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Brazilian rainfall down. Coffee futures up.

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ON THE COVER:
Surveillance cameras have helped. Smartphones, laptops, appliances, cars and the bank cards in your wallet also collect data about you.
(ILLUSTRATION BY RYUMI SUNG)

ABOVE:
Digital devices collect and aggregate personal information such as your age, race, gender and political affiliation.
(ILLUSTRATION BY RYUMI SUNG)
MARYLAND SMITH WELCOMES A FAMILIAR FACE TO THE SOUTH SIDE OF CAMPUS. A new Testudo statue, gifted to the school by an anonymous donor who also provided funds for its preservation, now resides in the west courtyard of Van Munching Hall. With its construction completed in spring 2018, the statue marks the seventh Testudo placed on campus since the original’s installation more than 85 years ago. Maryland Smith students won’t have to travel far to rub Testudo’s head for good luck in the years to come. / PS /

BY THE NUMBERS

7 Testudo statues on the College Park campus

ADELE H. STAMP STUDENT UNION
GOSSETT FOOTBALL TEAM HOUSE
MARYLAND STADIUM
MCKELDIN LIBRARY
SAMUEL RIGGS IV ALUMNI CENTER
VAN MUNCHING HALL
XFINITY CENTER

300 Testudo’s weight, in pounds

The bronze statue alone weighs 300 pounds, but a 700-pound cement filling was added to the original statue to secure it in place after a number of incidents involving its disappearance.

85 Testudo’s age

The original statue was erected outside Ritchie Coliseum on June 2, 1933.

37 Sections on Testudo’s shell

1 Million +

The number of students and alumni who have rubbed Testudo’s nose for luck
Support Smith Via Fearless Ideas Campaign

Those who support “Fearless Ideas: The Campaign for Maryland,” a $1.5 billion campaign launched on May 11, 2018, can help Maryland Smith grow.

“The overall goal is to prepare fearless leaders who will tackle the world’s complex problems and deliver innovative solutions,” says Chris Dax, assistant dean for development and alumni relations at Maryland Smith.

One area of emphasis during the multiyear campaign will be scholarships and fellowships. “Campaign gifts can help Smith attract the most talented and diverse students, regardless of their ability to pay for higher education,” Dax says.

As part of this focus, the school will emphasize scholarships for “+1 programs” that allow undergraduate students to extend their Smith experience by one year, so they can hit the job market with a specialty master’s degree.

Another area of emphasis will be investment in the school’s world-class faculty. “Funding for endowed chairs and professorships expands resources that help our faculty to soar to, or to stay at, at the forefront of their fields,” Dax says. “It also enables Smith to promote extraordinary research and teaching.”

The latter is the focus of Smith’s Office of Transformational Learning. “We are disrupting conventional teaching methods and creating a learning partnership between faculty and students,” Dax says.

A third area of emphasis will be infrastructure. Donors will be encouraged to support current-use needs provided by the Smith Annual Fund. “So many of our alumni already contribute annually,” Dax says. “We would invite them to consider how they can transform Smith with a separate campaign commitment.”

Senior Class Gift Doubles in Size

Maryland Smith graduates contributed at a record rate to the Senior Class Gift Program in spring 2018. The initiative has more than doubled in size since its launch in 2015.

“It is a special person who will give back to his or her school prior to graduation,” Maryland Smith dean Alexander Triantis says.

“The Senior Class Gift Program has had a growing number of Terps investing in their own future through their generosity and leadership.”

Seniors who participate in the program receive a philanthropy honor cord to wear during commencement. They also receive special recognition during the ceremony, and their names are featured on Maryland Smith honor rolls.

Students receive the same honors when their parents make a gift on their behalf.

“Without my scholarship, I might not be where I am today. I am very thankful for all of the opportunities made possible by alumni donors.”

Khalil Pettus ’15
ARDEA PARTNERS

Support Fearless Ideas
Donate today at giving.umd.edu/smith
MBAs Learn Leadership on the Street, in the Cold, on the Water

Students may learn leadership theory in the classroom. But Maryland Smith professor Neta Moye says the lessons do not stick until students practice the principles in the real world. “The best leaders are the best learners,” Moye says. “They know how to squeeze the meaning from every single experience they have.”

That’s why she has championed the extra-curricular MBA Leading Fearlessly program, which entered its second iteration in 2018. The program has full-time students sharpening their leadership skills through out-of-the-box experiences and coaching sessions.

The program kicked off with full-time students chasing clues through the streets of Annapolis, à la “The Amazing Race,” then surviving an arctic wilderness scenario in the woods on a cold January afternoon. The semester culminated on the water in May, with teams racing sailing yachts.

“This year, we tweaked things a bit,” Moye says. “We put a little more intentionality into it.”

Even before the first activity, the students broke into three-person teams — Moye calls them pods — that they worked with throughout the semester.

In between the daylong adventures bookending the semester, the pods met for five group sessions with a professional executive coach.

The goal, Moye says, is for students to build on the core leadership course they take in the first semester of the MBA program and hone a specific skill to prepare for their summer internship.

Moye has plans to extend the program into year two for the full-time MBA students, as they continue to learn and grow as leaders. She is hoping to add a Gettysburg leadership experience for the spring semester of the second year.

“We’re ultimately helping them develop the habits of being an experiential learner,” she says. / CH /
Wisdom from Men of Distinction

The Smith Business Academy celebrated its five-year anniversary on April 27, 2018, by hosting the inaugural Men of Distinction Summit for college and high school students of color at Maryland Smith. More than 150 students attended the event. Kevin Warren, executive vice president of Xerox, delivered keynote remarks, and several Smith alumni participated on panels.

Victor Mullins, dean of undergraduate programs, says the Smith Business Academy is a brotherhood of young minority males, “charged with the goal of excellence.” Following are quotes from the event. / DJ /

“The world has a ton of critics. What I’m looking for are playwrights.”
KEVIN WARREN, Xerox

“Don’t think of yourself as an employee. You are a business.”
KEVIN WARREN, Xerox

“Life is about being able to adjust.”
KHALIL PETTUS ’15, Ardea Partners

“To become the man who can achieve the challenges of tomorrow, we must change today.”
NAHOM TEKLE ’17, Capital One

“Don’t tell yourself no. Let other people tell you no.”
TAMERAT MULUGETA ’18, Bank of America Merrill Lynch

“This is the place where statistics are changed.”
ETHAN PARKER ’19, PwC (intern)

MicroMasters Offers Mini-MBA and Low-Cost Path to Full Degree

Working professionals have a new low-cost path to a high-quality online MBA. The MicroMasters program in MBA Core Curriculum from Maryland Smith, available through online learning platform edX.org, is designed to immerse participants in the foundational business skills needed to advance their careers.

