Elasticsearch Meetup to make Durban debut

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Durban tech and legal professionals can look forward to the first-ever Elastic Durban Meetup to be hosted by open source search and analytics company, Elastic, following the success of their popular events in Johannesburg since 2016. The gathering in Morningside, Durban on the evening of Thursday, 29 August, has been made possible through a collaboration between legal technology company, LexisNexis South Africa, and enterprise search consultancy, Knowledge Focus, which traditionally coordinates the Elasticsearch events.

LexisNexis Chief Technical Officer, Terrance Naidoo, said it was exciting to finally have an Elastic Meetup in Durban.

"We're proud to have a long-standing partnership with Knowledge Focus and Elasticsearch developing our enterprise search platform and are pleased to play some small role in their Durban debut. LexisNexis has sponsored the event and provided our Durban head office as the venue, as part of the meetup partnerships we launched earlier this year to practically explore the sheer number of opportunities which legal tech enablement and new design thinking can bring to the industry."

Under the theme, 'Search Capabilities', the presentations and discussions on the night will be around how search tools can be used to enhance the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and how search has developed to focus more on user experiences.

LexisNexis South Africa's DevOps Team Lead, Morné Olderwagen, will be one of the expert speakers, outlining the journey LexisNexis has been on to ensure that its legal search results meet client needs for relevance, with the aid of AI and natural language processing (NLP). Intuitive search functionality is critical to a number of leading LexisNexis solutions, such as LexisLibrary for legal research and Lexis Practical Guidance for the "how-to" of legal practice. LexisNexis is deploying AI, including NLP, visualisations and robot process automation, to draw knowledge, actions and conclusions, while enriching the data to serve clients and make the practice of law more efficient.

Olderwagen joined LexisNexis in 2005 as a PHP developer and soon expanded onto C# development after a brief stint as an SEO specialist for the marketing department. In 2012, he joined the Enterprise Search team working on the FAST ESP platform. After Microsoft acquired FAST in 2008 and stopped full support of it some years later, LexisNexis migrated to Elasticsearch as its new Enterprise Search platform under the leadership of Olderwagen in collaboration with Knowledge Focus.

Elasticsearch Engineer at Knowledge Focus, Neil Maderthaner, will speak on 'Painless Scripting in Elasticsearch'. Maderthaner has over 20 years of experience working with almost all the prominent search based products in the industry and is one of the first certified Elastic Engineers in South Africa. He will provide practical scenarios and demonstrations of Painless, the simple, secure scripting language designed specifically for use with Elasticsearch.

Tech development giant, Derivco, will also have a strong presence with development engineers Thomas Parry and Nicholas Waring giving a joint presentation on F5 and Elasticsearch and how this is used to spot hackers. The discussions will be followed by networking and refreshments.

Anyone with an interest in tech development and data science, particularly as it pertains to the legal field, should not miss this event on Thursday, 29 August 2019, from 18h00–20h30 at LexisNexis Durban, 215 Peter Mokaba Road, Morningside, Durban.

To RSVP for the event, visit the RSVP link at https://www.meetup.com/Elasticsearch-South-Africa/events/263389714/.

The Elastic Meetup in Durban follows several successful Legal Tech Meetups in which LexisNexis has been involved recently, which have featured expert speakers and robust discussion. The first was held in Johannesburg in May under the theme 'Perspectives' and featured insights from LexisNexis Artificial Intelligence Team Lead, Craig Wymer, Chief Development Officer/Chief Information Officer of Webber Wentzel, Warren Hero, and Robert de Rooy, developer of the Comic Contract, the world's first fully illustrated contract.

Another May gathering was held in Durban under the theme, 'Insights into AI and Machine Learning', and featured data scientist and head of Exegetic Analytics, Andrew Collier, LexisNexis South Africa Chief Technical Officer, Terrance Naidoo, and Amira Abbas, a Master's candidate in Quantum Machine Learning and former research scientist at STANLIB Multi-Manager who now runs a tech startup.

Collier and Abbas also provided a continuation of their addresses at the second AI meetup in Durban held in July, with the theme 'Demystifying Machine Learning', following up on the initial discussions around AI and machine learning.

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