



# Women in Big Data Global Newsletter

*To inspire, connect, grow, and champion  
the success of women in big data*

Find one of us in your *local community*

Have an idea for an article or a suggestion? Send to [general-inquiry@womeninbigdata.org](mailto:general-inquiry@womeninbigdata.org)

## What's New?

Summer is here! And with that said we are into our third WiBD Global Newsletter!

From 3 members inside Intel to 15 members since June 2015 in the Bay Area, we are now 10,000+ worldwide!

In this edition, we get to know yet another WiBD member...learn about conference platform VerveCon...welcome our new Israel

chapter and flash back to our Russia chapter...and point to hints on starting your own WiBD chapter.

So, on we go, inspiring each other and fostering positivity as we continue to grow this year!

## Have You Met Her?

*Written by Tina Rosario*

### Let's get to know each other a little bit better, shall we?

In September, 2016, **Gunjan Sharma** joined the Women in Big Data program after attending a luncheon in California earlier that year. She thought it was a great way to give back to the community and do something real towards the success of women in this space. In her words: "I have usually been the sole woman in the room and I thought, wouldn't it be great to not feel conscious about wearing pink! I also learned that WiBD didn't have a presence on the East Coast, and I decided to start the East Region of WiBD". Since then Gunjan and team have significantly grown the East region to over 1800 members!

Gunjan is inspired by giving back to the community and participating

in WiBD. She's motivated by the chance to interact with a lot of smart women, learn from them, and share her experiences with the newer generation. Feedback and acknowledgement from the community that WiBD events are indeed helping women is very rewarding for her.

Gunjan has personally experienced the growth of WiBD since she started three years ago. She expects us to continue the growth and expand our programs and benefits as strong sponsors (most recently AWS) come on board.

Although much of the work in the East region is focused on professional women, Gunjan believes "there's a big opportunity to partner with educational institutions to spread awareness and education of the Big Data and AI space at the high school and undergrad levels, where you begin



Meet **Gunjan Sharma**, WiBD US East Coast Region Lead and WiBD DC Director. Currently Technology Head at Capital One.

"...who you want to be comes from within, not from others' perspectives of self-worth and success. Believe in yourself."

course selections that define your career. To support all of these opportunities, we need more volunteers who are willing to give their time while continuing to do well in their day jobs.”

Throughout her career, Gunjan has had several mentors, and her best piece of advice is “...live from the outside in—who you want to be comes from within, not from others’ perspectives of self-worth and success. Believe in yourself.”

To those she mentors Gunjan offers similar advice: “Do some soul-searching to understand yourself and where you want to go, and to chart out a path. Every so often, check-in with yourself, self-assess, and correct your course as needed. And network—at all levels, up and down!”

Gunjan was recently inspired by a quote she read: “The mind is its own place, it can make heaven into hell and hell into heaven.” For her, this speaks to finding strength during tough times and winning through perseverance, resilience and a positive mindset.

## Around the World

### Upcoming Summer Events 2019:

#### Data Con LA 2019

**August 17 | 7:00 am PDT**  
**University of Southern California,**  
**Marshall School of Business**

This summer, join the largest conference for everything data in Los Angeles on Saturday, August 17th! Thousands in the LA community will come together to share insights, best practices, and case studies, as well as connect and network with each other. Learn more at Data Con LA 3551 (<https://www.dataconla.com/>)

For more on events, click [here](#).