The series of seven courses will be the first MicroMasters program on the edX platform to offer transferable credits to a full MBA degree.

“Courses cover core business skills, and the interactive cases allow students to apply these skills while interacting with others students in the class,” says Maryland Smith professor Judy Frels, assistant dean and academic director of the school’s online MBA program, ranked No. 9 nationally by U.S. News & World Report.

The asynchronous online series will offer three levels of engagement. Students may complete individual massive open online courses (MOOCs), earn the full MicroMasters program certificate for $1,500, or take the next step and convert the coursework into credits toward an online MBA.

Students who wish to have the credits applied toward the full degree must complete the entire MicroMasters series and meet regular admissions standards at Maryland Smith. The MicroMasters path will give degree seekers 25 percent of an MBA for less than the cost of single graduate credit.

Students pursuing the verified track will take proctored exams and receive feedback from MBA-level teaching assistants. / DJ /
Leadership starts with understanding people, keynote speaker Dana Ritzcovan ’93 told graduates on May 19, 2018, at Maryland Smith’s undergraduate commencement celebration in College Park, Md.

“We hire employees at organizations, yet human beings show up instead,” said Ritzcovan, then group managing director and head of human resources for Global Wealth Management at UBS, a global financial services company.

Ritzcovan, a UMD English Department alumna who serves on Smith’s Board of Advisors, shared three rules for aspiring leaders.

► **ASK WHY.** People resist change for many reasons. Ritzcovan said effective leaders take time to understand specific concerns. “Leadership is about altering what people think is possible and right by understanding their worldviews,” she said.

► **STAY FLEXIBLE.** When leaders hear new ideas, they resist the impulse to apply their own worldviews. Instead, they withhold judgment and consider the possibilities. “Leaders think, listen and speak differently than others,” Ritzcovan said.

► **LOOK FORWARD AND BACK.** Leaders embrace change, but they also appreciate history. “Leaders speak respectfully about the past, realistically about the present, and optimistically about the future,” Ritzcovan said.

Overall, 1,271 Smith students graduated in three ceremonies on May 19 and July 26, 2018. / DJ /

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**New Books by Faculty Authors**


- **“Awakening a Leader’s Soul: Learnings Through Immortal Poems,”** by Smith School executive education facilitator Gaurav Bhalla, reimagines the purpose of leadership and the importance of a leader’s humanity. (Motivational Press, 2017)
At Dingman Center, It’s Ladies First in the Classroom

The Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship at Maryland Smith is encouraging more women to be entrepreneurs with its Ladies First initiative.

The center brought its effort into the classroom in spring 2018 with a new one-credit course, “Ladies First Founders,” for undergraduate students building businesses or social ventures.

“We wanted to provide that extra level of support and peer community for undergraduate female entrepreneurs,” says Sara Herald, MBA ’11, who teaches the course as Dingman’s associate director for social entrepreneurship and program champion.

The course blends skill-building workshops and networking events. Topics include the how-to’s of networking and mentorship, startup pitching, body language and how to get funding.

Herald points to research showing that a lack of a peer community has been a barrier to entry for would-be women entrepreneurs. With just 10 women in the application-only course, the inaugural cohort became the tight-knit community she was hoping for.

The women were working on a mix of startups, including a skincare business, to a company making athletic wear for figure skaters, to a biomedical device maker.

“I’ve never really had a space where I’ve connected with female entrepreneurs,” says Audrey Awasom ’18, a student in the course who started the nonprofit Noble Uprising to provide career training to homeless women. “It was just so safe to be able to just speak your mind and share your experiences and have others relate.”

The Dingman Center introduced Ladies First in 2016 as a series of events and workshops in an effort to up the number of women participants in all programs. This year’s ramp-up also included the launch of Ladies First Friday Office Hours, for women with business ideas to seek advice. And in April, the center hosted a friendlier women-only version of a “Shark Tank” pitch session with Springboard Enterprises, dubbed the Dolphin Tank. / CH /

Smith School Earns Top 10 Rankings

Three Maryland Smith graduate programs are ranked inside the top 10 in the United States by major media outlets.

The school’s master of finance program is No. 2 and the executive MBA program is No. 10 in separate reports from Financial Times. The executive MBA program is ranked No. 7 by The Economist.

Meanwhile, the school’s online MBA program is No. 9 in the most recent ranking from U.S. News & World Report.

Bloomberg Businessweek also ranks Maryland Smith No. 8 in the United States for its Management Information Systems undergraduate major, and No. 9 for full-time MBA student satisfaction. / DJ /
First the Snub, Then the Multimillion-Dollar Startup

Success came fast for Raul Fernandez ’90, an economics alumnus at the University of Maryland.

He turned a part-time job on Capitol Hill into something more after graduation, and soon he was running a partnership with NeXT, a high-tech startup founded by Steve Jobs.

But just as the business was taking off, its investors opted to bring in an experienced executive above Fernandez to guide him.

“That gave me the anger to leave and the emotional incentive to leave,” Fernandez said on April 18, 2018, during the Robert G. Hisaoka Speaker Series at Maryland Smith.

Fernandez, 25 at the time, quit his job and launched Proxicom in 1991. The company, which developed secure e-commerce environments during the earliest days of the Internet, eventually sold for $450 million.

Fernandez serves today as vice chairman and owner of Monumental Sports & Entertainment, a private partnership that owns the NBA’s Washington Wizards, the NHL’s Washington Capitals and Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C.

The speaker series was created through a three-year gift from Robert G. Hisaoka ’79, who hosted the event and served as discussion moderator. / DJ /
Stop Boring People With Your PowerPoints

IN A RECENT LETTER to shareholders, Jeff Bezos reveals that at Amazon, there are no snooze-inducing slide decks dominating group meetings. Instead, employees are asked to pen six-page memos distributed at the start of the meeting. Participants are given “study hall” time to silently review the memo before proceeding with a productive discussion.

“Amazon’s approach is fantastic,” says Tricia Homer, executive communication coach at Maryland Smith. “The fact that they are stressing the importance of good writing is great, but even more impressive is the idea of giving everyone one time together to review concepts before launching into a discussion about them.”

But not all organizations can be Amazon. If yours relies on presentations with more traditional approaches — Microsoft’s ubiquitous PowerPoint, Google Slides or even the more dynamic Prezi — it doesn’t mean your presentation is destined to leave audience members bored or surfing their smartphones for a distraction.

Ultimately, any presentation is about fueling a connection between the audience and an idea or presenter, Homer says, and you can absolutely use presentation tools to make strong, memorable points and encourage productive discussions.

