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Ms. Whitcomb

ISM 2

30 October 2022

Interview Assessment #8

Name of Professional: Yanfu Zhu

Profession/Title: Senior Data Scientist

Business/Company name: Walmart

Date of Interview: 10/10/2022

Assessment:

My second interview was with Mr. Zhu, a senior data scientist at Walmart. Through this interview, I hoped to learn about what I can do in natural language processing (NLP), the work of data scientists, and the applications of machine learning and natural language processing in my future ISM product. During the interview, I gained a great understanding of what steps I can take next to be more involved in the applications of machine learning and specifically, NLP.

I first discussed with Mr. Zhu his work as a data scientist in various companies such as JP Morgan Chase and Walmart. We had a great conversation about the importance of understanding the business case as a data scientist and machine learning engineer. Something new that was extremely fascinating was Mr. Zhu's emphasis on learning systems design as a machine learning engineer. It has become his main goal in his career, and I really agree that it is a very critical aspect of machine learning! I really appreciate his point of view on the extreme importance of systems design as it is the main function that enables programmers to implement their programs into the entire ecosystem of the business. It's the "Big Picture" of computer science and this also

connects to my last interview with Mr. Moini on the need to learn about the real implementation of NLP models that people can actually use. Figuring out the deployment and UI design of NLP models could be extremely beneficial in giving me a headstart in the field to learn such complex difficulties regarding latency and efficiency. Based on my interviews and research, I now really want to create a fully working product using my learnings from my original work this semester. It will help me have a greater awareness of the real uses of machine learning and will provide me with the necessary experience in ISM to innovate in the future! I also requested some resources for projects that I could use to learn more about natural language processing applications to help myself with my original work.

I found out a lot about careers in the field of machine learning in both academia and industry through the interview. I learned about the importance of understanding theory in both academia and industry which connects to my previous interviews with other business professionals. However, an important distinction that I was able to make was that theory in industry, while required for understanding, isn't the most important aspect. It's actually understanding the business model that needs changes through machine learning. Learning the business is the most useful to actually determine a plausible solution that is efficient and can help the business grow and be successful. While my ISM experiences from last year have helped me develop a technical skillset in machine learning, I have yet to explore creating a working product that is fully functional and well-integrated to solve a real-world problem. I believe that my experiences in DECA from last year will actually help me tremendously as I already have a solid understanding of business cases and the knowledge necessary to get a good grasp of businesses and their needs. Thus, I decided to really focus on this aspect as I grow in my pursuit of machine learning in ISM and beyond!

I plan to work on the NLP side for machine translation and language prediction for the next few weeks in ISM to understand and apply machine learning in real-world contexts!

Overall, I felt that the session was really helpful in guiding me to learn more about careers in machine learning and the applications of machine learning that I could focus on with projects. I want to use this acquired practical knowledge to create a sophisticated product that can be used in the real world. I aspire to continue enhancing my understanding of NLP through research papers, Hugging Face, and my original work!