



## The 2015 CRT Foundation - Lagrange Prize awarded to Panos Ipeirotis and Jure Leskovec

**The first and most important international recognition in the field of complex systems  
awarded to two young leading figures in the new frontiers of scientific research,  
which encompasses Big Data, crowdsourcing and social media**

Europe, America, Big Data, innovation. These are some of the key words that have characterised the 2015 edition of the **CRT Foundation – Lagrange Prize**, which commends two scientists who are gaining international recognition for their research in the field of Complexity Science. The winners are **Panos Ipeirotis** and **Jure Leskovec**: both of European origin (Ipeirotis was born in Greece, Leskovec in Slovenia), both are currently working in the United States (the former in New York, the latter in California), both are key players in a dynamic and stimulating area of research in which IT systems are interconnected with Big Data and with the daily, collective, increasingly widespread use that people make of digital technologies, including social media and crowdsourcing.

Associate Professor and George A. Kellner Faculty Fellow at the Department of Information, Operations and Management Sciences at Leonard Stern School of Business of New York University, Panos Ipeirotis is today considered **one of the world's leading experts in crowdsourcing and UGC** ("user-generated content", content created and shared by users on the Web). He combines his solid academic and research activities with an active approach to sharing his theories, which also comes across in his personal blog *A Computer Scientist in a Business School* ([www.behind-the-enemy-lines.com](http://www.behind-the-enemy-lines.com)). On the other side of the USA, Jure Leskovec is Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Stanford University, where he conducts research focused on **analysing and modelling social and information networks, their evolution and the diffusion of content and social influence**. A stone's throw from Silicon Valley, Leskovec already has experience in the relations between research, business and high tech: he is one of the co-founders of **Kosei**, a start-up that specialises in online suggestion systems, acquired in January 2015 by the social network Pinterest.

These are the **reasons** that led the jurors of the CRT Foundation – Lagrange Prize to award this recognition to the two scientists:

*Prof. Panos Ipeirotis is renowned for his pioneering work in the field of crowdsourcing and human computation. His research, a cross between computer science and economics, uses crowdsourcing Web platforms to develop algorithms for the actions of a multitude of people, to combine individual opinions and to provide guarantees on the quality of the results obtained, thereby enabling new collective intelligence mechanisms*



to emerge. Prof. Ipeirotis has also conducted innovative studies that combine economic, social psychology and automatic text analysis methods to quantify the economic value of the content generated by users on the Internet, paving the way for the opportunity of considering this value in decision- and policy-making processes.

Prof. Jure Leskovec uses the Internet as a telescope on human lifestyles and behaviour, analysing the multitude of digital footprints left by our daily activities and shedding light on the dynamics of socio-technical systems on a planetary scale. In just one decade, Prof. Leskovec's research has achieved a series of results of extreme scientific impact and at times important business value: from building maps of how information is propagated on the Web, to developing mathematical models of viral marketing, and predicting anti-social behaviour on the Web. Prof. Leskovec is also acknowledged for having made a rich collection of social data and computational tools for their analysis freely available to the scientific community.

The CRT Foundation – Lagrange Prize will be awarded to the two winners today, **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October, at 5.30 pm, at the Teatro Vittoria in Turin** (via Antonio Gramsci 4). After a speech by the General Secretary of the CRT Foundation, **Massimo Lapucci**, Panos Ipeirotis and Jure Leskovec will talk with **Francesco Bonchi**, the coordinator of “Algorithmic Data Analytics”, the Turin-based ISI Foundation's new research group which, since September, has been exploring the data universe, seeking cutting-edge algorithmic solutions to the problems, challenges and opportunities that the diffusion of Big Data is offering scientists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moderated by **Marcel Salathé**, a digital epidemiologist at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, the conclusions of the debate will then be drawn by **Mario Rasetti**, President of the ISI Foundation.

*“Complexity science breaks down the barriers that have traditionally kept disciplines such as physics, medicine, biology and information technology separate, and is **fundamental to understanding the society that surrounds us**”, says professor Mario Rasetti, President of the ISI Foundation. “More specifically, it is precisely the analysis, processing and interpretation of the information codified in so-called Big Data, fields in which professor Ipeirotis and professor Leskovec have achieved extraordinary results, which represent the key to deciphering the immense system of relations that today bring people together in a single interconnected global society”.*

*“The CRT Foundation promotes the culture of innovation and research through the Lagrange project – explains the General Secretary of the CRT Foundation, Massimo Lapucci – by **investing a total of around 38 million euro and providing support to over 665 young people** through PHD scholarships and applied research grants: in a period spanning over ten years, they have been able to **become a part of a virtuous system which brings together universities, business, research and jobs, benefitting the country's development**. Furthermore, the CRT*



*Foundation – Lagrange Prize acknowledges excellence in global research: this year, I am extremely pleased that the new “frontier” of crowdsourcing has emerged from the winners, a pioneering area we are working in with the ISI Foundation to identify international best practices”.*

**Established in 2008 by the CRT Foundation and coordinated by the ISI Foundation**, the Lagrange Prize is part of the **Lagrange Project**, one of the most innovative European initiatives dedicated entirely to studying complex systems and data science, where a culture of innovation is encouraged through PHD scholarships and research grants. The Prize is the symbolic event of the Lagrange Project: a prestigious international acknowledgement – the first and the most important for Complexity Science – awarded to **world renowned researchers**.

Looking at the winners of previous editions, several key aspects characterise the approach adopted by the Prize (and by the ISI Foundation) such as the variety of countries of origin and areas of study of the scientists: a symbol of the **interdisciplinary nature** and the **global value** of a field – Complex Systems – which today plays a fundamental role in the panorama of contemporary scientific research. In 2008, the Lagrange Prize was awarded to the Russian mathematician Yakov Gregorievich Sinai and to the British economist Bryan Arthur, in 2009 to the Roman physicist Giorgio Parisi, in 2010 to the American bioengineer James Collins, in 2011 to the Hungarian physicist (of Romanian origin with a US passport) Lazlò Barabasi, in 2012 to the American social network expert Lada Adamic and to the French economist Xavier Gabaix, in 2013 to the Australian sociologist Duncan Watts and in 2014 to the British physicist Mark Newman. British journalist, Philip Ball, editor of Nature and Italian journalist Riccardo Luna, previously the director of Wired, appointed Digital Champion for Italy in 2004, also received a special acknowledgement for scientific communication in the sphere of complex systems.

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