Tricia Homer offers 10 suggestions for better presentations.

1. Tell a story: Humans connect with storytelling. Think about your complete presentation as a narrative with anecdotes to make your points.

2. Start and close strong: Focus on a clear opening to build momentum, then leave the audience with a clear call to action.

3. Use handouts: Don’t just distribute printouts of the slide deck. Provide something the audience can take with them to reinforce the points of your presentation.

4. Breathe: We all need to get more comfortable with silence. This signals confidence, builds your connection with the audience and helps your message sink in.

5. Write a script: Whether you plan word-for-word what you’re going to say, or just plan the bullet points of your presentation, the key is to plan.

6. Practice: Practice is essential. Practice using your words, voice and body language to convey confidence.

7. Go small: Less is more. If you have 10 minutes to present, plan only eight minutes of content to allow time to pace your presentation. And don’t pack your slides with too much text or small type that can’t be read from the back of the room.

8. Be conversational: Keep it simple and avoid jargon and unfamiliar acronyms.

9. Think about visuals: Don’t rely on predictable, clichéd clip art. Take time to brainstorm appropriate, attention-grabbing images.

10. Remember transitions: There are four basic types of slides — the opening slide, content slides, emphasis slides and transition slides. Transitions are often overlooked. But they offer an opportunity for “signposting” at key points to help audiences move with you from one topic to the next. This increases engagement and boosts memory. Transitions also provide an opportunity to go “off script” with stories or questions.
Lights,
Camera,
Data
Machines Learn To Edit Movie Trailers

**IT TAKES JUST A FEW SECONDS** for a movie or series trailer to grab you — or to lose you. Netflix and other content studios know this. It’s the reason why those hyper-short previews begin to autoplay when you hover your mouse over a title on menu screens for Netflix, Hulu or Amazon’s Prime Video.

In recent research Maryland Smith professor Michel Wedel, working with co-authors at Netflix, Harvard and Santa Clara University, sought to develop an algorithm that marketers can use to create the most optimal movie clips and, as a result, draw bigger audiences.

“It’s not enough to simply lift the first few scenes of the trailer,” Wedel says. But that’s what many content creators have been doing.

Wedel and his co-authors conducted extensive field experiments, using a web-based facial-expression tracking system to study the emotional responses of volunteers in real time while they watched comedy movie trailers.

The researchers used the data to predict how likely those viewers were to see the film. The findings not only helped researchers detail what key elements are contained within the most effective trailers, they also helped the authors calibrate an effective model for slicing trailers into short but compelling video clips of just 10, 20 or 30 seconds.

The method, they say, improves upon the current hands-on approach to making clips, and can be automated.

It is the first known research to develop a model for editing trailers to produce short promotional clips. Some takeaways:

- Movie trailers are different from other types of commercials. They are more like a sample of the product than a testimonial. Audiences go to a movie for the emotions they expect to experience there — fear during a horror film, sadness during a drama, happiness during a comedy.

- While not all moments in the trailer or clip are expected to have a huge impact, the start, peak, end and trajectory of audio and emotions matter. The researchers say their integrated model can be used to produce optimal short movie clips for use in emails, messages, social media, and in the apps, landing pages and user interfaces of content providers.

- By studying the timing and intensity of the emotion, the researchers say, marketers can create clips that have the potential to be even more effective than the original trailers, with some clips aimed at platforms that support sound and others aimed at those that don’t (such as Facebook).

- Audiences generally don’t like comedy trailers to contain too many scenes or be too fast-paced. The same held true in shorter clips, the researchers found.

- The sequence of scenes also had an impact. When the key scene (typically the longest) is placed toward the end of the comedic trailer or clip, happiness levels and watching intention both increased.

- Happy, happier, happiest is the best order for scenes in a comedy movie clip, the researchers say. / KJ /
Beware of the Pull of Prada

Is your handbag making you selfish and hypocritical? A working paper co-authored by Maryland Smith professor Yajin Wang shows that luxury consumption can lead ordinary people to behave badly.

Study participants assigned to carry a Prada bag, for example, donated generously to charity — but only when other people were around to see it.

“Is your handbag making you selfish and hypocritical?” says Wang.

“We repeatedly found that women wearing luxury products behaved less prosocially, including by sharing less money with others and donating less money to charity when no one was around to see it,” the researchers write.

“Taken together, these findings provide novel evidence that using luxury goods affects how people feel and behave.”

Previous studies have linked luxury consumption with prosocial behavior, but Wang’s research distinguishes between public and private acts of kindness.

“Whereas luxury consumption generally promotes less prosocial tendencies, it leads to more prosocial behavior when such acts can enhance a person’s reputation,” the authors conclude.

Four Steps to Win Back Angry Customers

It happens. Sometimes companies let their customers down. And when they do, they need to fix it fast, says Maryland Smith marketing professor Janet Wagner, director of the Center for Excellence in Service.

She says Samsung recovered nicely in 2016, when customers experienced exploding smartphones. “Samsung was a little slow to respond to that, but once they did, they apologized, explained what happened and compensated customers by giving them new phones.”

Wagner says Samsung and other companies must follow a four-step formula to win back customers’ trust after a service failure.

- **ACT QUICKLY.** Don’t give the customer time to fume about the problem.

- **APOLOGIZE ... AND MEAN IT.** Say a genuine “I’m sorry,” because you don’t want to lose the customer. In the process of apologizing, empathize. Say something to the effect of, “I understand why you are offended by this.” Then explain what went wrong and how you will solve the problem.

- **SOLVE THE PROBLEM FAST.** When a service failure happens, it’s important to try to match the service recovery process to the service failure. For example, if someone in your company is rude to a customer, all you really need to do is apologize. If a customer loses time or money because of the service failure, that’s when you have to start thinking about how much you are going to compensate them financially or the equivalent (like refunding their money or offering something for free in the future). You need to restore the customer’s sense that he or she has been treated fairly.

- **FOLLOW UP.** Afterward, check back to make sure the customer is satisfied with the solution you offered as well as the quality of your service.
A Collusion-Free Guide to Winning Elections

"It’s a money game," Zhang says. The researchers took a data-driven approach to look at the effectiveness of different campaign channels.

Most campaign dollars are spent on television advertising and grassroots efforts, where campaigns send volunteers door-to-door or to public areas like shopping center parking lots to have one-on-one conversations with voters.

"Social media is relatively a new phenomenon, and typically it doesn’t cost that much," Zhang says. "The other two channels take up the vast majority of the resources, so that’s why we were very interested in looking at the return on investment for those."

The research reveals that both television ads and grassroots efforts can successfully influence election outcomes. But the different channels work on different segments of voters.

