Ius Commune Conference 2019

Workshop: Empirical Legal Studies (II)

Friday, 29 November (14.00 – 15.00)

Building: Oude Valk

Room: Bronnenlokaal

Participants

Chairs: **Dr. Catalina Goanta, Marion Meyers and Bogdan Covrig** (Maastricht University)

The purpose of this workshop is to familiarize the audience with innovative empirical methods, which can be applied to the field of law and law enforcement, in order to contribute to the increase of technology literacy skills among legal scholars. This hands-on workshop is built around two parts: (i) case network analysis with Gephi (morning session); and (ii) machine learning in Python (afternoon session).

Machine learning in Python

The volume of legal scholarship on artificial intelligence (AI) is growing exponentially, as more fields of law become preoccupied with the implications of AI in society. Information literacy around how exactly AI works or is deployed remains however very low. While it may not be necessary for legal experts to become proficient in computer science skills, a minimum level of understanding what AI is and how it functions is essential to further much needed interdisciplinary research on this theme.

The objective of this workshop is to give participants a basic understanding of AI and machine learning, and to showcase various types of legal research questions to which machine learning may be applied. In particular, the workshop will include:

1. A brief history of AI.
2. The relation between and definitions of AI, machine learning, supervised learning, unsupervised learning and reinforcement learning.
3. Two case studies of computer science research projects conducted by the Web Transparency Initiative (Princeton University) on affiliate marketing (Mathur et al., 2018) and dark patterns (Mathur et al., 2019). The Github repositories of Python code used to run the two studies will be explored in detail.
4. A brainstorming session on potential legal research questions which may make use of machine learning.