



# CASE STUDY

21st ACM SIGKDD Conference on  
Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining



## Delegates

1,192 delegates – the second largest KDD in 21 years  
From 39 countries, attracting large contingents from North America, China and Australia  
Over one quarter of delegates were from Asia

## Date

10-13 August 2015

## Venue

Hilton Sydney

## Program highlights

- Largest technical program ever, featuring 43 technical sessions, 228 paper presentations, four keynote speakers, 11 industry and government talks, 15 workshops and 12 tutorials
- Highest level of sponsorship ever achieved from 27 organisations such as Google and Facebook, and the greatest support ever received from local government
- Largest number of student travel awards (89 students)
- Over 50 organising committee members and 120 volunteers involved in the preparation and arrangements of KDD2015.

**75%**  
OF KDD15 DELEGATES  
WERE INTERNATIONAL



**61%** INCREASE ON FORECAST DELEGATE NUMBERS

*“KDD2015 was the largest big data-related event in Australia’s history that engaged academia, industry and government from local, regional and global communities.”*

- Professor Longbing Cao, General Co-Chair for KDD2015 and the Director of IDA

The world’s foremost researchers and practitioners from data mining, knowledge discovery, data analytics and the big data sector congregated in Sydney for the 21st Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Special Interest Group (SIG) on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining conference (KDD15). The conference covered sectors including education, public policy, industry, government, healthcare, e-commerce, telecommunications, law and non-profit.

Considered the world’s premier conference in big data and data mining, KDD2015 was the first Australian edition of the largest international conference in data analytics and only the second time it had been held in the Asia-Pacific region.

Typically held in the northern hemisphere, KDD15 offered an opportunity for local industry, academia and government to engage in a once-in-a-lifetime event with international counterparts and experts.

The co-located Big Data Summit (BDS15), held 9-10 August, attracted 450 registrations, marking the largest big data forum in Australia that bridges the gaps between academia, industry and government in big data, data science, industrial transformation and data economy. It was the first time the event widely engaged with both local and regional professional groups, including the Australia and New Zealand Chapter, the Indian Chapter and the China Computer Foundation.

The social program included an opening and awards ceremony in Hilton Sydney’s grand ballroom, Microsoft’s KDD Kick-Off Reception at the Zeta Bar in the Hilton and the KDD Banquet and Business Meeting on the final evening at the Dockside Pavilion in Darling Harbour.

#### **Outcomes and measurable impacts**

KDD15 in Sydney was the second largest KDD conference in its 21-year history with 1,192 registrations, representing a 61 per cent increase on the delegate numbers forecast by the local organising committee.

The United States represented the largest delegation with 382 confirmed delegates in attendance. Australia and China followed with 292 and 115 delegates, respectively, and there were also large contingents from Germany, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Japan and South Korea. By region, Asia represented the majority share with one quarter of delegates.

In Sydney, KDD15 garnered the highest level of sponsorship in its 21-year history from 27 organisations such as Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, SAS and Microsoft. High-profile speakers included academics from Stanford, Cornell and MIT, and industry heavyweights such as Google, HP, Alibaba, Huawei and Groupm.

The success of KDD15 also opened new opportunities to significantly boost Australia’s data innovation, economy and education through an international and cross-disciplinary approach. It helped to raise the profile of local industry representatives from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and its Advanced Analytics Institute (AAI), and the International Institute of Data and Analytics (IDA).

#### **Partnering for success**

When Sydney was confirmed as host city for KDD15 in 2013, Business Events Sydney (BESydney) worked with the local organising committee and Tourism Australia to immediately launch a delegate boosting program. Raising the profile of the upcoming Sydney conference, these activities included pre-conference promotion at events in Shanghai and Shenzhen with tailored marketing collateral and giveaways, marketing videos in English and Chinese for the conference website, and advertorial articles written by Professor Longbing Cao, General Co-Chair for KDD2015 and the Director of IDA, in key industry journals in China and India.

New South Wales (NSW) Government engagement, assisted by BESydney, included the Hon. Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, addressing delegates during the banquet dinner. That

same week the minister had launched Digital Plus, a plan that includes new policy actions, including development frameworks for enterprise architecture, telecommunications and a new roadmap for accelerating to a fully digital government. Minister Dominello also provided a welcome speech for BDS15.

Other government support, delivered with BESydney’s assistance, included the NSW Premier, the Hon. Mike Baird MP, providing a welcome message in the conference handbook for delegates, and an introduction to NSW Trade & Investment and the State’s tourism body, Destination NSW.

“On behalf of KDD2015 and BDS15 organising committee, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to BESydney for the great support and to the relevant agencies and departments of NSW for the tremendous commitment to KDD2015,” said Professor Cao. “Hosting KDD2015, the first Australian edition of KDD, is a very wonderful experience, and it has shown that it is not necessarily risky to organise large events such as KDD15 in Sydney, despite initial concerns on distance, isolation and the small population of Australia.”

The successful organisation of KDD15 and BDS15 in Sydney will substantially lift the international leadership of Australian community, and boost data-driven innovation, applications and collaborations between Australia and regional and global communities.

#### **Events shine in Sydney**

Named the world’s most reputable city in 2013, Sydney rivals its global contemporaries as a leading centre for business, leisure and culture. It’s the meeting place of people, opinions and ideas, where inspired solutions flourish.

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