

# ICCSSA Afternoon Seminar – The Impact of Generative AI

On behalf of the Institute of Certificated and Chartered Statisticians of South Africa (ICCSSA) board, we would like to invite you to an afternoon of seminars.

The purpose of the seminars is to bring practicing statisticians from industry and academia together with our members for a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activity and an opportunity to network with each other.

## DATE:

Friday 9 February 2024

## TIME:

Friday 9 February 2024  
12:00 – 15:00

## COST:

Free (need to register for catering and remote access purposes).  
Non-members are welcome to attend the seminars.

## VENUE:

SAS Auditorium  
SAS Institute  
93 Central Street,  
Houghton,  
Johannesburg

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## PROGRAMME:

12:00 - 13:00      Finger Lunch  
13:00 - 15:00      Seminars

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## GUEST SPEAKERS:

Speaker 1: Prof Mark Nasila  
Title: Generative AI and the Future of Work

Because of its wide range of applications and interactive features—which go beyond the domain of professional users and encompass everyday creativity and task automation—generative AI is causing a great deal of excitement and standing out in the tech scene.

The technology has become a leading force in innovation, influencing both individual creativity and organizational productivity, because of its widespread accessibility and its proficiency in jobs ranging from writing to music production. In this session, a basic introduction to generative AI will be given, along with the reasons why the buzz surrounding it has been fueled by current events. We will also go over industry-specific examples of generative AI use cases to show the range of tasks that can be enhanced by this technology. Finally, we will discuss how Generative AI could help reimagine the future of work while enhancing innovation and productivity.

Prof. Mark Nasila is the Chief Data and Analytics Officer of FirstRand Risk, and a Singularity University Faculty for Artificial Intelligence, Data science and Data strategies. He is also a steering committee member of the National Institute for Theoretical Physics and Computational Sciences (NITheCS), a research fellow at Stellenbosch University and a Professor of practice in Artificial intelligence at the University of Johannesburg. As an experienced AI and data science expert, he ensures the techniques and methodologies he introduces into FNB are at the forefront of where banking is headed, both locally and internationally. He is the developer and the brain behind an AI system FNB has harnessed to reimagine its risk management and forensic due diligence processes.

Prof. Nasila holds a PhD in Mathematical Statistics from the Nelson Mandela University, and is also an alumni of the SingularityU South Africa Executive programme. He was named one of the Corinium Global Intelligence '2020 Global Top 100 Innovators in data and analytics', He was named the 2022 Southern Africa Finnovator (Financial Services Innovator) of the year by Exibex at the FINNOVEX 2022 awards, as well as the recipient of the Excellence in Data & Analytics 2022 award at the DigiBank Summit



## Speaker 2: Prof Benjamin Rosman

Title: On intelligent agents and research communities

There are many possible ways that AI could grow alongside society over the next decade. One desirable path is for it to become increasingly able to cooperate alongside humans in a way that is flexible and safe. In this talk, I will discuss some of the work we have been doing to build systems that are able to scale their capabilities with no additional learning, do so with human-specifiable goals, and in a way that is safe. However, it is not good enough to deploy these technologies without the relevant expertise in the places where they are being used. In the second part of this talk, I will then discuss the recent growth of the African machine learning community and the impact this is having. My hope is that the combination of these learning systems and communities growing alongside each other will open the door to a desirable future.



Benjamin Rosman is a Professor in the School of Computer Science and Applied Mathematics at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, where he runs the Robotics, Autonomous Intelligence and Learning (RAIL) Laboratory and is the Director of the National E-Science Postgraduate Teaching and Training Platform (NEPTTP). He is also the Chief Science Officer of Lelapa AI, building AI for Africans, by Africans.

He received his Ph.D. in Informatics in 2014, and previously obtained his M.Sc. in Artificial Intelligence, both from the University of Edinburgh. He also has a B.Sc. (Hons) in Computer Science and a B.Sc. (Hons) in Applied Mathematics, both from the University of the Witwatersrand. His research interests focus primarily on reinforcement learning and decision making in autonomous systems, specifically on how learning can be accelerated through abstracting and generalising knowledge gained from solving related problems.

He is a founder and organiser of the Deep Learning Indaba machine learning summer school, with a focus on strengthening African machine learning, which now has satellite events in over 35 African countries. He was made a 2022 CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholar by the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, in Learning in Machines and Brains, was a 2017 recipient of a Google Faculty Research Award in machine learning, and a 2021 recipient of a Google Africa Research Award. In 2020, he was made a Senior Member of the IEEE. He is an Advisory Committee member of the Reinforcement Learning Conference, a member of the AAAI Membership Committee, a member of the IEEE Cognitive and Developmental Systems Technical Committee, and a member of the Scientific Committee of the Association of AI Ethicists.

## Speaker 3: Dwijendra Dwivedi

Title: Generative AI in the SAS Environment

EMEA AI and IOT Leader at SAS. Artificial Intelligence evangelist and Business Analytics subject matter expert. Leading Analytics & AI practice for EMEA at SAS helping organizations in enablement of AI applications. Thought leader in bridging the gap between business needs and analytical enablers and to drive analytical thinking into successful business strategies.



Over 17 years of experience in applying analytics across different industries, e.g., BFSI, telco, utilities, aviation and government, and in various functional areas, e.g., risk and marketing. Conducts business analytics seminars and workshops, for the executive audience and also for power users.