

Data science now available at high school level

The Explore Data Science Academy (EDSA) is launching an online course and a series of data science competitions aimed at making 'job future' skills available to South African high school students.



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From 11 February 2019, students in Grades 10 - 12 can access 'Data Science for High School' online, which teaches the fundamentals of data science and exposes students to Python programming, data visualisation and some basic machine learning algorithms.

"As an Academy we're concerned that vital future skills are not being taught at our high schools," said Shaun Dippnall, a co-founder of the Explore Data Science Academy.

"The jobs of the future are very different to today," Dippnall added. "To succeed in 2025, youngsters will need to be creative problem solvers who write code and are able to solve complex software algorithms."

Although the course is purely online, instruction material is supplemented by videos and assessments to help guide the student. Regular testing will advise learners of their progress and provide necessary feedback.

Commenting on the relevance of the course to high school students, Dave Strugnell, EDSA co-founder says: “South Africa’s youth should be learning data science skills from as early an age as possible. In many countries these skills have been introduced into the syllabus at primary school level already.”

Competitions

In addition to the online course, Explore will be holding two competitions later this year, which will involve scholars competing against each other in order to solve complex problems using data science techniques. Entrance is free.

“These will be Kaggle-style competitions where we give scholars a problem, as well supportive data, and a time period to solve it. Whoever builds the best algorithm wins,” says Aidan Helmbold, another Explore co-founder.

The winner per competition will earn R10,000. Second prize is R5,000 and third prize is R2,500.

For more information, visit: www.explore-datascience.net/online-detail?id=1

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