Television advertising works well for people who are on the margin. "For people who do not have a strong political preference before they enter the poll, television advertising is more effective," Zhang says.

For those who already have strong partisan ties, grassroots campaigns work better to get them to show their support by voting.

“Our research is not saying you should do one versus the other,” Zhang says. “Instead, we are saying if you are going to spend money on those channels, this is how you should intelligently allocate those resources."

“Mobilize your likely voters by sending people from your field operations to where your support already is,” she says. "You want to get those people out to vote. Then for the states where a lot of people are still debating how they are going to vote, you really should spend a lot of mass media advertising money to influence them."

However, the opposite is true for ads supporting candidates paid for by political action committees. The researchers attribute this to the difference in advertisement content: PAC advertising is predominately negative and tends to attack rivals rather than promote the preferred candidates.

“We find that it works better with people who already have a strong preference," Zhang says. “If you’re targeting people in the middle, you should use a more positive tone.”

Zhang says she was surprised to find that grassroots campaigns have a much greater effect on voting outcome than advertising campaigns. She thinks this is probably because both parties advertise somewhat similarly in terms of their spending, but there is a lot more variation in where candidates focus their grassroots efforts. / CH /
The Cost of Being Authentic
Confronting Subconscious Bias in Crowdfunding

People looking to raise money using crowdfunding sites are encouraged to be authentic in their profiles and project descriptions. It’s the best way, they’re told, to connect with potential donors and engender trust. But what about when it’s not?

Research from Maryland Smith professor Jessica M. Clark finds that for some fundraisers, being authentic — particularly when it comes to race — can actually stand in the way of their fundraising goals. The researchers studied the ways that fundraisers signal racial identity on Kickstarter, the effects of those signals on their success, and the cost of being authentic.

Clark’s co-author, Wake Forest University’s Lauren Rhue, collected images from Kickstarter, both from project description pages and profile pages, and used classification software to determine which races were represented. She later broadened the study to include signals about race included in the project text. That’s when Clark joined the research.

“We decided that maybe you could tell the race of a person just based on the words they use in their project description,” Clark says.

The researchers discovered that while the fundraiser’s visually perceived race had the most meaningful impact on the probability of success, the racial components in the text also carried significant weight. In their working paper, they include a table of words that are found to be highly correlated with race.

Black fundraisers, for example, more frequently refer to projects using cultural terms like “jazz” and “hip-hop,” and more often use words like “community,” “God” and “youth.”

White fundraisers, meanwhile, tend to talk about projects involving black subjects using terms that are more altruistic in tone, such as “hope,” “charity” and “help.”

Overall, they found that white fundraisers had greater success than black fundraisers, and that Asian fundraisers had higher success rates than any other group. “It’s the ‘model minority’ concept,” Clark says. “We think that Asian fundraisers benefit from that phenomenon — that they are stereotyped as being smarter, working harder, and doing all the right things to attain success.”

The research carries broad implications, not just for fundraisers and their endeavors, but also for the fundraising sites that stand to benefit from their projects.

“A common recommendation when faced with racial bias online is simply to remove all racial signals from your posting — whether it’s an Airbnb accommodations posting, or your Craigslist posting or your Kickstarter project,” Clark says.

This leads to other problems. In cases where all racial signals are stripped from photographs and text, the posting can become strikingly vague.

“Well, you’re not just vague, but untrustworthy,” Clark says. “We include these visual elements as a measure of trust. You’re saying, ‘This is me. This is who I am. You should trust me.’ If you remove details from your project, you remove specifics, which is something that people want to see.”
ETHICS IN A DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE WORLD

story by daryl james
photograph by tony richards
illustrations by ryumi sung
“Many people don’t know the extent to which some of these datasets are combined,” says Wendy W. Moe, dean of graduate programs and director of the Maryland Smith Analytics Consortium. “There are analysts who can aggregate all this information, take seemingly anonymous data and ‘back out’ identities, effectively de-anonymizing the data.”

That didn’t happen 15 or 20 years ago. Television and radio signals filled the air, but advertisers had no way of knowing for certain who tuned in. People concerned about privacy simply could decline telephone surveys and shut their doors to Nielsen meters.

Even if audience members chose to participate in market research, they were clumped together into demographic categories. “Audiences in the past were anonymous, aggregated groups of people,” Moe says. “That is no longer the case.”

Marketers now track individuals. They know your name, where you live and how you spend your time. They know where you went on vacation and your political ideology. “They can take that data and predict your personal profile in terms of gender, age, education,” Moe says. “Then they push relevant content and ads to you.”

Her book, “Social Media Intelligence,” explores the data science involved. Her classes at Maryland Smith also explore the ethical issues that arise.

As Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg learned on July 25, 2018, consumers get angry when they feel exposed or betrayed. His company lost nearly $120 billion in a record-setting plunge that started the previous evening in after-hours trading.

Smith entrepreneurship professor David A. Kirsch links some of the turmoil to revelations about Cambridge Analytica, a political consulting firm that used Facebook data to influence the 2016 presidential election. But Kirsch sees a larger reckoning taking place in Silicon Valley, where public sentiment has shifted against high-growth tech darlings.

“All of these big tech companies have been living a charmed life when it comes to their public image,” Kirsch says.

Big tobacco, big oil, big pharmaceuticals, big banks and big agriculture have taken their hits over the years. But big tech largely has escaped the wrath.

“Where has big tech been in all of this?” Kirsch asks. “Just sitting with a big Cheshire

“THERE ARE ANALYSTS WHO CAN AGGREGATE ALL THIS INFORMATION, TAKE SEEMINGLY ANONYMOUS DATA AND ‘BACK OUT’ IDENTITIES, EFFECTIVELY DE-ANONYMIZING THE DATA.”

by Wendy W. Moe, dean of graduate programs and director of the Smith Analytics Consortium.
**BALANCING ACT**

The challenge for free or freemium platforms is balancing the interests of paying customers — the advertisers who want as much consumer information as possible — with the privacy interests of end users. Moe says solutions start with dialogue.

“There needs to be an effort to educate everyone on how this works,” she says. “Because I think there’s a big gap in our understanding of what’s going on.”

**WE ARE THE PRODUCT, AND PEOPLE MAY AT SOME POINT GET TIRED OF BEING THE PRODUCT, AND IF THEY DO BECOME TIRED OF BEING THE PRODUCT, THEN THE BUSINESS MODEL IS NO LONGER SUSTAINABLE.”**

“‘We are the product, and people may at some point get tired of being the product,’” he says. “And if they do become tired of being the product, then the business model is no longer sustainable.”

**Alex Yoder**, analytics executive vice president at performance marketing agency Merkle, sees a watershed moment for the industry.

