

NITheCS COLLOQUIUM: DIRISA: A National Infrastructure for Data Democracy

Dr Anwar Vahed (Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa)

Monday, 19 February 2024 | 16h00 – 17h00 SAST

Venue: Neelsie Cinema, Stellenbosch University, and online

--- Cheese and wine will be served at the venue ---

ABSTRACT

Research data is used and generated by players in the research and innovation ecosystem, and has to be managed to harness its value in the National System of Innovation (NSI). DIRISA (Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa) is a relatively recent addition to the National Integrated Cyber Infrastructure System (NICIS).

In line with the mandate of NICIS, DIRISA focuses on value adding, complementary offerings by differentiating itself through a portfolio of cloud-based services for research data management and data intensive research. The main objective of DIRISA is the provision of a national research data infrastructure together with these services. These are briefly presented together with activities implementing the other objectives of DIRISA. In conclusion, the value of emergent notions of FAIR and Open Data are considered in the context of strategic priorities.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Anwar Vahed is the director of the Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa (DIRISA). He manages the implementation of a national research data infrastructure that supports data intensive research, and coordinates the development of relevant expertise and strategies, as well as the implementation of policies for research data management. DIRISA, together with the Centre for High Performance Computing (CHPC) and the South African Research Network (SANReN), comprises the technology component of the National Integrated Cyberinfrastructure System of South Africa.

Anwar's professional career spans leadership, managerial and capacity development roles in diverse academic, research and production ICT environments. He is a computer scientist with more than 20 years' experience in academia, and in research and development in the fields of data science, artificial intelligence, machine learning, artificial neural networks and research data management. He was Principal Researcher and the Research Group Leader of the ICT for Earth Observation Research Group at the CSIR and prior to joining the CSIR, he managed the data and information delivery systems of Statistics SA, and chaired the Department of Computer Science at the University of the Western Cape..

He has developed the national strategy for research Big Data, is editor of data science journals and serves on several local and international committees in the data sciences, including the Research Data Alliance (RDA), US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and CODATA.



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