My life before BGU:
I did post-doctoral work at Northeastern University and Harvard. I went to Boston for two years but stayed a further two years because of my wife’s start-up. I completed my PhD in computer science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, focusing on natural language processing. In my post-doc and now at BGU, I combine natural language processing with social media dynamics. For example, I do active modeling of extremist groups on social networks, modeling and prediction of political discourse in social networks, and algorithmic biases in machine learning.

An insight from your research:
Despite impressive advances in learning algorithms, language and social dynamics are a complex challenge. We’re still very far from cracking it or from creating algorithms that will “understand” human language in different social contexts. I think the key is a combination of fields, and the understanding that despite the data and the algorithms, we should borrow insights and theories from a variety of fields.

Something that doesn’t appear on your resume:
I’m lazy. that’s why I work with computers and learning algorithms. I want the computer to do the work for me. On the other hand, my main transport for the last 15 years has been a bicycle, even at the height of winter in Boston.

When I grow up:
As a child, a pilot, and later, a lawyer. It’s still not too late to be a pilot and a lawyer… Seriously, one of the privileges of academics is that they work on whatever interests them, and as such, I am where I want to be.

Lennon or McCartney? Bob Dylan!
Mac or PC? PC, with Linux
Pizza or burgers? Why not both?
Facebook or Twitter? I don’t have Facebook

Dr. Oren Tsur
Department of Software and Information Systems Engineering
Faculty of Engineering Sciences

Jorge Luis Borges is an inspiring author, and I keep returning to “The Garden of Forking Paths,” as well as to Lewis Carroll’s “Alice in Wonderland” and “Alice through the Looking Glass.”

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