

2017 Data Literacy Workshop at New York Hall of Science

Demonstrating the Need for a Multi-Sector Approach

Workshop participants articulated a number of important outcomes of a collaborative effort between representatives of academia, industry, and government in the Northeast region of the U.S.: “I think a multi-sector collaboration would help create well-defined need and pave the way for a pipeline from K-12 education to the responsible use of big data in society and citizenship.” Participants described the desired outcomes of the initiative, which justified the need for a multi-sector approach:

- The ability to view and solve problems collaboratively;
- An acknowledgment of diverse perspectives, approaches, and methodologies (as one participant said, “a culture of inclusion and diversity in data science in the region”);
- Integration of big data literacy education and training initiatives across disciplinary fields;
- The development of a unified framework and sustainable infrastructure that will allow for joint project implementation and oversight;
- Support for a “real-world research opportunity,” where people make data-smart decisions in non-partisan ways; and
- Critical thinking and awareness of biases inherent in the news media landscape.

Inclusivity

Participants were enthusiastic not only about their own involvement, but also of the broadest possible attempt at inclusivity, citing the role of ethics and “how big data literacy can serve civic and democratic engagement.” One had come from an underserved population and hoped to continue to engage that community by “being a voice so their values and insights are heard.”

Community of Practice Development

Early evidence of interaction related to each of the five Community of Practice (CoP) cycles was observed during the workshop. Observations of participants at this early stage were promising and will assist the project team in developing indicators for each stage of the full CoP. Comments made by participants suggested many in the group share a commitment to the initiative.