

Framework for Integrating Big Data and Thick Data: Understanding Customers Better

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Abstract : With the popularity of data-driven decision making on the rise, this study focuses on providing an alternative outlook towards the process of decision-making. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods rooted in the social sciences, an integrated framework is presented with a focus on delivering a much more robust and efficient approach towards the concept of data-driven decision-making with respect to not only Big data but also 'Thick data', a new form of qualitative data. In support of this, an example from the retail sector has been illustrated where the framework is put into action to yield insights and leverage business intelligence. An interpretive approach to analyze findings from both kinds of quantitative and qualitative data has been used to glean insights. Using traditional Point-of-sale data as well as an understanding of customer psychographics and preferences, techniques of data mining along with qualitative methods (such as grounded theory, ethnomethodology, etc.) are applied. This study's final goal is to establish the framework as a basis for providing a holistic solution encompassing both the Big and Thick aspects of any business need. The proposed framework is a modified enhancement in lieu of traditional data-driven decision-making approach, which is mainly dependent on quantitative data for decision-making.

Keywords : big data, customer behavior, customer experience, data mining, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, thick data

Conference Title : ICCSIT 2018 : International Conference on Computer Science and Information Technology

Conference Location : Bangkok, Thailand

Conference Dates : December 13-14, 2018