



معهد قطر لبحوث الحوسبة  
Qatar Computing Research Institute  
Member of Qatar Foundation

Press Release

# QCRI partners with the University of Chicago to promote using data skills for social good

## *Catalyzing positive social change through advanced computing research*

**Doha, Qatar, 01 July 2013:**

How can we use data to make the world a better place? How will the next generation of data scientists be trained to take on projects with real-world impacts in energy, health care, public safety, education, transportation and other sectors?

Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) has partnered with the University of Chicago as part of the Eric & Wendy Schmidt Data Science for Social Good summer fellowship program (DSSG), where 36 aspiring data scientists will work closely with experts in data mining, machine learning and data science projects to make progress on these questions.

According to Dr. Patrick Meier, Director of Social Innovation at QCRI, "We are collaborating with our colleagues at the University of Chicago because our principles and visions are aligned. Advanced Computing can bring about social good, social change, particularly in the context of poverty alleviation and humanitarian action."

The fellowship program is organized by former Obama for America 2012 Chief Data Scientist Rayid Ghani, funded by Eric Schmidt, Chairman of Google, and led by a team from the Computation Institute and the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. The fellows will work with government and non-profit organizations to solve real world, difficult data problems.

"There are a lot of people really excited about data and analytics as well as making a social impact, but they don't even know where to start," Ghani said. "The goal of this fellowship is to solve concrete problems and create a long-term culture where data scientists are thinking about social challenges."

QCRI has contributed one of the projects that will be addressed as part of the DSSG fellowship program – "Measuring Disaster Damage with Tweets." This experimental project, which is part of QCRI's Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response (AIDR) project, aims to answer a difficult question: how well can social media be used to detect the damage wrought by natural disasters? Through correlating tweets about damage and casualties during Hurricane Sandy, and other recent disasters, with hard data about the destruction, the goal of the project is to explore to what extent social media might allow earlier and more economical damage assessment and disaster response.

QCRI has plans to bring the Data Science for Social Good program to Qatar in 2014, engaging aspiring data scientists from the region. The Qatar-based fellows program will focus on applying data science to promote social good projects in the Arab World and beyond.

QCRI is working on several key humanitarian and development projects in the region and around the globe in partnership with the United Nations, Red Cross, World Bank and others, balancing its commitment to positive social change with a vision to become a world-class institute for advanced computing research. These projects support the endeavours of Qatar Foundation's Research and Development enterprise to build Qatar into a leading center for research and development excellence and innovation.

For more information on QCRI programs or its research projects in Social Innovation, visit [www.qcri.qa](http://www.qcri.qa). For more information about the Data Science for Social Good summer fellowship program, visit [www.dssg.io](http://www.dssg.io).

ENDS

**For more information, please contact:**

Kimberly Mathern  
QCRI Communications Manager  
Tel: +(974) 4454 2515  
Mob: +(974) 6645 5177  
Email: [kmathern@qf.org.qa](mailto:kmathern@qf.org.qa)

**For more information about Data Science for Social Good, please contact:**

Rob Mitchum  
Communications Manager, Computation Institute  
Tel: +1 (773) 484 9890  
Email: [rmitchum@ci.uchicago.edu](mailto:rmitchum@ci.uchicago.edu)

**About Qatar Computing Research Institute**

Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) was established in 2010 by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar's transformation from a hydrocarbon-based economy to knowledge-based economy.

QCRI is a national research institute supporting Qatar Foundation's mission to build Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by focusing on large-scale computing challenges that address national priorities for growth and development.

In doing this, QCRI conducts world-class multidisciplinary computing research that is relevant to the needs of Qatar, the wider Arab region, and the world. It performs cutting-edge research in such areas as Arabic language technologies, social computing, data analytics, and cloud computing.

The research conducted at QCRI is aligned with the Qatar National Research Strategy and supports the strategic priorities outlined in the Qatar National Vision 2030. For more information, please visit [www.qcri.qa](http://www.qcri.qa).