

A Reflection Report for Attendance at First Nepal Winter School in AI - Kathmandu, Nepal

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First Nepal Winter School in AI

This is a summary of my travel report to Kathmandu, Nepal for the 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI. The First Nepal Winter School in AI was held in the beautiful himalayan city of Kathmandu, at Prime College campus, from December 20 to 30, 2018.

The First Nepal Winter School in AI consisted of series of lectures, lab sessions, and scientific paper reading/writing sessions given by invited world-class experts. The experts include a number of distinguished experts from world's leading university like MIT, Stanford, CMU, New York University, Kings College London, University College, London, University of Montreal, Canada etc. and have good knowledge of the teaching methodology and the key gaps that need to be filled. The audience were the undergraduate students, Graduate students, Researchers, Engineers, Scientists from Several Academia and Industry.

The main objectives of First Nepal Winter School in AI was:

- Provide students/professionals with the prerequisite fundamentals of mathematics, statistics, programming and paper reading skills required for starting a career in AI research.
- Provide overview of state-of-the-art research in ML and AI.
- Inspire early stage researchers to take on challenging high impact AI problems in visual recognition, natural language processing, medical science etc.
- Provide a venue for sharing and discussing cutting-edge technological advances in AI among both veteran and young researchers from around the world.
- Create new opportunities for the participants and play an important role in democratizing AI by inspiring the next generation of leaders in AI from developing countries.

As part of the winter school, there were presentations by invited researchers to educate the audience like us on both the basics and recent advancements in Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Optimization, Big Data, Reinforcement Learning, Graphical Modeling etc. Most of the presentations were meant to encourage collaborations and discussions on related research topics among different university students, research groups and industry partners.

It was an amazing experience to attend this winter school in Nepal as i had an opportunity to learn the mathematics of probability and statistics and refresh whatever i have learned throughout my Master and PhD studies. For me, as i am doing my PhD research on IoT, it was also interesting, as i got to know to apply ML and AI algorithms on IoT data to solve the real-life problems. I also got the opportunity to explore Nepal.

Admission to this winter school was highly competitive as only top 100 students (out of more than 600 applications) got the opportunity to attend this winter school. From Norway and COINS, I along with my fellow COINS member Mr. Debesh Jha who is also a PhD student at Simula was selected for this amazing winter school. I had a fun learning session with Debesh and other fellow participants.

I took this opportunity to introduce our COINS project to the participants of the First Winter School in AI in Kathmandu, Nepal. I have made networking with the renowned speakers and intelligent participants of the winter school which i believe will improve the visibility of our COINS project. After introducing what COINS Research School of Computer and Information Security is all about, i have invited some of the researchers to take part in some of our COINS Research School activities. In addition to that, i have also discussed my PhD research ideas with the distinguish speakers from academia and industry.

For detailed information about the events, please visit this link:
<https://nepalschool.naamii.com.np/program>

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank COINS for sponsoring me to attend this exciting winter school.

Below are the some pictures which i took during the events.

Concluding Remarks

Attending the 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI has definitely offered me a strong cognitive about ML and AI research with a focus on IoT and lot of fun having new friendship with great researchers at the same time. It also gave me an opportunity to explore magnificent and naturally beautiful Nepal. So, I give my strongest recommendation to attend this winter school in future.



Figure 1: Ashish Representing COINS at the 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI



Figure 2: Attending 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI - Ashish Rauniyar (Left) and Debesh Jha (Right)



Figure 3: Ashish and Debesh from COINS with Fellow Participants from Winter School



Figure 4: Ashish with Event Coordinator (Dikshya Singh) at the 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI



Figure 5: Session Atmosphere at the 2018 First Nepal Winter School in AI