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# HOW DATA-SCIENCE ROCKED THE US ELECTIONS

By SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

11/9. It was an average morning. Most Bangladeshis woke up getting ready for the busy day ahead. And that is when the news broke. Donald J. Trump, the presidential candidate of the Republican Party, was leading the polls. Slowly and steadily, as they day went by, it was increasingly clear that he is going to be the next leader of the free world (!). Countering all major forecasts, Trump aced in states that most media thought would be inclined towards Hilary. So, what went wrong? Did the number crunchers get the data wrong? Or was it there all along... but they failed to see it.

Nowadays in developed countries, elections are a field day for data science. Although, election data science remains a novice wing of hardcore-big-data-fuelled science, it is still extensively being used to stay ahead in the game.

How does data science work in elections? It's quite straightforward actually! Pollsters, over a period of time, collect data via phone calls, social media, surveys and even social big data from third parties. After collecting reams of data, these are fed into machines that try to understand the context and provide patterns and critical insights.

Since the very first campaigns by Senator Clinton and Donald Trump, data

scientists have been crunching numbers based on public opinion, media coverage, scoops and scandals. Till the very last week, most of the significant news outlets i.e. CNN, New York Times, MSNBC, found that Senator Clinton's chances of winning the elections were 70-95%. But the whole world was shocked when the final polling results emerged. So, what went wrong?

Truth be told, the election data science comes with its own trade off—after all it's a numbers game. Most people actually fail to understand that data science is merely a blunt tool. The raw data always hides the truth, but it is the missing context that makes the data unanalysable. And, there

are countless real world examples of data science failing. Google's flu engine was a machine that overinflated the number of flu patients in USA by not understanding the concept of patient zero. Facebook was, in the recent past, heavily criticised for taking down the picture of a 9 year of naked girl running away from napalm bombs. Facebook's algorithm flagged it as an inappropriate content instead of comprehending the underlying message—the fury of the Vietnam War.

Another reason that data scientists from Silicon Valley have pointed towards is: insufficient data on US elections. Out of all the data that pollsters collect during the election campaigns, only a very few

data are truly actionable and reliable. Like any scientific experiment, when a new variable is introduced the equation changes. In the US elections, we saw new variables being dumped every now and then. Be it the email servers of Senator Clinton or the Trump University Scandal or Hillary Clinton being sick during her campaigns or Melania Trump's GQ Magazine photo shoot—every new scoop actually sensitised the voters in various ways. According to Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, the fatal blow to the campaign was the announcement made by James Comey, Director of FBI, on Election Day regarding the private email servers that the FBI was investigating.

## Online classified platforms Behind the scene

A major force driving the continued economic growth of Bangladesh is a rapidly urbanising youth population. As economic prosperity facilitates we can see a growth in employment which results an increased purchasing power of the youths. Hence they are encouraged to look for an upgrade in their lifestyle. However, the ever-increasing nature of demand also curbs their scope of getting all they want, which compels them to get the best value for every penny they spend. This case, prevalent worldwide including in Bangladesh, and aided by global digitisation powered by the internet, has paved way for online classified platforms to step in. Online classified platform's rise in popularity across Bangladesh indicates an improvement in lifestyle of the citizens and is a clear indicator of greater business prospects for new players.

Shylendra Nathan, CEO of Ekhanai.com, has been on top of the situation all along, which in fact has encouraged him to explore the territory of the budding popularity of online classified platforms in Bangladesh. During his tenure at Ekhanai.com, he has been a first-hand witness of the bud taking the form of a mammoth. When asked about prospects in Bangladesh, he responded with some valuable information obtained from a research conducted for OLX. On behalf of OLX, the survey was done by global market research firm MetrixLab in 2013. The report states that internet users aged between 18 to 65 years from six divisions creates a market valuation of 147 billion taka. Currently, the value of all product ads posted on Ekhanai.com by sellers amount to nearly 15 billion taka. Indeed, online classifieds are waiting to go big soon.

### JUST IN



## Samsung launches Galaxy J1 NXT Prime in Bangladesh

Samsung Mobile Bangladesh has launched the latest addition to its J series – Galaxy J1 NXT Prime. This new device intends to provide dual-SIM smartphone experience at a budget. A key feature of the phone is Ultra-Data Saving Lite mode which ensures data saving up to 50% and also enhances the performance of 1,500 mAh battery. This new device showcases 1080P Full HD Playback to serve the multimedia and gaming requirements of users. This smartphone also comes up with operating system of Android Marshmallow 6.0. The device is powered by 1GB RAM and 1.2 GHz Quad-core processors and packs 8GB of internal storage. It also has quick launch camera with a 5-megapixel primary camera and an LED flash.

