

# Press Release



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First Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Chemistry sets the tone

Covestro AG  
Communications  
51365 Leverkusen,  
Germany

Contact  
Petra Schäfer  
Telephone  
+49 214 6009 6332  
E-mail  
petra.schaefer  
@covestro.com

## Data is making chemistry smarter

- **Covestro, Bayer and Evonik are promoting data sciences**
- **More sustainable research, production, distribution through big data**
- **Winners of the international hackathon from RWTH Aachen University**

One of the most important challenges facing the chemical industry is to develop new materials and products faster and more sustainably – to reintegrate them into the raw materials cycle. How can digital tools help to improve research and production right through to customer contact? How can data sciences and artificial intelligence contribute to a more sustainable, resource-saving chemistry? And how can the management of business and supply chains be optimized through greater use of data in conjunction with machine learning? Leading experts from established companies, start-ups and universities discussed these questions at the first conference for data science in chemistry, “Chemalytix”, in Leverkusen. Covestro, a manufacturer of high-performance materials, launched the event together with Bayer and Evonik.

The first international data science hackathon, which Covestro organized in advance at three universities worldwide, was won by a student team from RWTH Aachen University, Germany, with a model for an improved production process based on machine learning. The students were honored at the conference and received the global winner’s award in Leverkusen.

### Recognizing synergies and exploiting potentials

“We have not yet exploited the full potential of these new technologies. We must continue to develop the interaction between humans and artificial intelligence for our industry and ensure that data and intellectual property remain secure. If we are to remain successful in the long term, we must tackle this challenge now,”



said Sucheta Govil, Chief Commercial Officer of Covestro and responsible for innovation. “Only by working together can we find the answers. That’s why cooperating with leading partners in industry as well as with customers is so important.”

“Data sciences have the potential to significantly change our entire value chain, from research and development to production and logistics to sales and marketing,” said Kemal Malik, Member of the Board of Management for Innovation at Bayer. “We are already seeing the enormous potential of data science in the life sciences, for example in digital agriculture and precision medicine. At the same time, digital technologies will play a key role in helping us achieve our global sustainability goals. Partnerships with universities, start-ups and other large companies are essential in this dynamic environment.”

Henrik Hahn, Chief Digital Officer of Evonik, said: “I consider Data Science to be an application-oriented science in the truest sense of the word and thus far more than a business intelligence Ferrari. While BI enables better decisions to be made on the basis of the known, data science knowledge starts with the unknown. And this can also bring decisive competitive advantages in chemistry. At Evonik, we have therefore set up central contact points for data science. To put it in a nutshell, we are looking at how we can jointly develop a powerful magnet internally. We want to use it to find the famous needle in the haystack sooner. Gathering the right data with the right tool – that’s what it’s all about.”

#### **Hackathon winners announced**

Practical questions from the supply chain and production of the chemical industry were solved by around 90 students of data and engineering sciences in the first global hackathon. Covestro had asked the leading universities Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Tongji University in Shanghai and RWTH Aachen to compete simultaneously for three days in November. The winner with the best solution was Team “Datavengers” from RWTH Aachen, which received an award in Leverkusen. “The students developed novel answers using different methods of machine learning. They demonstrated that data and its proper use can make the whole industry smarter and faster,” explained Nils Janus, Head of Advanced Data Analytics at Covestro. “We are demonstrating that the chemical industry can be an exciting employer for smart data scientists.”



**About Covestro:**

With 2018 sales of EUR 14.6 billion, Covestro is among the world's largest polymer companies. Business activities are focused on the manufacture of high-tech polymer materials and the development of innovative solutions for products used in many areas of daily life. The main segments served are the automotive, construction, wood processing and furniture, and electrical and electronics industries. Other sectors include sports and leisure, cosmetics, health and the chemical industry itself. Covestro has 30 production sites worldwide and employs approximately 16,800 people (calculated as full-time equivalents) at the end of 2018.

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