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Data Science projects billed $300/hour on Kaggle

- Posted by Vincent Granville on May 29, 2013 at 8:30pm
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Below is information found today on Kaggle. This flat rate applies regardless of the consultant's age - but only the "best" data scientists are allowed to work on business projects posted by campanies like us (we are going to submit a very interesting project next week). Yet, not sure how much the data scientists are actually paid. In a pure consulting environment, they would get paid 1/3, that is $100/hour - still much higher than rates advertised by recruiting firms.

Yet, if you see Kaggle's demographics, they have tons of users from India, Ukraine or Mexico. If they win projects as frequently as data scientists from other countries, they must be making lots of money: $100/hour goes a long way in Mumbai. My experience is that it is far more efficient to contact Indian experts directly and pay $10/hour, a good rate in India.

Kaggle.com's Regional Traffic Ranks

Country	Rank
Mexico	6,372
India	33,674
Ukraine	39,401
United Kingdom	51,952
United States	56,471
Russia	57,382
China	81,174
Germany	160,362

Also, are these "best" data scientists really qualified for your project? In other words, is their expensive fee justified, for you? Anyway, my project will consist of proving a new statistical conjecture in the context of non-parametric correlation coefficients for big data. Typically in this type of environment (Kaggle) you find many people with strong theoretical background or great programming skills (frequently overseas), but not many domain experts. I guess it works well for some projects like mine, and not for others.

Kaggle mentions that their "top" data scientists work faster. So maybe they are not expensive after all (likewise, I charge by the project and not by the hour when I do consulting work, as I usually automate processes and accept only projects that I can do 5x faster than competitors, for half the price).

Here's the extract from Kaggle's website:

Kaggle Connect is a consulting platform that connects you to the top 0.5% of the world's data science talent[1].

With anywhere from eight to 40 hours, a Kaggle Connect data scientist can help you extract answers and insights from your data[2]. After you post your project, you will be matched with a data scientist within 60 hours.

To give you the opportunity to fall in love with the service without having to make a financial commitment, we're offering eight complimentary hours for your first small project (no committment or credit card is required). After the eight hours have been consumed, Kaggle Connect costs $300 per hour.

(1) Who are these data scientists?
The Kaggle Connect data scientists are the best 0.5% of the 95,916 data scientists who compete in data mining competitions on Kaggle.

(2) How long is a typical project?
When working with a top 0.5% data scientist, projects take just eight to 40 hours ($3k to $12k). Projects are finished in closer to eight hours for clean data and closer to 40 hours when the data requires cleaning.

(3) How does IP protection and data privacy work?
The data scientist signs a confidentiality agreement before the project begins. All IP is transfered to the company at the conclusion of the project.

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Comment by [Anirudh Kala](#) on July 17, 2014 at 6:17pm

Hi Vincent,

I am a Data Scientist from India, and I really appreciate all the work that you are doing here. I would little disagree that $10 per hour is a good rate in India , especially for experts but yes $20-25 certainly is a good one. I also do a lot of freelancing and I see that its growing quite rapidly in India.

Comment by [Ramdas Panicher](#) on May 31, 2013 at 2:23am

Thx a million for your quick response, Vincent

Comment by [Vincent Granville](#) on May 30, 2013 at 9:59pm

@Ramdas: $10/hour is how much I thought I paid, for good quality job, and the fact that the consultant was very happy. But I never asked how many hours they actually spent working on my projects - as long as delivery was fast and quality good, I did not care. I paid per project, and found people who managed to automate the task incredibly efficiently, using web crawlers (I provided training as needed). In short, what I expected them to do in one hour, they'd do it in 5 minutes. Also, they worked from home. If I was an employee, I'be willing to cut my salary in half if I was allowed to work from home all the time. Finally, many business projects - even seemingly complicated ones - can be solved with simple models, even without models at all. I think I could teach my 12 years old daughter to run these analyses and run great web crawlers. It is a myth that advanced maths provide advanced ROI. For what I do, vision + good judgement + intuition + hacking skills + natural analytic skills + craftsmanship + curiosity + Google skills is more useful and less expensive than advanced math knowledge.

Comment by [Ramdas Panicher](#) on May 30, 2013 at 11:49am

Is 10$ an hour really a good rate for "Experts" in India?

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4

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5

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6

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7

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