Seminar/Talk

Dr. Salil Vadhan "Differential privacy: from theory to practice and back"

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Harvard University

Host: Monika Henzinger

Since it was introduced in 2006 by theoretical computer scientists Dwork, McSherry, Nissim, and Smith, differential privacy has become the leading framework for ensuring that individual-level information is not leaked through statistical releases or machine learning models built from sensitive datasets. In addition to a rich theoretical literature, differential privacy has also started to make the transition to practice, with large-scale applications by the US Census Bureau and technology companies like Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Meta. After giving some of this background, I will describe OpenDP, a community effort to advance the practice of differential privacy that we have been building over the past few years. In particular, OpenDP is developing a trustworthy and open-source suite of differential privacy tools that can be easily adopted by custodians of sensitive data to make it available for research and exploration in the public interest. Finally, I will give a taste of some of the intriguing research questions that this effort to bring differential privacy to practice has raised.Bio: Salil Vadhan is the Vicky Joseph Professor of Computer Science and Applied Mathematics at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, and Faculty Co-director of the OpenDP open-source software project. Vadhans research in theoretical computer science spans computational complexity, data privacy, and cryptography.His honors include a Simons Investigator Award, a Gdel Prize, a Harvard College Professorship, and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 02:00pm - 03:30pm
Raiffeisen Lecture Hall, Central Building

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