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Researching What Matters With Community Members: Session Introduction

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Data Day 2015

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Motivation: Community-engaged data analytics and informatics for social change

• Data and technology change lives, but impacts most often perceived via consumption of market-provided goods and services
• Government uses data and technology extensively, but impacts usually aggregate in nature, not targeted at specific communities
• Inequality and structural barriers to economic and social progress increasing in the U.S.
• How can data, analytics and information technology support individual and group opportunity, engagement, action for social justice?
Participatory action research & Community-based participatory research: Key concepts

- Process by which researchers engage with community members to jointly, collectively, articulate problems in the real world to be solved, and identify ways to solve them using research
- Iterative, inductive, inclusive, critical
- Not traditional, ‘objective’ research whose eventual application and utility may be shown by someone else
- Diverse applications:
  - Topic areas: Education, health, economic development
  - Disciplines: Urban and community planning; community-based operations research
PAR & CBPR definitions

Participatory action research:
Both epistemology and a methodological approach for creating knowledge that is rooted in the belief that those most impacted by research should take the lead in framing the questions, design, methods, analysis and determining what products and actions might be the most useful in effecting change. (Maria Torre, 2009)

Community-based participatory research:
An applied collaborative approach that enables community residents to more actively participate in the full spectrum of research (from conception – design – conduct – analysis – interpretation – conclusions – communication of results) with a goal of influencing change in community health, systems, programs or policies…It is an orientation to research which equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. (National Institutes of Health, 2015)
PAR process - 1

![Diagram of the PAR process]

- **Cycle 1**
  - Engage with real world setting/situation
  - Analyse and reflecting on action/intervention
  - Defining the issue: Initial observations & existing data
  - Taking action/intervening
  - Planning action/intervention

- **Cycle 2**
  - (Re)engage with real world setting/situation
  - Analysing & Reflecting
  - Defining the issue: Initial observations & existing data
  - Taking action/intervening
  - Planning action/intervention

- **State 1**
  - Engage with real world setting/situation
  - Analyse and reflecting on action/intervention

- **State 2**
  - Taking action/intervening
  - Planning action/intervention

**Time**
PAR process - 2

Fig. 1. Participatory Action Research design in Kahnawake.
How do we integrate data, technology and community into applied research?

Focus on developing innovative technologies to improve lives and foster participation for individuals and groups

- Community Informatics
- Urban Informatics

Adapt engaged social science methodologies to address ICT:

- Action Research
- Design Science Research
- Participatory Action Design Research

Technology-infused data collection and analysis for community problem-solving:

- Community-based measures
- Community data analytics & information technology
What will this session achieve?

The four speakers will answer the question:

How can projects and initiatives that involve data, technology and analytics, inspired by PAR and related methods, and made possible through a commitment to community engagement, generate findings that can make a difference in the lives of underserved and underrepresented communities, urban communities and communities of color?

We hope to inspire students, researchers and professionals to help us develop this new area of inquiry and enhance research and practice.