



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

Graeme Fraser, President

August 30 2022 Editor: Don Butler

Noon meeting online

PROGRAM: Morsal Saddiq-Khan, ASI (Advanced Symbolics Inc), “Polly” for AI Market research

Video https://youtu.be/KpUJ_PVwDxc

We start

At 1230 President **Graeme Fraser** welcomed those present to the 9th meeting of this Rotary Year

and acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people We acknowledge and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place.

He then told us about speaking fairly often to Stan Banville, a resident of Parkway House which West Ottawa has supported for many years. Stan has CP and is the one with the best communication skills there. Stan has many challenges in life but rarely complains or sounds depressed. This reminds **President Graeme** to put things into perspective and be grateful for what he has in life.

Brett Brooking played a video of an instrumental version of O Canada with scenes from Canadian nature

Guests: Ron Baker, PP RC Simcoe and Barbara Hull-Holland also from Simcoe, Rotarian Badr Ghazawi from Lebanon and our speaker Morsal Saddiq Khan of ASI.

Gaye Moffett took the mic and noted that some of us had seen interviews on TVO’s Agenda with Erin Kelly, ASI CEO, telling about Polly, the AI poll predictor, which had done well with recent elections. **Gaye** had been pressing Kelly for some time to speak to us which resulted in Morsal being with us today. **Gaye** told us Morsal was a TV and broadcast videographer who loved storytelling and data discovery. With a slide presentation

[file:///Users/donbutler/Downloads/Rotary%20CLub%20-%20Morsal%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/donbutler/Downloads/Rotary%20CLub%20-%20Morsal%20(1).pdf)

Morsal started by telling us that the ASI principals had spent 10 years working with the University of Ottawa to develop algorithms which analyse information in social media to determine the opinions of a given population and gauge that population's reaction to certain past messages and forecast its reaction to similar new messages.

ASI combines both the representative sampling and customised questions but small data sets of traditional research with the large datasets of the more recent social listening approach.

One of ASI services is message testing. Polly can test messaging against similar past messaging to that target audience without premature exposure of a campaign.

Clients wanting to draw attention to their basic message should provoke negative and positive feelings about the basic idea which will result in discussion between peers and thus attention better than statements from spokespeople. An NGO seeking funding to protect wildlife increased donations by focussing away from polar bears in which interest had dropped off and focussing on walruses.

Clients may also want to damp down discussion about an issue. An example was presenting a police budget increase worded to arouse minimal emotion

Morsal told us about the other services ASI offers and took questions.

Q&A

Morsal got questions from a dozen of us:

-She is new with the company and has no experience with the political campaign analysis and is in the ASI marketing arm rather than tech so asked that **Andrew Young's** question on the programming language used be directed to an ASI engineer. (**Gaye** will assist with this and Morsal will tell the engineer of **Andrew's** interest)

-ASI prefers to use questions from clients for testing but if need ASI will generate the questions.

- ASI message advice to clients is that the message be true but focusses on the best way to deliver that message and the best target for it to achieve client objectives.

-Morsal had always been interested in the story presentation by social media and joined ASI because Polly is more advanced than other social questioning companies in the quality of analysis brought to market research.

-in a brief exchange on impactful messages **Bob Harrison** cited an Ikea ad that had only visuals suggesting different worlds and ending only with the word 'Ikea'

- Polly draws from media such as Reddit, Twitter and Facebook to define a target audience fitting client needs and then estimates that audience's reaction to the proposed client messaging based on how the audience responded to similar messaging in the past.

- "Vanity metrics" means measurements which look impressive but actually add nothing useful to the analysis and Polly is good at picking those out and considering only actionable metrics.

- **Pardeep Ahluwalia** asked what Rotary could learn from what ASI does to help get its messages out and whether Morsal had considered joining Rotary. Morsal thought her generation had short attention span and looked for different ways to make an impact.

- **Yves Lafontaine** also suggested Morsal join Rotary. She could help make our Club more connected to the younger generation. ASI become a Corporate member?

-Polly has not been given a face but ASI is working on two different ways of approaching Polly.

-Polly can work in any language.

-**Caroline DeWitt** was struck by Morsal's passion and enthusiasm and endorsed the invitation that she join Rotary. **Caroline** asked if Polly used Google and Facebook like Cambridge Analytica had in the 2016 elections. Polly does not use Google and much prefers Twitter and Reddit over Facebook because of the FB privacy rules.

-ASI is neutral and does not discriminate. Polly has no position on any question. It only tells clients what Polly sees in their target market and how Polly advises how they best deliver their message. ASI normal practice would accept a request from an unfriendly country

-**Larry Chop** warmly praised TVO's interviews with ASI's Kelly during the recent Ontario election and how well Polly predicted the results.

Gaye thanked Morsal for a great presentation and great answers to questions and told her we would donate to End Polio to mark her visit

Birthdays for September

The inimitable **Fred Christie**, speaking for our Club foundation, toasted

-third generation Rotarian **Eric Armstrong** who has contributed to a wide range of Rotary projects.

- **Jim Maxwell**, a Past President, past club secretary, active supporter of the Cash Calendar, Mums, and Belair projects.

-**Linda Flynn** – a worker with endless service on Rotary projects – especially literacy.

- **Eugen Achihaei** –applies his property management skills to a variety of our club's community projects.

Announcements

- Soc and Rec tour of Billings Estate on Sunday Sept 4

-Luis Espinosa, a prospective Club member moving here from Mexico, is looking for a house but has problems because while he has plenty of cash he has no job at present. Can members help out?

- Lease problems have forced closure of CoBrie Restaurant. **President Graeme** awaits more details from Carlingwood Mall management but for now all meetings will be Zoom

- Mums needs Club member drivers to earn that delivery fee for the Club.

Happy Dollars with Ken Murray

Jim Maxwell is happy that former Rotary Exchange student from Australia, Catherine Denham, is now coming back with husband and two boys for a three month tour of Canada and the USA.

Linda Flynn has been happy at her cottage but now has to return to "reality"

Ken had met an exchange student (not Rotary) and host parent at tennis. **Ken** gave them his card and offered to help if needed

Pardeep Ahluwalia and Simmy had hosted our Barbados member, **Tony Watkins** and his wife H  l  ne, visiting Ottawa, to dinner.

Yves Lafontaine asked for the CV of Luis Espinosa as he knows someone who may be able to give him a job

We Close

President Graeme reminded us that the Sept 6 meeting would be Zoom only. He told us about the speaker and adjourned

Cash Calendar winners

<http://www.ottawarotarycalendar.com/2022-winners.html>

6 September 2022

12:00 for 12:30 p.m.

By ZOOM

Jenna Wickens ; Catholic Family Services of Simcoe - *Ageing & Ageism.*

Intro and Thanks: **Ron Doll**

Spinoff: TBA

Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81365346181>

See President Graeme email for log-in details