

## Kickstart AI consortium members, Ahold Delhaize and Philips, announce new round of academic joint appointments

*Zaandam, the Netherlands, July 1, 2020* – Today Ahold Delhaize and Philips announced two new joint appointments as part of their continuing commitment to the Kickstart AI platform, announced in October 2019. These appointments are established to strengthen AI research and education capabilities and to train the next generation of AI researchers in the Netherlands. Ahold Delhaize welcomes Maarten de Rijke, Ph.D., currently University Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Information Retrieval at the University of Amsterdam, while Ruud van Sloun, Assistant Professor at the Eindhoven University of Technology, joins Philips. Additionally, ING opened two positions together with the University of Amsterdam.

The Kickstart AI member companies have committed to establishing joint positions of academic staff to enable private-public collaboration and facilitate researchers' work in both industry and university settings. Job creation, retention of AI talent, and fostering shared AI knowledge are at the key drivers of the Kickstart AI initiative and recognized as essential elements in supporting economic recovery in the coming years.

Maarten de Rijke's work with Ahold Delhaize will focus on building intelligent technology to connect people to information. Such solutions include search engines, recommender systems, and conversational assistants. Dr. De Rijke's research focuses on the intersection of information retrieval and machine learning, where increasingly intelligent machines learn from interactions with users. De Rijke is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and a strong believer in use-inspired research, mixing theory, experimentation, and application. In addition to his work at Ahold Delhaize, De Rijke will remain active as University Professor and as Director of the national Innovation Center for AI (ICAI).

Dr. Ruud van Sloun's work with Philips seeks to create real-world impact by translating his academic research on AI and signal processing into industrial innovation for next-generation medical diagnostic (imaging) applications. He studied Electrical Engineering at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) where he received his MSc and PhD degrees, both cum laude in 2014 and 2018, respectively. Earlier this year, he was recognized by the Google faculty research award for his work on model-based deep learning.

The Kickstart AI joint appointments directly contribute to the development of the broader Dutch AI ecosystem. These positions offer academic researchers and staff the opportunity to have a greater impact to society while strengthening the links between universities and companies as well as increasing innovation and research productivity for both.

## About Kickstart AI

Kickstart AI is a platform aimed at boosting the AI ecosystem in the Netherlands by accelerating and promoting the development of AI technology and nurturing AI talent in the country. The goal of Kickstart AI is to bridge the gap between the Netherlands and other leading countries that have made notable progress in Artificial Intelligence. The platform is driven by five Dutch companies: Ahold Delhaize, ING, NS, KLM and Royal Philips. This joint effort will add educational capacity, foster the development of the AI community in the Netherlands, and reiterate the position of the Netherlands as a competitive and relevant global AI hub.

For more information visit <https://www.kickstartai.nl/>

