



1st International Workshop on Public Health in the Digital Age: Workshop Chairs' Welcome

It is our great pleasure to introduce the **1st International Workshop on Public Health in the Digital Age: Social Media, Crowdsourcing and Participatory Systems** taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on May 14, 2013 (<http://www.digitalhealth.ws/>) in conjunction with WWW 2013, the 22nd International World Wide Web Conference.

The 1st PHDA 2013 is building on successful events run by the chairs: the ehealth 2009-11 conference (<http://electronic-health.org/>) held in Istanbul, Casablanca and Malaga, the DDD 2012 conference in Boston (<http://healthmap.org/ddd/>) and the EE2 workshop (<http://www.isi.it/events/ee2>) in Courmayeur in 2012. We succeeded in our ambitious aim of bringing together professionals from computing and medical backgrounds which will make the workshop a truly unique event. The formal and social discussions promise to generate cross-fertilisation of ideas and numerous stimuli for new collaborations.

The enormous potential to improve public health through harvesting, analysis, visualisation of Big Data cannot be more clearly expressed. Public health needs to leverage cutting edge computer science and availability of real time Big Data from social networks, blogs, games, 24×7 online media providing constant stream of real time situation-aware data to be harnessed, analysed and rapidly responded to increase public participation and avoid public health threats. These topics have become most pressing after the insurgence of the novel influenza virus A(H7N9) which has already infected several tens of individuals in China in the last weeks.

We received 17 submissions and accepted 4 papers, 3 medical abstracts and 5 poster submissions promising a diverse and vibrant day completed by a panel discussion "Big Data with Crowdsourcing for Public Health: the hype and the potential" attended by representatives from academia, industry and public health professionals.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the PHDA 2013 so far: the authors of all submitted papers, the speakers, the programme committee members, reviewers and session chairs and above all the WWW workshop chairs, Leslie Carr and Alberto Laender, for their support and collaboration.

The PHDA 2013 chairs

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