Podcast Name: *ACM ByteCast*
Episode: Episode 45 - Eugenio Zuccarelli

Welcome to the *ACM ByteCast* podcast, a series from the Association for Computing Machinery! The podcast features conversations with researchers, practitioners, and innovators at the intersection of computing research and practice about their experiences, lessons learned, and visions for the future of computing. In this episode, host Rashmi Mohan interviews guest Eugenio Zuccarelli, a data science leader with the Fortune 500 company CVS Health. He has worked across many industries, has been featured in many leading forums and publications for his exceptional contributions including being listed in the Forbes 30 Under 30 and being a TedX Speaker.

To begin, Eugenio introduces himself and shares what drew him to the field of computer science. He began his career by working in data science on the technical side of operations. Now, his work is around how to develop a team of data scientists that is scalable. He has always been passionate about engineering, technology, and robotics. While in college, he noticed that all of the focus surrounding technology was lacking in one fundamental area: the human component. At this point, he began to work at the intersection of data science, AI and engineering, which initially further instilled his passion for AI and data science. Then, Eugenio highlights his previous project which explored how technology can help us better understand humanity through the implementation of wearable devices. The project, known as Project Us, prioritized doing something useful for the people who use the technology, rather than only benefiting the technology itself. It began as a bracelet for participants to wear that would track their emotional signals to highlight empathy. Once Covid hit, the project's conversation shifted to analyzing emotions through Zoom calls to ultimately help participants better understand each other.

Eugenio has experience working in many different domains, including the automotive and fintech industries. He highlights that the major common threads uniting these industries are technology and data. With his diverse experience, Eugenio understands that every sector of every company must deal with their own unique challenges. Similarly, every company has their own sensitive information and responsibility to protect their users. Thus, it is not the case that AI is easier to implement in some industries and more difficult in others. Regardless of the domain, we must all be careful that we are using these technologies to do the right thing and take the human component into account. People do not want their health data to be leaked any more than they do not want their financial data leaked.

Next, Eugenio elaborates on the prohibitive costs of healthcare and that the sharing of data within healthcare is not easy. This is one of the largest problems in the healthcare industry today. Even within the same hospital across different providers, there are still many systems that don't talk to each other. Until now, there was never a patient-centric approach to information sharing. Sharing data is about having a complete picture of a patient so that all of the parties involved in their care can be educated and make the best decisions for the patients based on the information they have. Eugenio shares that trust across parties is the key

component of data sharing. Looking towards a future in which patient data is appropriately recorded and shared, he explains that it will take cooperation and trust between all parties.

Eugenio defines synthetic data as data that has been generated artificially. He is not a huge fan of this kind of data because it is typically generated through algorithms, not from real life or real people. This kind of data doesn't capture the full possibilities or demographics and tends to further the inherent biases we already have. Before wrapping up, Eugenio shares that the most important thing he has learned throughout his career thus far is that you always have to adapt your attitude to the current situation at hand, regardless of the work being done. Finally, he shares his method for finding accomplishment when most of his work is not producing tangible things. As a leader, he now finds success in seeing other people develop and achieve their goals.

Key takeaways:
1:39 - Eugenio introduces himself and shares what drew him to computer science.
4:41 - Project Us and exploring how technology can help us understand humans better.
10:47 - The application of AI throughout different industries.
15:30 - The prohibitive nature of data sharing in healthcare.
20:36 - How much is the data sharing problem a trust issue?
26:25 - What is synthetic data?
32:40 - The most important lessons Eugenio has learned in his career thus far.
36:58 - Finding a sense of accomplishment.
42:18 - Advice for students looking to build solutions.

Links
Learn more about [Eugenio Zuccarelli](#).
Learn more about [Rashmi Mohan](#).

Tags:
Eugenio Zuccarelli, AI, healthcare, CVS Health, Fortune 500, Forbes 30 under 30, computer science, data scientist, machine learning, wearable devices, mental health, human interaction, empathy, technology, health data, data privacy, data sharing, synthetic data, data research