

**Author:** Leontina Pinto, ENGENHO

**Presentation Title:** COVID-19: Understanding Problems, Building Solid Solutions

**Abstract:** COVID-19 produced one of the most significant disruptions humanity has ever faced. Social distancing led to never-ever seen lockdowns, including an almost-complete closure of retail and services. Many consumers struggle to support daily necessities, and reactions (at least in Brazil) vary from theft to defaults. Instead of punishments, it is essential to understand the problem and offer solutions. Understanding the problem requires an in-depth knowledge of the clients and their behavior “ through a comprehensive, reliable diagnostic. However, how to model behavior that is still under construction? Consumers confront a never-experienced, unknown, mysterious world, where rules are made "on the fly," and dynamics change frantically. There is no historical data able to assist in analysis or direct predictions. However, there is an ocean of information ready to be acquired and processed: social media. We propose to collect this information in a fast and efficient way and use it as an input vector to predict the load transformation as a basis for constructing customized, realistic and feasible solutions for each customer. The model has been applied to four Brazilian distribution companies, aiming to anticipate load evolution during the pandemic. Results were encouraging: we were able to predict not only the load drop (15% in one week) but also load recovery (4% drop at this moment). Defaults on several classes (commercial, industrial, residential) were detected before their occurrence, paving the way for tailored solutions from special credit schemes to photovoltaic installations. In some cases, micro-grids may supply vulnerable areas, with possible export to the main grid. The next step, currently under development, is more ambitious. Problems known and corresponding solutions developed, it will be possible to use social media to detect vulnerable clients in advance and interfere, leading to a more secure and conscious consumption.