“The Cambridge Analytica scandal is beginning to feel for consumer privacy like the scandals at Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, Tyco and Arthur Andersen felt for consumer trust in accounting practices — and which resulted in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002,” he says.

As a charter member of the Smith Analytics Consortium, Columbia-Md.-based Merkle helps prepare Smith students for the disruption.

“It seems logical that entirely new companies and industries could emerge out of the recent public outcry stemming from concerns about consumer privacy, audience targeting and marketing efforts designed to influence consumer behavior,” Yoder says.

“Many consumers, for example, overlook the benefits of targeted advertising. Besides customized content, they get free or subsidized services like email, video calling, photo sharing and cloud storage. Most people never pay a cent to Facebook, Google, Craigslist, LinkedIn, Snapchat or other tech services, yet they enjoy the connectivity offered.

“‘In a world where targeted advertising is turned off, these companies would have to charge some sort of subscription,’” Moe says.

Privacy advocates might not mind paying a little extra if it meant freedom from digital surveillance.

Some of the downsides of targeted advertising are merely annoying — like when a parent goes on her personal iPad to shop for a child’s birthday gift, and related...
banner ads start showing up on other family devices, spoiling the surprise.

Other potential scenarios are more invasive. Health care organizations, for example, already know when you visit the doctor. If they match that information with your prescription refills, gym memberships and other key metrics, they could practice price discrimination based on the statistical probability of your next medical event.

“Are you comfortable with your health insurance company knowing whether or not you work out, and then giving you a different price based on the information?” Moe asks.

Students in the school’s Master of Science in Marketing Analytics program tackle such questions in a required ethics course led by Moe. They learn the general frame-

work of ethical decision making and then delve into the data collection issue.

Moe says ethical business starts with honesty, so buyers and sellers understand the trade they are making. In data collection this means avoiding games of semantics. If a company promises not to “read” your email, for example, it should not turn around and scan it digitally for keywords.

To get the conversation started in her classroom, Moe challenges students to design an algorithm that would maximize short-term profits in a given scenario like health care. Then the students take a step back and consider the ethical implications.

“It becomes very clear that the best algorithms in terms of profitability will oftentimes step on the toes of privacy issues and data security issues,” Moe says. “We talk about that tradeoff.”

BLAME IT ON THE ALGORITHMS

Moe and her students discuss at least five dilemmas that marketing analysts confront as they move from the classroom to the corporate world. Intentionally or otherwise, available data may be used in the following ways:

1. **Polarizing Communities**
   People see sameness as safety. They don’t need social media to divide themselves into echo chambers. They have been doing that for centuries. But marketing algorithms, which identify and cater to consumer preferences, accelerate and exasperate the process.

   “If you have a consumer profiled to be a certain kind of buyer, and you keep feeding this person content related to that interest, then opportunities for cross-selling are missed and exposure to new products and ideas are limited,” Moe says. “A marketing filter bubble emerges, which narrows your choices.”

   Something similar happens in the realm of political discourse. “If you start clicking on left-wing content or right-wing content, you get more and more of that content,” Moe says. “You get profiled as a left-winger or right-winger, and you stop seeing the other side.”

2. **Promoting Bias**
   Algorithms may also inadvertently promote bias. Unlike humans, who insert emotion into the decision-making process, robots predict the future by looking impassively at the past.

   That’s how machine learning works. But if the past includes discrimination based on race or some other protected identifier, then the bias gets carried forward in the code. “Not because companies are maliciously trying to discriminate,” Moe says. “But because they’re building models that mirror the human nature exhibited and reflected in the data.”

   She cites one example at Airbnb, a vacation housing broker that uses algorithms to recommend prices to property owners. If past rental decisions reflect bias against landlords of color, driving down demand in certain neighborhoods or at certain properties, then recommended prices also come down.

   “All of that bias gets built into the algorithms,” Moe says.
Exploiting Children
Children and other vulnerable populations may be especially susceptible to the power of algorithms. “You can have a healthy conversation about how much data privacy is good for most of the adult population, but the same algorithms that track adults also track minors.”

Calls for Transparency
Moe takes certain steps to maintain a degree of anonymity on her own devices. She avoids the cloud as much as possible. She periodically removes cookies and clears browsing histories. And she mixes up her online viewing habits to ward off filter bubbles.

“‘It’s an active process for me to try and train the algorithms,’” she says. “‘I will click on things that I might not actually be interested in, so I always have that broad-swat view.’

The precautions work to some extent. But Moe says the only way to stop being tracked completely is to detach from the digital world. That’s tricky considering the reach of big tech.

‘‘I don’t think it’s feasible at this point,’’ she says. ‘‘Consumers don’t have a lot of freedom to protect their own privacy.’

Europe has intervened on behalf of consumers with new regulations. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which took effect in May 2018 following a two-year grace period, cracks down on how companies collect and share data.

U.S. policymakers may soon follow, requiring organizations to be upfront about the data they collect and how they use them. If done right, Moe says, regulations could promote fair competition by establishing the same high standards for all organizations.

‘‘Many companies want to be socially responsible,’’ she says. ‘‘But if they do that, they take a hit to their profits because they lose to those who are not. If they are regulated, then it’s an even playing field for everyone.’

The goal would be transparency, so consumers understand the tradeoffs they make when they download an app, participate in a store loyalty program, use a bank card or create a social media profile.

‘‘The very first thing that regulators can do, and it’s what the Europeans have done, is to increase transparency,’’ she says.

Feeding Addictions
Marketing data may also be used to squeeze extra profits from addicts. A bar eventually will close or stop serving drinks. But algorithms do not ease up when they detect unhealthy or compulsive behavior.

Tinder won’t remind you that you’re already married. Amazon won’t warn you that you can’t afford another collectible toy. And Netflix won’t stop streaming the next episode of “Breaking Bad” just because it’s 2 a.m. on a work night.

Moe, who has published research on binge watching, says the Internet is a judgment-free zone that simply detects user preferences and delivers matching content.

“‘If you have a gambling addiction or video gaming addiction, you’re going to exhibit behaviors that indicate high interest — which will generate more and more targeted ads toward you for those topics,’’ Moe says. ‘‘And that’s a problem.’

Merkle already has seen the legislative impact. “Not only do we have GDPR in place in Europe, but California just passed the toughest data privacy law in the U.S., and other states are looking at similar legislation,” Yoder says.

Sarbanes-Oxley disrupted all forms of general accounting, and Yoder predicts something similar in marketing analytics. “New practices and companies that provide oversight will emerge,” he says. “Very clear processes must be in place for direct legal oversight, operational exactitude and audit capability.”
He says ethical and legal debates will revolve around who ultimately owns the data. If website owners have the same rights as real property owners, for example, does that mean they can open their property to the public and observe the behavior of individuals who choose to visit?

