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Post Mortem of a Failed Statistical Engineering Project

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An important axiom in innovation is "Fail early, fail often, but learn from the failures." This talk discusses an academic-industrial statistical engineering project that initially had good prospects for success but ultimately provided virtually no benefit to the industrial partner although it did produce a nice dissertation for the PhD student assigned to the project. It is crucial to note that "hindsight is always 20-20."

The talk begins with a high-level overview of statistical engineering. It then discusses the nature of academic-industrial relationships through industry sponsored centers of engineering excellence. Next, the paper discusses the three-year journey selling the project to the company, the politics both within the engineering center and with the company, the failure of the academic leadership, the difficulty of beginning meaningful dialogues between the company engineers and the university team, and the fundamental funding issues that led to the dissolution of the joint engineering/statistics team project.

The talk ends with a summary of the good, the bad, and the ugly of the experience. More importantly, it provides constructive insights and suggestions to address the fundamental issues that doomed this project.

Type of presentation

Talk

Classification

Mainly application

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