Q&A with Stefano Leonardi, professor and principal investigator at Sapienza University of Rome

In this monthly interview series, we turn the spotlight on members of the academic community and the important research they do—in thought partners, collaborators, and independent contributors.

For April, we nominated Stefano Leonardi, a full professor in the Department of Computer, Control and Management Engineering at Sapienza University of Rome. Stefano has earned his PhD in algorithms and machine learning from the University of California at Berkeley, and has been a leader in algorithm theory and economics and computing, and his contributions to this field spans from finding solutions to online platforms and applications to being the conference chair of events such as STOC, the Web Conference, and WINE.

Q: Can you tell us about your background in academia, your role at Sapienza University of Rome, and the type of research you specialize in?

"I've been interested in online platforms and network economics, and have been focused on algorithmic mechanisms for solving matching and allocation problems. Our team's efforts are centered on how we can design interactions that make markets fairer and more efficient, and how to solve problems that are important to the industry."  

Q: What have you been working on lately, and how do you collaborate with the Core Data Science team?

"I have been working on designing algorithmic mechanisms for the sharing economy. Our team's efforts are centered on how we can design things that make matching between buyers and sellers on online markets as efficient as possible.

Q: Tell us about the paper you wrote with the Meta Core Data Science team and published at the Web Conference 2021.

"The paper is about finding solutions to online platforms and applications to being the conference chair of events such as STOC, the Web Conference, and WINE. Our next step is to understand how the advertising system can be even more fair and transparent across multiple categories of users. The paper focuses on solving a multidimensional problem in which we needed to evaluate price, opportunities, and additional criteria. The results focus on designing an online system able to learn over time from different feedback sources, and deciding how to best determine advertisers' budget allocation across them."  

Q: Where can people learn more about you and your work?

"I'm continually inspired by the potential impact my research has in industries. My contributions to this field spans from finding solutions to online platforms and applications to being the conference chair of events such as STOC, the Web Conference, and WINE, and I'm especially interested in how we can design online mechanisms for the sharing economy.

Collaboration with Meta is very important for university and academic research. The work we do at Meta with a team of researchers and engineers is particularly exciting because we are working on a real-world problem that is important to the industry and the public. Our collaborations with Meta are always about understanding difficult problems. With our collaboration, we have an incredible opportunity to learn from the people who are actually deploying products on the platforms, and to test and design things that make matching between buyers and sellers on online markets as efficient as possible."

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