Regardless of what emerges in terms of regulation, Yoder says, companies that thrive in the new environment will be those that remember marketing’s oldest rule: The customer is always right.

“What only the most advanced brands are realizing is that it’s not about knowing the individual as much as it is about offering a brand experience that is relevant, coherent and valuable,” he says. “There should be a perceived exchange in value that compels the customer to engage willingly and openly.”

He says this objective can be achieved without violating consumer privacy. “The key is to focus on using data to surprise and delight consumers with messages, offers and other content that resonate with their interests,” he says. “Our expertise in this space will enable our clients to navigate new regulations with less disruption.”

**CHANGEMAKERS**

Yoder says business schools like Maryland Smith have an important role to play in the process.

“As the training ground for future leaders of industry, it is up to institutions like the Smith School to prepare students to tackle questions about where it is appropriate to apply big data and AI,” he says. “Laws and regulations are not going to tell them what to do right now,” she says. “The goal in our program is to teach students how to think through the issues and how to lead team discussions.”

Learning to speak up in a group is key because the modern workplace increasingly emphasizes collaboration. “None of these decisions are made by a single person,” Moe says. “They are always made in teams.”

Moe says her aim is to teach students to think for themselves and to frame their arguments persuasively, so they come to the workplace prepared to lead change.

“Laws and regulations are not going to tell them what to do right now,” she says. “The goal in our program is to teach students how to think through the issues and how to lead team discussions.”
Working With Watson

At the Intersection of Business and Tech

What does a typical workday look like for Kristie Curameng Bradford, MBA ’05? Well, there’s really no such thing — and that’s precisely why she loves her job.

“No days look similar,” says Bradford, business development executive at IBM Watson. “There are so many things I could be doing in one day.”

Her brainy colleague, Watson, is often thought of as the supercomputer that beat out its human counterparts on an episode of “Jeopardy!” in 2011. But artificial intelligence has come a long way since then. Bradford is tasked with figuring out how businesses can optimize Watson’s smarts to stay ahead of the curve.

“I help businesses think about whether they need to grow via partnership, creating a joint venture, or actually acquiring a business outright,” Bradford says. “When you do any of that — whether it’s closing a deal or creating a strategy — the day-to-day looks very different.”

When it comes to the intersection of business and technology, Bradford stresses the importance of both worlds being in constant collaboration.

“If people aren’t aware of that, they should quickly learn how technology is impacting their businesses,” she says. “In my case, you wouldn’t think that somebody in M&A would need to focus on technology — but that’s what we’re all about.”

Her role at IBM Watson provides the perfect opportunity to put her expertise and business acumen to use. But she also gets to be a student of technology who is always learning something new.

“I think one of the beauties for me is I know a lot about strategy and M&A, and they’re teaching me a lot about technologies like AI and blockchain,” Bradford says. “One of the things that attracted me to IBM is that we use the word ‘transform’ and we mean it.”

Take, for example, IBM’s acquisition of Merge, a company that handles and processes medical images. Bradford says IBM didn’t buy those technologies just to be a player in that space. IBM wanted to teach Watson how to “see” the human body in a new light and to help radiologists work more efficiently and effectively.

It was an ideal marriage between IBM Watson’s cognitive computing and Merge’s medical imaging assets and expertise that others might have missed.

And it’s up to Bradford to ensure that similar, mutually beneficial ventures aren’t overlooked.

“When people ask me what it’s like to be a part of this company, it’s interesting because we’re asked to look at the same things people have been looking at, but almost in an upside-down, inside-out way. It’s ‘how can it be’ versus ‘how it is today.’ Those are the fun things that we get to do.”
Itch to Explore Leads to Global Adventures

In the past year Tekisha Harvey, MBA ’08, has visited Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Colombia, Argentina, the Netherlands, Bali, the Philippines, Thailand and Japan. “It’s crazy that this is my life,” she says. The adventures were hard-earned for Harvey, who — after 16 years of climbing the corporate ladder — decided to branch out on her own as a marketing consultant while simultaneously jet-setting across continents. “I wanted flexibility,” Harvey says. “I wanted not to have to wear a suit, I wanted to be creative, I wanted to be coaching or developing others, and I wanted to not have a traditional office.” So how do you go from the typical 9-to-5 to being your own world-traveling boss? Harvey has a few tips for navigating that transition.

EMBRACE THE DESIRE TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

Although she had built a successful career at ConAgra Brands working in shopper marketing, the call to explore new places became impossible to ignore. “I had the seven-year itch,” Harvey says. “After I was promoted, I thought, ‘Things will be different. Before, I worked on up to 10 accounts at a time, and now I have this one large account, so I can really dig in and make changes.’ But I realized that the higher you go, that doesn’t necessarily mean you have more power and authority.” Harvey questioned whether she was in the job for the right reasons. Ultimately, the allure of working for herself won out. “ConAgra was a great experience,” she says. “But I felt like it was over, so I left.”

ASK FOR FEEDBACK OFTEN

Harvey’s first freelance project was a marketing plan for a fitness equipment business owner. One of the challenges she faced early on was realizing that without the barometers of a mega corporation, knowing if you have what it takes can be daunting. “When you’re starting out on your own, there are no hard markers for whether you’re doing a good job,” Harvey says. “I delivered the marketing plan and asked for some candid feedback. Ninety percent was that he liked everything, and 10 percent was how I could improve.” That information was empowering for Harvey. “I thought, ‘Oh, that’s not hard. I get that. I could do that.’ That spurred me on to actually consider marketing consulting as the next step for what I wanted to do on my own,” she says. / MR /

IN HER OWN WORDS

Read about Harvey’s journey to becoming her own boss on her blog at tekishaharvey.com.
I surrounded myself with people doing different things.

/ TEKISHA HARVEY, MBA ’08
STACKSHARE FOUNDER Yonas Beshawred ’09
stopped counting the rejections when he went looking for funding in Silicon Valley. “I got a bunch of no’s,” he says. “I stopped counting after, like, 50. At that point it doesn’t matter. All you need is one yes.”

Now, after raising more than $7 million, his startup is thriving. The company, a Yelp-style social media network for engineers and software developers, builds on the entrepreneurial spirit that his immigrant parents brought from Ethiopia to Silver Spring, Md.

Beshawred says his parents moved to a new country at a young age, learned a new culture and worked multiple jobs to put themselves through Howard University. “Children of immigrants see what their parents go through,” he says. “We have the ability to really start from where they ended.”

