick Meier. Practical Extraction of Disaster-Relevant Information from Social Media. *Social Web for Disaster Management (SWDM'13)*, 2013, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
15. Muhammad Moeen Uddin, Muhammad Imran, and Hassan Sajjad. Understanding Types of Users on Twitter. *SocialCom Stanford Conference 2014*, May 2014, CA, USA.
16. Soudip Roy Chowdhury, Muhammad Imran, Muhammad Rizwan Asghar, Si-hem Amer-Yahia and Carlos Castillo. Tweet4act: Using Incident-Specific Profiles for Classifying Crisis-Related Messages. *10th International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM)*, May 2013, Baden-Baden, Germany.
17. Muhammad Imran, Syed Zeeshan Haider Gillani and Maurizio Marchese. A Real-time Heuristic-based Unsupervised Method for Name Disambiguation in Digital Libraries. *2nd Workshop on Mining Scientific Publications at the Joint Conferences on Digital Libraries (JCDL)*, July 2013, Indianapolis, USA.
18. Muhammad Imran, Stefano Soi, Felix Kling, Florian Daniel, Fabio Casati and Maurizio Marchese. On the Systematic Development of Domain-Specific Mashup Tools for End-Users. In *Proc. of the International Conference on Web Engineering (ICWE)*, July 2012, Berlin, Germany.

19. Florian Daniel, Muhammad Imran, Stefano Soi, Antonella De Angeli, Christopher R. Wilkinson, Fabio Casati and Maurizio Marchese. Developing Mashup Tools for End-Users: On the Importance of the Application Domain. *International Journal of Next-Generation Computing (IJNGC)*, 2012.
20. Muhammad Imran, Felix Kling, Stefano Soi, Florian Daniel, Fabio Casati and Maurizio Marchese. ResEval Mash: A Mashup Tool for Advanced Research Evaluation. *In Proc. of the 21th International Conference on World Wide Web (WWW) Companion*, 2012, France, Lyon.
21. Muhammad Imran, Florian Daniel, Fabio Casati, Maurizio Marchese. ResEval Mash: A Mashup Tool that Speaks the Language of the User. *In Proc. of the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI)*, 2012, Austin, USA.

(Full publications list at <http://mimran.me/publications>)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Scientist

December 2014 – Present

Qatar Computing Research Institute, Doha, Qatar

Responsibilities: I lead the Crisis Computing group at QCRI. We focus on building computational methods and technologies to process high-volume social media textual and imagery data during time-critical events. We study and invent novel approaches to combine human and machine intelligence to solve non-trivial problems. Currently, interested in developing innovative solutions and technologies to help stakeholders (UN OCHA, UNICEF) gain situational awareness and actionable information from social media during time-critical events.

AINGEL Team Leader

September 2015 – February 2016

Qatar Science & Technology Park, Doha, Qatar

AINGEL (Artificial INtelligent GEO-location) Response is a start-up funded by Qatar Science and Technology Park. This project aims at combining human and machine intelligence to process social media data.

Post-doctoral Researcher

April 2013 – December 2014

Qatar Computing Research Institute, Doha, Qatar

Responsibilities: Conducted research on the application of Social Media mining methods to problems in the humanitarian crises. Humanitarian crisis computing seeks to rapidly identify situational awareness, actionable and tactical information in the big crisis data available on Social Media. Currently, leading research and technical directions of AIDR (Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response) project. The focus of this applied research project is to use Social Media microblogging platforms like Twitter during mass convergence events and humanitarian crises in an effort to mine and classify information that can help stakeholders gain situation awareness and in their decision making processes.

Research Associate

June 2012 – September 2012

Qatar Computing Research Institute, Doha, Qatar

Responsibilities: Mainly worked on two different research projects. The first project focused on real-time analysis of Social Media platforms such as Twitter, to predict life span of NEWS articles. Analysis of various parameters associated with articles like social media exposure in terms of their spread, first few hours visits, discussion was conducted using time-series analysis techniques. The second project focused on classification and extraction of useful information using machine learning techniques from disaster-related messages posted on Twitter to assist stakeholders in disaster response.

PhD Candidate

November 2009 – March 2013

University of Trento, Trento, Italy

Responsibilities: Worked on the research direction of end-user development. EUD research tries to bring programming closer to the needs of end users. My PhD dissertation introduced the concept of Domain-Specific Mashups in which Web 2.0 technologies were employed to empower and enable non-programmers, non-technical users to develop ad-hoc and situational applications to perform complex data aggregation, processing and analysis tasks.

**TECHNICAL
EXPERIENCE****Database Administrator**

July 2007 – August 2008

National University of Science & Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan

Responsibilities: I was responsible for the installation, configuration, upgrading, administration, monitoring, maintenance, and security of Oracle database systems. Moreover, performance tuning, query execution, tuning execution plans, were among other important responsibilities.

