

IEEE Brainwaves

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IEEE Brainwaves Feature Events :

Panel Discussion



IEEE Brainwaves came up with its first event of the year, A Panel discussion on 'How to create a start-up' on 24th January, 2018. The discussion was moderated by Prof. Mayur Parulekar and involved, Hiloni Punatar (Co-founder, Think Digital), Osborne Saldanha(Associate, Tuscan Ventures), Sumit Ranka(Founder, Thinkpot; Co-founder, Innov8), Ranveer Allahbadia (Founder, BeerBiceps). The discussion addressed different aspects of building a start-up like content creation, marketing, finance etc.

Mr. Ranveer Allahbadia addressed how his interest in fitness led him on to YouTube, where he aimed at addressing the lack of content for the Indian audiences. He stressed at the importance of putting up quality and original content on YouTube to stand out from the crowd and also talked

about the need to adapt and re-invent oneself with the ever changing needs of the viewers to reach more and more screens.

The discussion then moved forward with Ms. Hiloni Punatar reminiscing about how her involvement in College festivals led her into the world of marketing from an IT background. From graduating as an engineer in Information Technology to Marketing Management from Harvard University, she talked as to how important it was to explore other interests while one is still in college, because had it not been for her involvement in college festivals she may not have realized her interest for Marketing. Mr. Sumit Ranka, a Harvard and an IIM alumnus addressed how he got into the world of start-ups, how important it is to understand the needs of the market and find solutions. Something of this sort led him to into his first venture, Innov8, a co-working space provider, the idea of which germinated from how productivity takes a hit when the working environment doesn't seem welcoming enough to the employee. He further went on about how the experience he got through his first venture allowed him to maneuver past pitfalls he had faced during his second venture, Thinkpot. One can have all the ideas in the world, but unless an investor looks at the venture as a cash cow, it is very difficult to bring in funds. This is where Mr. Osborne Saldanha came in, being a Venture Capitalist himself he pointed out how an investor looks at a potential company or a start-up with an objective view, but at the same time accepting how each venture has to be evaluated on its merit and how there can't be just a single way of deciding which is the right venture to get into. The interaction was followed by a Q&A session, with the attendees picking the brains of the panelists with their queries.

IEEE Spectrum Article : This AI Hunts Poachers

The elephant's new protector is PAWS, a machine-learning and game-theory system that predicts where poachers are likely to strike



Every year, poachers kill about 27,000 African elephants—an astounding 8 percent of the population. If current trends continue, these magnificent animals could be gone within a decade.

The solution, of course, is to stop poachers before they strike, but how to do that has long confounded authorities. In protected areas like wildlife preserves, elephants and other endangered animals may roam far and wide, while rangers can patrol only a small area at any time. “It’s a two-part problem,” explains Milind Tambe, a computer scientist at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles. “Can you predict where poaching will happen? And can you [target] your patrols so that they’re unpredictable, so that the poachers don’t know the rangers are coming?”

To solve both parts of the problem, Tambe and his team created an artificial-intelligence system called PAWS, which stands for Protection Assistant for Wildlife Security. A machine-learning algorithm uses data from past patrols to predict where poaching is likely to occur in the future. And a game-theory model helps generate randomized, unpredictable patrol routes. The system has been field-tested in Uganda and Malaysia with good results, and in 2018 its use will expand to China and Cambodia. In addition, Tambe says, the PAWS system could soon be integrated into an existing tracking tool called SMART, which wildlife conservation agencies have deployed at most sites worldwide to collect and manage patrol data.

In a one-month trial with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Uganda’s Queen Elizabeth National Park, rangers patrolled two areas that they rarely visited but that PAWS indicated had a high probability of poaching. Much to the rangers’ surprise, they found numerous snares and other signs of illegal activity. A later 8-month trial looked at the entire park. Again, the patrols verified the model’s predictions: In the high-probability areas, they found about 10 times as much poaching as in the low-probability areas. A new trial in Uganda’s Murchison Falls National Park is checking whether PAWS will work equally well in a different location.

Andrew Plumptre, director of science for the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Africa program, is collaborating with Tambe’s group on the Uganda field trials. He says that on normal patrols, rangers enter data about what they’re seeing, using a smartphone app called Cybertracker. About once a month, that data gets uploaded to SMART. “You’re able to map where patrols have searched, where they found snares and carcasses of elephants and whatever,” says Plumptre. “But there’s nothing proactive about it. Ranger patrols alone aren’t sufficient to stop poaching.” He’s hoping that PAWS’s predictive abilities will make those patrols as efficient and effective as possible.

Continue Reading at <https://spectrum.ieee.org/robotics/artificial-intelligence/this-ai-hunts-poachers>