Critical Review

of the talk
Data-Driven Engineering Modeling: Is it a Reinvention of Old Techniques or a Genuine New Paradigm?

given by
Professor Kwang-Chun Park

In classical communication theory, there are five most important elements: source, receiver, channel, message and encoding (i.e the language). Although much could be said about me, the receiver; it is out of control of Professor Park and therefore I skipped it in my analysis. All other elements, however, I do analyse and give what I think is a fair assessment.

The source

Professor Park showed himself as very knowledgeable on the topic at hand as well as the many topics that he touched on. He showed passion for his research and a will to change the world, a very positive outlook that he managed to transmit to the audience; keeping us listening him due to his particular way of approaching research and teaching.

The channel

In such a talk the channel is oftentimes as much audible as it is visual. The presenter talked about many topics that could be complicated but he managed to simplify them to the point they didn't require much visual support, and so the slides were not crucial. Despite this, he managed to make them quite noticeable due to their heavy text content. In some cases the font was too small to read; and the color scheme too bright.

The message

When I read the title I was excited to learn about a topic I had never encountered before. Unfortunately, as I am writing this I cannot say I know more about Data Driven Modelling than what I knew before the talk. Professor Park touched on many subjects but failed to address perhaps the most important one: *What is* data driven modelling?

Another issue I see with the talk is the way in which he digressed into tangential topics without seeming to build up to a conclusion from them, somewhat reminiscent of an informal chat with friends instead of an academic talk. Close to the end, he came up with the conclusion that Data Driven Modelling should be taught in undergrad courses, all without any supporting arguments.

The language

In general I feel that commenting on a speakers command of the language spoken is a low-hanging fruit, since it is often used to attack a speaker without addressing the speech. In this case, however, the speakers poor command of the English language became an impediment to proper understanding of his message.

Conclusion

All in all, I left the room rather unsatisfied. The topic seemed interesting and Professor Park appeared to be someone from whom one can learn a lot; thus I was ready for a challenging and formative talk, much like the other ones I've assisted to as part of this course. Instead, Professor Park failed to reach any depth in favour of jumping from topic to topic without teaching much about any of them.