

Data Science: A New Discipline or Just Another Venn Diagram?

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The emergence of Data Science has led to a flourishing of initiatives, centers, degrees, programs and organizational units at educational and research institutions around the world. The demand for data science know-how from students, parents, scientists and employers is strong and getting stronger.

However, the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and the lack of a consensus around its definition raise challenges for its implementation in the modern university setting. Many ongoing efforts treat Data Science as simply a combination of topics from existing fields. While such an approach has obvious practical advantages, the challenges raised by Data Science may indicate that it should be more productively pursued as a new discipline in its own right.

In this talk I will try to frame this larger question with a goal of initiating a discussion to identify the intellectual opportunities and research questions that could lie at the heart of a new discipline of Data Science. .