CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR SERIES

NEDRA ABRECHT

Wednesday, November 15, 2017
SDE, BI & Big Data, Zillow

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ABSTRACT: The software industry has evolved over the years, from simple data collection and user interaction to smart data collection and business reporting to what we know as "big data" today. In fact, big data is considered the new oil, driving more decisions and algorithms than you can imagine. The impact data has on all of our lives is immense and pervasive. The amount of data being collected and used is mind-boggling. This industry is on the precipice of new AI technology and implementations unlike humanity has ever seen before, all powered by data. Several career paths in big data are much more naturally suited to the chemical engineering skillset than the computer science skillset. In my presentation, I will talk about how data has evolved in the software industry, how it is being used today, and how a chemical engineering degree can equip you with skills to become a data scientist, data engineer, or machine learning engineer better than any computer science degree will provide.

LECTURE 02:30 • BAG 261
RECEPTION 3:30• Benson Lobby

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BIOGRAPHY: Nedra is an engineer at heart. Always has been, always will be. She loves nothing more than building things: houses, businesses, children, and code to name a few. Creating something from nothing is the primary motivation for the things she focuses on in life.

Nedra sort of fell into coding during the dot-com days. Not wanting to leave Seattle, and the Puget Sound area being short on traditional chemical engineering jobs, she taught herself coding and how to work with data. Her career has spanned a number of industries, from insurance to marketing to real estate, but every one dealing with the generation, management, and contextualizing of data for businesses. Nedra's latest gig is working in the data science and engineering group at Zillow as a Data Engineer. You know. The Zestimate people. If you don't, your parents do.

Not to be limited to a career in tech, Nedra built the house she and her family currently reside in and recently purchased a 3-location franchise. She has worked on many side gigs over the years, most recently a "high velocity" trading bot for crypto currencies with a fellow like-minded developer. Nedra also thinks it's a little weird to talk about herself in the third person.