## Our Strength in Numbers

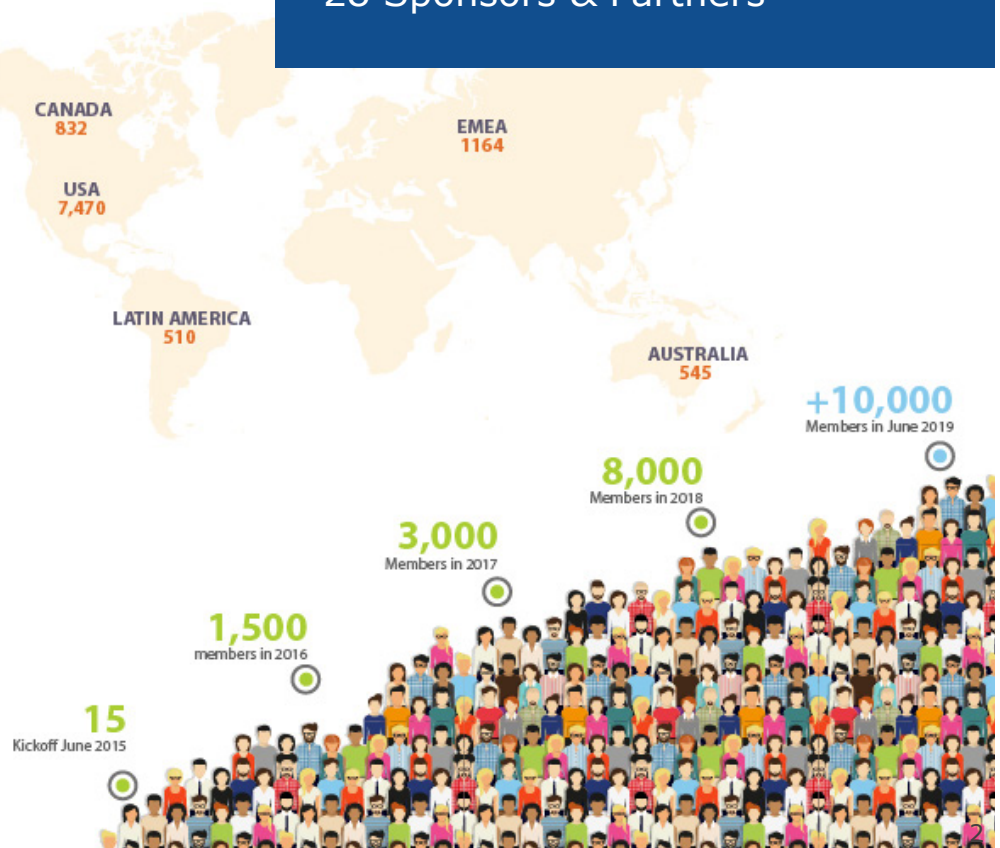
>10,000 Members

23 Chapters

28 Sponsors & Partners



Over 10,000 members worldwide  
learn more: [womeninbigdata.org](http://womeninbigdata.org)



# VerveCon: Meet the Leader in You



**Sudha Kasamsetty,**  
Founder of VerveCon

With increasing focus on improving female representation in business and tech, we are now seeing a lot more women's conferences. But there are still very few that showcase female technical speakers, while also recognizing the challenges and needs of women technologists in the industry. There is a gap and an opportunity here...which is why VerveCon was created, as a platform for women technologists to come together in a conference setting and share their solutions and stories, and to learn and inspire each other to become great leaders at work.

VerveCon was launched in 2018 in Silicon Valley, California. The first conference drew 750+ women from across the Bay area. The second conference was held on May 7th, 2019, and featured a vibrant group of ~1000 attendees who discussed a range of topics—

from block chain to conversational AI, NLP, Big Data and hands-on AWS training workshops, to interactive career discussions, mentoring and networking. See the full [blog](#) and learn who is behind VerveCon, the partnership with WiBD and much more.

Click [here](#) to read more.



## New Israel WiBD Chapter



*Itai Yaffe, Nufar Gaspar & Liat Amidan Man, core team members of WiBD Israel Chapter (L to R)*

### The Newest WiBD Chapter

After several months of discussion and brainstorming with a small team on how best to form a Women in Big Data chapter in Israel, we decided to start with a [meetup group](#) and target professionals from various positions within the tech industry. With that direction in mind, [Itai Yaffe](#), [Liat Amidan Man](#), [Tiferet Kronfeld](#) and [Nufar Gaspar](#) formed the core team of the Israeli chapter. The WiBD Israel Chapter was launched formally and celebrated in an event on May 30th, 2019, at the Nielsen Marketing Cloud Israeli office location. Over 50 attendees (mostly but not only women) from various companies, domains and positions took part. The event included opening remarks, two great talks about AI, roundtable sessions dealing with various data-related topics, cool WiBD branding (including WiBD laptop stickers), excellent food and drinks, and much more.... We received very positive feedback, both verbally and through a written survey. Plus, this is the first time Women in Big Data has had a male director, Itai Yaffe, for a chapter lead (very thrilled about that)! For details, see the full [blog](#) write-up by Itai.

