PhD position in User Modelling, Personalisation & Engagement at MediaFutures: Research Centre for Responsible Media Technology and Innovation

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PhD position in User Modelling, Personalisation & Engagement, Work Package 2 at MediaFutures: Research Centre for Responsible Media Technology and Innovation

There is a vacancy for a PhD position at MediaFutures: Research Centre for Responsible Media Technology & Innovation. The position is for a fixed-term period of 3 years.

MediaFutures is a new centre for research-based innovation at the Department for information science and media studies, University of Bergen, and will be located at Media City Bergen. The centre is a part of the Norwegian Research Council's Research-based Innovation scheme. MediaFutures will in cooperation with industry partners from news media and media technology research topics like media experiences, recommender technology, content production and analysis, content interaction and availability, and Norwegian language technology. The goal is to develop responsible technological solutions to societal challenges like AI, fake news, echo chambers and political polarization. The results will be new digital tools, analytical methods and content types for the future of media. The center will also perform research training within media technology and innovation. This will create outputs such as new patents, prototypes, research articles and software, as well and innovative start-up companies.

Read more about the centre at https://www.mediafutures.no.

About the project/work tasks:

This PhD position will be part of Work Package 2, User Modelling, Personalisation & Engagement at MediaFutures, more specifically in the task 2.1 and 2.5.

In the latter Task, MediaFutures aims at developing the next generation of user modeling, personalisation and recommendation methods and algorithms incorporating additional user-related information to develop better results for individual users. This will be performed by adopting Machine Learning models and resulting in the development of software prototypes that can effectively use heterogeneous forms of input data for personalization and recommendation. In the former task, MediaFutures aims at investigating the extent in which different recommendation methods and algorithms can lead to undesired societal effects, such as an unbalanced coverage of different viewpoints or the spread of misinformation. The problem will be addressed with simulation-based studies, e.g., based on agent-based modeling or other forms of assessing short-term and longitudinal effects. The successful PhD candidate will work on both of the above-described tasks.

The main objectives of the PhD position include:

- To develop user modeling and personalisation techniques capable of effectively eliciting user preferences (e.g., ratings) and side information.
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- To implement effective preference elicitation strategies which will enhance the user experience when interacting with media content.
- To evaluate the developed models taking into account important competing factors (e.g., business values, societal values, and individual values).
- To perform simulation studies (offline experiments) based on historical datasets describing media consumption by consumers.
- To run user studies to investigate in which ways different forms of explanations are suited to increase the perceived transparency of the recommendations at the consumer's side.
- To conduct field tests in corporation with industry partners with novel technical approaches for user modeling and recommendation.

Qualifications and personal qualities:

- To develop user modeling and personalisation techniques capable of effectively eliciting user preferences (e.g., ratings) and side information.
The applicant must hold a master's degree or the equivalent in Information Science, Computer Science, Data Science, Informatics, or equivalent.
The degree has to be completed by the application deadline.
The requirements are generally a grade B or better on the Master thesis and for the Master degree in total.
As an applicant you should be able to work independently, have a considerable work capacity as well as an enthusiasm for research.
Great motivation for research, interest in the topic and good knowledge of relevant theory and methods.
Strong programming skills are a must.
Background within data science and recommender systems is an advantage.
Experience from scientific work (e.g., previous conference and journal publications) is an advantage.
Fluent in English.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.

About the PhD position:
The duration of the PhD position is 3 years. The employment period for the successful candidate may be reduced if he or she previously has been employed in a PhD position.

As a PhD research fellow, you will take part in the PhD programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences, UiB. The programme corresponds to a period of three years and leads to the PhD degree. To be eligible for admission you must normally have an educational background corresponding to a master’s degree with a scope of 120 ECTS credits, which builds on a bachelor’s degree with a scope of 180 ECTS credits (normally 2 + 3 years), or an integrated master’s degree with a scope of 300 ECTS credits (5 years). Master’s degrees must normally include an independent work of a minimum of 30 ECTS credits. It is expected that the topic of the master’s degree is connected to the academic field to which you are seeking admission.

We can offer:
- Exciting development opportunities as part of your role in a strong professional environment
- Salary at pay grade 54 upon appointment (Code 1017) on the government salary scale (equivalent to NOK 479.600 per year). Further promotions are made according to length of service in the position.
- A cross-disciplinary, interactive and challenging working environment.
- Enrolment in the Norwegian Public Service Pension Fund.
- Good welfare benefits.


Your application must include:
- A cover letter including a brief account of your research interests and motivation for applying for the position.
- The names and contact information for two reference persons. One of these must be the main advisor for the master's thesis or equivalent thesis.
- CV.
- A letter of motivation (2-4 pages) describing the relevant competence of the candidate, and how this competence contributes to WP2, User Modelling, Personalisation & Engagement. This should include both theoretical and methodological competence. Please consult the brief project description (see link above) when making this letter of motivation.
- Transcripts and diplomas showing completion of the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Relevant certificates/references.
- A list of academic publications.
- Academic publications that you want to submit for assessment (including your master's thesis or equivalent).
- The application and appendices with certified translations into English or a Scandinavian language must be uploaded at Jobbnorge.
- If you have a master's degree from an institution outside of the Nordic countries, or a 2-year discipline-based master's degree (or the equivalent) in a subject area other than the one associated with the application, you may later in the application process be asked to submit an overview of the syllabus for the degree you have completed.

Incomplete applications or applications sent as e-mails will not be considered. Only submitted documents will be subjected to an expert assessment.

General information:
Additional information about the position can be obtained by contacting work package leader Mehdi Elahi, mehdi.elahi@uib.no or Centre Director Christoph Trattner.

Practical questions regarding the application procedures should be directed to Adviser - HR, Bodil Haagland, bodil.haagland@uib.no.

Appointed research fellows will be admitted to the PhD programme at the Faculty of Social Sciences. Questions about the programme may be directed to Adviser-PhD, Hanne.Gravermoen@uib.no.

The state labour force shall reflect the diversity of Norwegian society to the greatest extent possible. Age and gender balance among employees is therefore a goal. It is also a goal to recruit people with immigrant backgrounds. People with immigrant backgrounds and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply for the position.

The University of Bergen applies the principle of public access to information when recruiting staff for academic positions.

Information about applicants may be made public even if the applicant has asked not to be named on the list of persons who have applied. The applicant must be notified if the request to be omitted is not met.
The successful applicant must comply with the guidelines that apply to the position at all times.

For further information about the recruitment process, click here.

Life as a PhD candidate at UiB
Marion Claireaux tells about life and work as a PhD candidate at UiB.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrtp6VxMeJ4&index=2&list=PLf8ZIYfAO0gihROTj6Stickg0ISO6G

About The University of Bergen

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