PRICE: TK. 6,990/- and comes up with 1 year warranty.

# THE DAY FOR APPS EATL- PROTHOM ALO HOLDS DAYLONG APP DEVELOPMENT BOOTCAMP YESTERDAY

One of the largest app boot camp for making mobile application, organised by EATL and Prothom Alo, was held on November 12th, 2016 at Mirpur Indoor Stadium, Dhaka. This boot camp was mainly for the tech savvy app-enthusiast youth of the country.



Students & professionals from different institutions joined this daylong skill development boot camp to enhance their knowledge and skills of different components of app development.

This program was segmented into nine sessions. Android app life cycle, game designing, UX UI, app backend, app monetization and Android push notification were some of the main topics of discussion in the sessions.

M A Mubin Khan, Managing Director,

EATL; said this Boot Camp is going to be a platform for the youths to enhance their technological skills. He also informed that, this is going to be a unique opportunity for the participants to resolve any kind of app related queries from the mentors.

At the final event, only a few selected candidates will be given the opportunity to present their ideas to a panel of distinguished judges on 25th and 26th of this month.

Architect Yeafesh Osman, MP, Minister of Science & Technology, along with other distinguished guests including Dr. AK Abdul Momen, ex-Bangladeshi Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the UN; Mr. Shyam Sunder Sikder, Secretary, ICT Division; Professor Dr. M. Kaykobad, Department of CSE, BUET; Dr. Mokhlesur Rahman, World Bank Bangladesh; Mr. Mustafa Jabbar, President, BASIS were present at the opening session.

This year, EATL went to hundreds of campuses to run their activation program. The result of the activation campaign was phenomenal! 700+ ideas were submitted, of which 500 ideas were primarily selected on 24th September, 2016.

The winning idea will be receiving BDT 10,00,000/- and a trophy. Not only that, the winning app in every segment will receive BDT 200,000/-

Prothom Alo is the "Title Partner"; World Bank is the "Lead Sponsor", The ICT Division is the "Strategic Partner", Channel I is the "Media Partner" of this mega event.

## TECH HAPPENING

## Booking ecotourism resorts of Relief International at Sunderban gets easy with Jovago

To make your winter vacation days a bit extra special, Jovago – Bangladesh's largest online hotel booking site now helps local and foreign tourists to book Relief International's famous eco-resorts from their site. Relief International, that's been helping the locals of Sunderbans into transforming their traditional whereabouts into entrepreneurship, thus minimising the dependency on forests. Later the villages where transformed into eco sites, with eco cottages built with local products such as the Nypa palm and bamboos. The sanctity of the area is therefore secured with their limited accommodations at a time. This is why is important to book in advance and Jovago makes the process easier than ever.



## eGeneration partners up with Code Club BD

eGeneration, a management consulting & technology services company of Bangladesh, has joined hands with Code Club BD, a non-profit organisation to help children learn coding and grow interest in computer science and digital making. As Strategic Partner of Code Club BD, eGeneration will provide all kinds of pro-

motional support to Code Club in order to disperse their ingenious work of giving every child in the country the chance to learn to code. During the signing ceremony were present Mr. Shameem Ahsan, Chairman of eGeneration Ltd and Mr. Shajahan Miah, Executive Director of Code Club Bangladesh etc.

## Acer announces B-Trac Technologies as new distributor partner

Acer recently announced its partnership with B-Trac Technologies as its newest distributor in Bangladesh. Under the terms of the agreement, B-Trac Technologies will distribute Acer's products, including notebooks, desktop PCs and monitors; further B-Trac will also become the provider of service and support in Bangladesh. On the partnership inauguration program the Mr. Pinaki Banerjee, Business Head for Bangladesh & East India spoke on behalf of Acer; Mr. Harjinder Singer, Commercial Head for Bangladesh and Mr. Shakib Hasan, Country Channel Consultant for Bangladesh from Acer was also present. Mr. Abdul Mabud, Chief Commercial Officer from B-Trac Technologies spoke on the occasion; Mr. Tariqul Kabir, Head

of Sales and Mr. Akhter Fahmi, Head of Operations from B-Trac Technologies were also present on the occasion.

This agreement with B-Trac will take Acer's success to the next level. With this association, Acer will be able to further explore the untapped potential of the market in Bangladesh and capture a bigger market share.



TECH BITS Alibaba smashes its sales record on Single's Day, despite concerns of slowing growth



Zuckerberg denies Facebook News Feed bubble impacted the election



Yahoo admits employees discovered hack in 2014



Snowden says tech companies should protect privacy no matter who is president



Google says there are now 2 billion active Chrome installs



Chrome