



# Dr. Una-May O'Reilly

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## What is Happening on MOOC Forums?

### Abstract:

Computer-supported collaborative learning theory indicates that learning is more effective and knowledge "sticks" if students discuss course related topics and teach each other. In online learning settings forums are the primary means of student interaction. We are examining the forums of MOOCs to understand the roles of students who post to them and the topics being discussed. This has to be done automatically, with artificial intelligence, if we can hope to handle the large volume of posts. I will describe a mixed human-computer approach that integrates machine learning to accomplish automatic interpretation. We have used it to automatically categorize hundreds of thousands of forum posts.

### About the speaker:

Una-May O'Reilly leads the AnyScale Learning For All (ALFA) Group. ALFA educates the forthcoming generation of data scientists, teaching them how to address the challenges spanning data integration to knowledge extraction. She has expertise in scalable machine learning, evolutionary algorithms, and frameworks for large scale knowledge mining, prediction and analytics. ALFA has contributed the building blocks founding open MOOC analytics. It also generates and mines feature repositories, using agile and scalable machine learning to pinpoint features and prediction parameters.

The author of over 100 academic papers, in 2013 Una-May received the EvoStar Award for Outstanding Achievements in Evolutionary Computation in Europe. She is a Young/Jr Fellow of the International Society of Genetic and Evolutionary Computation, now ACM SigEVO. She is the area editor for Data Analytics and Knowledge Discovery for Genetic Programming and Evolvable Machines (Kluwer), and editor for Evolutionary Computation (MIT Press), and action editor for the Journal of Machine Learning Research. Una-May has a patent for an original genetic algorithm technique applicable to internet-based name suggestions. She holds a B.Sc. from the University of Calgary, and a M.C.S. and Ph.D. (1995) from Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

**Date :** 18 Mar 2014 (Tuesday)  
**Time:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon  
**Venue:** Room 513, William M. W. Mong Engineering Building

**\*\*\* ALL ARE WELCOME \*\*\***