Despite the upbringing, Beshawred never thought of himself as an entrepreneur when he came to the University of Maryland. But he had a knack for recognizing problems and finding solutions. One semester, for example, he arranged to have old computers from Van Munching Hall donated to an Ethiopian charity that supports orphanages.

“I had always been starting things and creating things,” he says.

Beshawred also had a knack for computers, which led to an information systems degree at Maryland Smith and later a Master of Science in Human–Computer Interaction at UMD’s College of Information Studies.

In between the programs, Beshawred started his career as a business analyst at Accenture. The Fortune 500 experience looked good on his resume, but he felt pulled in a different direction. “There was nothing that I couldn’t do there,” he says. “It was more about what I wanted to do.”

Eventually, Beshawred followed a Maryland classmate to Silicon Valley, where he joined a startup called Cube as a summer intern. “It was literally 10 guys in a warehouse,” Beshawred says. “It was the typical Silicon Valley experience like you see on TV, where everyone is in one house, basically together, eating pizza and sleeping in bunkbeds.”

During the process he discovered a market gap and began working on StackShare as a side project. He says small companies like Cube and big companies like Accenture face similar challenges when it comes to software purchase decisions. The market is flooded with options, and finding the right tool for the job can be tricky.

“There was no good way to choose technology,” Beshawred says. “That’s when I thought of this idea of bringing together all of these different software tools in one place, and making them accessible to everyone through the power of social media.”

When Beshawred initially went looking for funding, he found himself trying to convince investors that his business model could work. Success came later when he changed his mindset.

“Yes, your job as a fundraiser isn’t to convince skeptics — people who don’t believe in your product or your business,” he says. “It’s to find the people who already believe.” / DJ /
A Collision of Art, Culture and Politics

Conversation mixes with music as the lunch crowd fills Busboys and Poets on a recent weekday.

Books by local authors fill store shelves near the entrance. Paintings by local artists cover the walls. On tap is a full lineup of weekend entertainment: A poetry slam on Friday, the DC Funk Parade on Saturday, and a screening of “Served Like a Girl” on Sunday with guests from the documentary about homeless female veterans.

Andy Shallal, EMBA ’19, founder and owner of the Washington hotspot, feels right at home as he surveys the scene. The restaurant, bookstore and performance venue at 14th Street and V Street NW represents the inclusive gathering place he struggled to find when he immigrated with his parents from Iraq in 1966.

“It is a response to my experience coming to America the first time — being able to find that place where I could feel connected by feeling represented,” he says. “So I wanted a place that is uplifting, where you come in — no matter what background or race or ethnicity you are — you feel a sense of belonging.”

Shallal opened the restaurant and bookstore in 2005, and since then he has added five additional locations from Arlington, Va., to Hyattsville, Md. The chain’s success has been gratifying, but Shallal is not done growing as an entrepreneur and leader.

“If you stop growing, you are no longer a leader,” he says.

That is why he chose the executive MBA program at Maryland Smith. “I could have gone anywhere,” he says. “But I chose to go to Smith because I felt like it was really the strongest program for a leader to be able to engage in.”

As a working professional who attends weekend classes in College Park, Shallal has an opportunity to apply his business education immediately.

“Every weekend that I spend in school, I bring back information on Monday to my team,” he says. “They know. They’ve been waiting, like, every week when I come. They are like, ‘What have you learned today?’ And I share it with them.”

Shallal, who was 10 when he arrived in the United States with no English ability, says the culture shock is what drove him toward art and other individual activities.

“Middle school is already a very complicated place for a teenager-to-be,” he says. “You know they’re going through so much growth and so many hormones and so many things going on. And now you’ve got this new element introduced — language and culture and everything else you have to maneuver and deal with.”

Shallal eventually emerged in a big way. He graduated from Catholic University of America, attended medical school at Howard University, and worked as a medical researcher at the National Institutes of Health.

He also ran for Washington mayor in 2014, founded the Peace Ball inaugural balls, and painted three Washington murals. The largest, at the Institute for Policy Studies on 16th Street NW, is several hundred square feet.

“I love everything that I do,” Shallal says. “Every day is a new day for me. It really is.”
“If you stop growing, you are no longer a leader.”

Andy Shallal
Students, faculty, staff and alumni are invited to share why they are #UMDSmithProud during the second annual Smith Day on Nov. 14, 2018.

Last year, Smith Terps kicked off the inaugural celebration in Van Munching Hall and at satellite campuses in Shady Grove, and Baltimore, Md., and Washington, D.C. In addition, nearly 300 alumni across nine locations around the world celebrated together to help establish this new tradition.

Smith Day 2017 enabled Smith Terps everywhere to share why they are proud, global, driven, fearless and supportive of the Smith community through autograph boards, thank you notes and social media posts. The high level of engagement from the community helped to spread positive messages and garnered over 1.5 million impressions from publicly accessible posts on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

The Smith School will build off last year’s success by establishing a greater virtual presence and bringing Smith Day to more locations as alumni host gatherings in their regions and at their companies.

All members of the Smith community looking to get involved with this year’s event are encouraged to email alumni@rhsmith.umd.edu. Anyone interested in the event can join the conversation online at #UMDSmithProud.

Alumni Zip into Terrapin Adventures

Maryland Smith alumni from class years 1982 to 2012 gathered on June 27, 2018, at Terrapin Adventures in Savage Mill, Md. Matt Baker, MBA ’83, owner and chief adventure officer at Terrapin Adventures, shared how he turned his passion for the outdoors into a successful business. Baker led the alumni in team building activities, followed by a memorable experience on the zip line and giant swing. Afterward, the group dined at Rams Head Tavern.

To view all Smith Alumni events, visit go.umd.edu/alumnievents
of the book is fully revised and updated. Schilit is CEO of Schilit Forensics, a consultancy for institutional investors, based in New York.

/ JOHN INGLESBY ’77 has owned Trinket Depot for more than 21 years. The Washington, D.C.-based company provides promotional products and apparel for corporate clients.

/ GARY D. APPLESTEIN ’79 serves as senior vice president at commercial real estate firm JLL in Baltimore.

/ DENNIS VIA ’79 serves as chief financial officer at NFP Property & Casualty Services in Arizona.

/ MARCY HOFFER BERKOWITZ ’82 is president of promotional products at Harry Hoffer Advertising Specialties in Springfield, N.J.

/ ROBERT ISELE ’83 has worked at the U.S. Department of the Treasury for more than 30 years. In his current role he serves as IRS chief counsel.

/ LEXY KESSLER ’85, lead partner in Aronson’s Government Contract Services Group, was named by The Daily Record as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women for 2018.