Java Developer (Intern)

February 2009 – May 2009

OKKAM, Trento, Italy

Responsibilities: Assisted OKKAM research team to analyze big log files of different servers to investigate how complex operations execute and behave under different circumstances. For example, this includes checking how much time a search query took to find an entity in the OKKAM entities database, or why certain part of a query failed.

**TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**

- Service-Oriented Architecture and Applications – course held by Prof. Maurizio Marchese at the University of Trento, 2010 – 2011
- Laboratory for Service Design and Engineering – course held by Prof. Maurizio Marchese at the University of Trento, 2011 – 2012

**PROFESSIONAL
ACTIVITIES****-Keynotes:**

- International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM 2016).
- Exploitation of Social Media for Emergency Relief and Preparedness (SMERP) workshop, co-located with European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR) in Aberdeen, UK, 2017.

- Invited talks:

- European Commission Joint Research Center (JRC), 2016, Ispra, Italy.
- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization workshop on Crowdsourcing tools, 2015, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Data Science workshop organized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, Islamabad, 2017.
- International Conference on Innovative Computing (ICIC), 2016, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Machine Learning and Data Analytics Symposium (MLDAS), 2014, Doha, Qatar.
- Global Entrepreneurship Week, Qatar Science and Technology Park, 2015, Doha, Qatar.
- SeCO Workshop on Search Computing, 2010, Como, Milan, Italy.

- Track Co-chair:

- International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM 2015, 2016).

- Program committee member:

- International AAAI Conference on Web And Social Media (ICWSM-2016, 2017)
- International Conference on Digital Health (DH 2015, 2016, 2017)
- International Workshop on Social Web for Disaster Management (SWDM 2015, 2016)
- International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management-Mediterranean (ISCRAM-Med 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)
- ICWSM Workshop on Standards and Practices in Large-Scale Social Media Research (2015)
- International Conference on Emerging Technologies (ICET 2014)
- Computational Social Science Winter Symposium (CSSWS 2014)

- Reviewer:

- ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW 2017)
- ACM Transactions on Information Systems (2015)
- Information Systems Frontiers Journal (2016)
- Computer Networks Journal (2014)
- International Conference on Web Information System Engineering (WISE 2014)
- International Conference on Information Systems for Crisis Response and Management (ISCRAM 2014, 2015)
- ACM Web Science Conference (WebSci 2014)
- International Conference on Web Engineering (ICWE 2012)

- Professional member:

- Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) professional member (since 2012)
- ISCRAM community professional member (since 2012)
- IEEE memeber since 2017.

CERTIFICATIONS

- **Oracle Certified Professional (OCP)**
Track: Database Administration
California, USA

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Programming languages:

- JAVA— SE, EE, EJBs (expert level)
- Web Services (RESTFul, SOAP), Hibernate, SAX, JAXB (expert level)
- Python (advance level)
- R (beginner level)
- Microsoft .NET Framework using C#, ASP.NET and ADO.Net (advance level)

- Databases:

- Oracle 9i, 10g, 11g (expert level)
- MySQL, MS-SQL Server (advance level)
- Redis (expert level)

- Misc. expertise:

- Weka: Data Mining Software (advance level)
- Good hands on knowledge of OOP (Object Oriented Programming) and agile methodology
- Experience designing and/or developing solutions for a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA)
- Sound knowledge of 3-tier and N-tier layered architecture, and design patterns like Singleton, Factory and MVC
- Experience using tools such as NetBeans, Eclipse, Visual Studio.Net
- Experience using technologies such as Maven, BaseCamp, Pivotal Tracker, GIT

MENTORING

Students mentored & co-mentored:

- Shruti Singala (2016)
 - Level: Summer intern at Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI)
 - Topic: Automatic detection of earthquake events from Twitter
- Mudra Patel (2016)
 - Level: Summer intern at Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI)
 - Topic: Automatic detection of earthquake events from Twitter
- Michele Lunelli (2010)
 - Level: Master (Laurea Magistrale) at the University of Trento
 - Co-mentor: Prof. Maurizio Marchese
 - Topic: Web crawling of Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic to extract scholarly data and scholarly metrics (h-index, g-index).
- Felix Kling (2011)
 - Level: Master (Laurea Magistrale) at the University of Trento
 - Co-mentor: Prof. Maurizio Marchese
 - Topic: Building Mashups: implementation of the front-end of the ResEval Mash project.
- Massimo Pacher (2011)
 - Level: Master (Laurea Magistrale) at the University of Trento
 - Co-mentor: Prof. Fabio Casati
 - Topic: Computation of the scholarly metrics of group of people such as research groups at universities or a research lab.
- Simone Dalcastagne (2011)
 - Level: Master (Laurea Magistrale) at the University of Trento
 - Co-mentor: Prof. Fabio Casati
 - Topic: Self-citations and other scholarly group metrics (e.g. group h-index).
- Matteo Bertoni (2013)
 - Level: Master (Laurea Magistrale) at the University of Trento
 - Co-mentor: Prof. Maurizio Marchese
 - Topic: Visualization of scholarly data: Built components for the ResEval Mash project.

REFERENCES

References available upon request.