



MULTICHOICE AND UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
PARTNER TO FOSTER TECHNOLOGY TALENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

MultiChoice South Africa and the University of Pretoria today announced a partnership, intended to develop and sustain scarce Artificial Intelligence, and specifically Machine Learning technology skills in South Africa. This partnership will see MultiChoice sponsoring a Research Chair of Machine Learning at the University of Pretoria.

The field of Artificial Intelligence and specifically Machine and Deep Learning, is key to the Fourth Industrial revolution and a truly digital future. There is a severe skills shortage world-wide, and even more so in Africa – world-wide there are only 6000 PhD's with little experience and 20 000 skilled pool of talent, with 30% of global pool of talent coming from only 6 organisations.

MultiChoice has identified opportunities for Artificial Intelligence and specifically Machine and Deep Learning to add value to their business ranging from content selection, automated editing and archiving, content recommendations, natural language processing in their customer care platforms and automated piracy detection to name only a few examples. As this is a very specialised field, partnering with an academic institute, is a forward-looking way to nurture these skills in South Africa.

MultiChoice South Africa CEO, Calvo Mawela said the chair will help MultiChoice to grow its pool of talent in engineering, to help the company build its digital future: "Technology and innovation is part of our DNA as a company, so this is a natural extension to ensure we remain at the forefront of developments. This chair will enable us to tap into the largest and highest internationally ranked local engineering school with an excellent transformation record. And more importantly, we'll make a significant contribution to South Africa to compete on an international stage in the new digital future."

This Research Chair, fully funded by MultiChoice, will act as a bridge between the two partners to guide them on the projects and research topics to be chosen for sponsorship. It will also include awarding bursaries and support students at all levels. The projects will range from final year and Honours projects through to Masters and PhD degrees in Engineering, Data Science or Computer Science.

Speaking at the launch of the chair at the University of Pretoria today, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Buti Manamela, "Our country is full aboard the Fourth Industrial revolution train, and this chapter, which illustrates the partnership between the private and public sector, is indicative of our commitment to place our country at the Centre of development. Yes, there should be technological advancement and development, and as government, we believe in guiding this in a more people centered fashion. We are pleased that this is taking shape in this manner. And hope to see many more collaborations between the public and the private sector."

"Technology is evolving every day on an exponential scale," said Prof Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor and Principal from the University of Pretoria. "It's vital educational institutions invest in researching and educating students about the next waves of technology. We're thrilled to have found a partner who supports us in developing high level skills and enhancing technology education in South Africa so as to be at the forefront in the 4th Industrial Revolution."