/ REESE FEUERMAN ’87 was recognized by the Baltimore Business Journal in 2018 as an outstanding chief financial officer in the Baltimore area. He is CFO at ConnectYourCare, a provider of consumer-directed health care account solutions.

/ KAREN ROBERTSON-KECK, MBA ’87, was appointed vice president of Human Resources at Sheppard Pratt Health System.

/ CYNTHIA THAYER ’88 was promoted to controller for St. John Properties in Baltimore.

/ IRA RAINESS ’89 was named president of Alliance MMA, a sports and media company based in New York.

/ APOORVA GANDHI ’91, vice president for Multicultural Affairs at Marriott International, received the 2018 Washington Business Journal Minority Business Leader Award.

/ DEBBIE (COLACIELLO) PARKER ’91 is senior vice president at Bank of America Merrill Lynch in Charlotte, N.C. In her current role she manages tax credit equity investments.

/ RANDALL CATHELL ’92 was appointed international tax director at accounting firm Cherry Bekaert in Florida.

/ GREG MORROW, MBA ’92, was appointed chief marketing officer at Endologix, a developer and marketer of innovative treatments for aortic disorders.

/ CHRISTINE M. BUCKLEY ’93 is a senior financial associate at RBC Wealth Management in Hunt Valley, Md.

/ ROBERT DELEON ’94 celebrated 20 years at Legg Mason in March 2018. He is currently head of financial planning and analysis support in Columbia, Md.

/ KYLE MOFFATT ’95 was appointed chief accountant in the SEC’s Division of Corporation Finance.

/ LAURIE MCDONALD ’99, vice president of sales at Pandora, was named by The Daily Record as one of Maryland’s Top 100 Women for 2018.

/ CHRISTOPHER DUVALL, MBA ’02, was promoted to senior director at The Chertoff Group, a global advisory firm based in Washington, D.C.

/ DAVID EMERSON, MBA ’02, was elected to the Board of Directors at LCG Associates, a national institutional consulting firm.

/ DAVID CHARTON ’02 was promoted to executive financial services director and first vice president in the Boston office of Morgan Stanley. Charton helps executives manage their stock and option allocation and develops investment strategies.

/ MARC EIMER ’04 released a debut record from Sightline Heights, a new alternative rock project from the Philadelphia area.

/ JAMES MUNUHE ’05 was promoted to partner at Baker Tilly, where he specializes in tax compliance, transaction tax planning and other advisory services.

/ CHRISTIAN FLEMING, MBA ’05, was appointed to vice president of Asset Management at Federal Realty Investment Trust.

/ DAVID LAX ’06 was promoted to vice president of Marketing & Brand for Factory Athletics.

/ JERRY GODWIN, EMBA ’07, was selected to complete a Fulbright Scholar Specialist Program with the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in Mauritius. Godwin was selected based on his work as a tech startup entrepreneur. The title of his project was, “Setting Up the Technology Business Incubator at the University of Mauritius.”
Chappaquiddick Producer Hosts Advance Screening

Film producer and former Major League Baseball pitcher Mark Ciardi ’83 hosted an advance screening of his film, “Chappaquiddick,” on March 12, 2018, in the Stamp Student Union.

Afterward, Ciardi answered questions about the film, which depicts Sen. Ted Kennedy’s involvement in a 1969 car collision that resulted in the drowning of campaign specialist Mary Jo Kopechne.

“It’s really interesting to get a peek behind the curtain of power,” Ciardi said during the Q&A. “Really, the movie is about the abuse of power, more than anything.”

He said Kopechne’s survivors saw the film and appreciated her portrayal as a smart, funny woman. “She finally got a voice,” Ciardi said. “I think the family appreciated that we humanized her, and we made her a living, breathing person” instead of just being “the girl who died in Chappaquiddick.”

Ciardi, co-founder and CEO of Apex Entertainment, serves on the University of Maryland’s Board of Trustees and delivered the university’s spring 2017 commencement address.

Past productions for Ciardi include “Million Dollar Arm,” “Secretariat,” “Invincible,” “The Rookie,” “The Game Plan,” “McFarland, USA” and “Miracle,” as well as his Emmy award-winning ESPN 30 for 30 documentary, “Big Shot.”

Before entering the entertainment industry, Ciardi played one season with the Milwaukee Brewers. / D.J./
HAL, the soft-spoken virtual assistant in “2001: A Space Odyssey,” has spooked moviegoers for 50 years. Despite claims of being “foolproof and incapable of error,” the machine commits mutiny and starts killing humans. A glitch like that is hard to overlook.

Artificial intelligence has come a long way since 1968. But glitches still emerge as market forces bring futuristic technology from the big screen to the real world.

The Cambridge Analytica scandal in spring 2018, for example, exposed consumer privacy risks on Facebook. High-profile breaches at Target, Yahoo and Equifax have exposed other problems related to data security.

The threats are real. But so are the opportunities for advancing technology.

Analysts today routinely crunch thousands of data points per second in projects that would have required room-sized supercomputers only a few years ago. Now the work can be done on ordinary laptops and handheld devices.

The results have been dramatic in health care, transportation, telecommunication and nearly every other quality-of-life measure.

A Global Digital Statshot from We Are Global and Hootsuite estimates that two-thirds of the world’s inhabitants now carry mobile phones, and more than half have internet access — giving billions of people more technology in their pockets than the richest tycoons and monarchs of past generations.

Standards of living have improved. But science fiction writers still get in our heads with warnings about rogue or pervasive technology.

Organizations need leaders who recognize the threats without losing sight of the opportunities. Maryland Smith embraces the challenge of bridging the gap.

Professors in every department have established themselves as pioneers in business analytics, machine learning and statistical modeling. Relying on their expertise, the school recently revamped its MBA curriculum and expanded its menu of specialty masters’ programs to emphasize data-driven decision making analytics.

Students need skills to navigate a world disrupted by technology. So they learn to solve equations, read spreadsheets and speak to computers.

At the same time, business students need soft skills to gain a comparative advantage over mathematicians, statisticians and computer scientists who also know how to work with numbers.

Smith professor Frank Alt, academic director of the school’s Master of Science in Business Analytics program, says the goal is to prepare leaders who can frame solutions in business terms and communicate opportunities to nontechnical managers.

Business at its core is about people, not machines. So Smith students learn design thinking, emotional intelligence, strategy, negotiation and active listening. They also learn ethics and how to articulate unpopular and risky positions.

Modern machines like Alexa, Siri and Watson do amazing things. But they need humans with humility, courage and the right mix of hard and soft skills to point them in the right direction.

Modern machines like Alexa, Siri and Watson do amazing things. But they need humans with humility, courage and the right mix of hard and soft skills to point them in the right direction.

Regards,

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