

FET-Proactive projects contribute to global research efforts into infectious diseases

Two former Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) projects have helped to develop a software, which could support ongoing effort to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.



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Scientists from the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (Deutsches Forschungszentrum für Künstliche Intelligenz, DFKI) and its spin-off SIS Software have recently announced a possible approach to monitor the spread of infectious diseases. According to the press release, the software can help undertake analyse patterns of symptoms, and health status securely in order to follow the evolution of the infectious disease as it spreads through a certain population. This system builds on the results of two former projects, SOCIONICAL and CIMPLEX, which were funded by the European Union.

The FET-Proactive project SOCIONICAL ran between 2009 and 2013 and examined the interplay between technology and social interaction. It developed a unique crowd sensing technology, which can be used in different settings. In the context of pandemic, this technology could help analyse mobility patterns and help researchers to develop models on the spread of infectious diseases. The FET-Proactive project CIMPLEX developed various tools to investigate and influence the spread of diseases and other contagion phenomena in complex social systems. CIMPLEX ran between years 2015-2017 and proposed modelling, computational, and ICT tools needed to predict spread of epidemics.

The coordinator of the both projects and director of the Department of Embedded Intelligence at DFKI, Prof. Dr. Paul Lukowicz, explains:

Pattern recognition using artificial intelligence can help to identify an outbreak and monitor the spread of an epidemic at an early stage. Our pioneering EU project has worked on ways to collect data in ways that respect data protection and are usable for crisis management situations.

Dr. Tobias Franke, who participates in current research activities of DFKI, concludes:

With our system, we strive for a holistic platform for citizen participation, data analysis and government information, which combines the results of successful research projects and proven technologies. In the context of the current COVID-19 crisis, they can make an important contribution to the fight against the pandemic.

Background information

FET-Open and FET-Proactive are now part of the Enhanced European Innovation Council (EIC) Pilot (specifically the Pathfinder), the new home for deep-tech research and innovation in Horizon 2020, the EU funding programme for research and innovation.

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