Click [here](#) to read more.



## Flashback WiBD Russia

### WiBD Russia: Flashback

Building a technical female community in a country famous for its conservative patriarchal traditions is a challenge faced by a group of Intel employees in Russia (Nizhny Novgorod) who decided to change the status quo two years ago. A solid history of scientific breakthroughs and powerful tech methodologies in Russia served as a great base for developing a Big Data community. According to statistics provided by a federal recruiting agency, female participation in the STEM segment in Russia is about 23%, with <10% of women involved in Big Data development. The team of WiBD volunteers had to build the technical female community from scratch, as nothing like that had ever existed in Russia. Moreover, Russian cities have not breed any similar communities, supported by either the industry or academia.

A team of volunteers, heavily supported by the Intel office in Nizhny Novgorod, launched a local chapter of the Women in Big Data community in April, 2017. The kickoff event was opened by **Marina Alekseeva**, Intel Vice President and General Manager, the Head of WiBD Training and Networking Committees. Marina shared her vision of Women in Big Data community perspectives in Russia, and she called on the participants, representing 17 companies and universities in Nizhny Novgorod, to support the initiative and make the difference.



*Marina Alekseeva, Intel Vice President and General Manager, the Head of WiBD Training and Networking Committees*

Thanks to conference talks and monthly meetups introducing a variety of technical and soft skill topics, the Women in Big Data community in Nizhny Novgorod has grown to 600+ members within two years. "We analyzed our audience and developed a curriculum aimed to present basic knowledge domains in Big Data, introduce experts, and provide related workshops and resources for our audience", says **Kate Antakova**, Intel Software Engineer and a lead of the WiBD-Russia training committee. "More than 80 attendees registering for each educational event proves that the vector is right."

Inspired by community growth and warm feedback, the WiBD-Russia core team launched another meetup series, "Professional portfolios



in the Big Data & Analytics.” “We want our audience to understand a whole spectrum of roles and competencies in the area of Big Data and analytics,” says **Elena Fedotova**, a WiBD-Russia chapter lead. “We invite experts from various businesses and academia to talk about their career paths and expertise, about tips and tricks for technical interviews, and about how they achieve a healthy work/life balance.”

The launch of the Women in Big Data chapter



(L) Kate Antakova, Intel Software Engineer and a lead of the WiBD-Russia training committee.

(R) Elena Fedotova, a WiBD-Russia chapter lead

in Nizhny Novgorod catalyzed similar activities in other communities. Now WiBD-Russia is a proactive and functional member of the city- and country-wide technical communities, partnering with federal companies, universities, and schools. “It is very important for us to evangelize the idea of supporting and retaining female talent in STEM areas,” shared Elena Fedotova. “We try to develop motivational programs for schoolgirls. For example, a year ago we organized a seminar for school teachers and parents. These people shape the new generation, and their influence cannot be overestimated. The speakers we invited talked about extra opportunities for kids to grow their knowledge in STEM subjects, about perspectives for girls, and about breaking gender bias.”

2019 presents new opportunities, and the Russian chapter has a packed agenda, including opening a new WiBD chapter in Moscow, partner events with the Google Women TechMakers community, new educational projects, and the first WiBD conference, scheduled to celebrate their second-year anniversary in Russia.

## Interested in Starting a new WiBD Chapter?

We have added guidelines for a successful chapter and also contacts for anyone interested in opening a WiBD chapter locally. Learn how to create a successful new chapter here:

<https://www.womeninbigdata.org/wibd-structure/>



## Learn More

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-  Bookmark our website [www.womeninbigdata.org](http://www.womeninbigdata.org)
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