Podcast Title: ACM Bytecast
Episode Title: Mounia Lalmas

In this episode of ACM Bytecast, host Rashmi Mohan is joined by Spotify researcher, Mounia Lalmas to share her journey to and work in tech. Mounia is the Director of Research and Head of Tech Research, leading a team of researchers in content personalization and discovery. She has a rich career in user engagement and a frequent conference speaker. Mounia became interested in computing because as a girl she was really interested in math, but didn't want to pursue a teaching career.

When she started in information retrieval there was not a big search engine, but once they were introduced, the field got much bigger. There is certainly a lot of progress on the algorithm side, but Mounia is more interested in evaluating the results for the user. She asks what does it mean to have satisfaction in and what metrics she should use for evaluation. The metric for success is different depending upon what type of problem you're trying to solve. For instance, users read news on their desktop differently than they do on a desktop computer. Success for a sleeping playlist means it's put on and allowed to play through, while a party playlist is successful when it encourages the user to act as a DJ.

Some users feel like Spotify can create playlists that read their minds. Mounia says that's not necessarily the case. However, experts can use their knowledge of human behavior and past listening habits to create recommendations that make it seem like your mind is being read. Good algorates are scalable, she says and optimized not just for the next thing, but also for the long term. Personalization means not just knowing what the next song a user wants to listen to is, but also what kind of music they'll want to listen to in the future. It's a balance and Mounia is excited to be doing it at Spotify where there is so much to research.

Mounia is most excited about new ways users can interact with platforms and content.

Key Takeaways:
0:42 - Rashmi introducest Mounia
2:10 - How Mounia was drawn into computing
7:45- Mounia's focus in information retrieval
13:45 - New trends in user metrics
22:05 - Is Spotify reading users minds
29:15 - Long term research goals at Spotify
37:20 - Mounia's other interests

Links:
Learn more about ACM: https://www.acm.org/about-acm/about-the-acm-organization

Learn more about [Mounia Lalmas](#)

Follow ACM on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#)

Tags: Computer Science, Computer Science Technology, computer problem solving, information retrieval, user feedback, research, content personalization