Ron Shaffer is Senior Manager, West Material Digitization (DX) and Approvals at the Bridgestone Americas Technology Center in Akron, Ohio. The West Material DX team develops AI-driven digital tools to accelerate material innovation and optimize rubber compound formulations. Before joining Bridgestone in 2018, Dr. Shaffer held scientific and leadership roles at the Naval Research Laboratory, General Electric Global Research Center, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from Ohio University in 1996 and is the author or co-author of over 90 peer-reviewed publications (H-index = 49, 8000+ citations) and 7 US patents.

Rocco Panella is a Lead Data Tools Developer in the West Materials Digitization Team at the Bridgestone Americas Technology Center in Akron, Ohio. He leads development on virtual materials discovery as well as other data science efforts in materials for Bridgestone. His prior experience includes deploying manufacturing-focused machine learning systems at Intel Corp and Nestle. Rocco also developed data visualization and analytics software for NAVAIR as a principal engineer at BGI, and was the principal investigator on several Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grants through the Department of Defense. He received his PhD in Chemical Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University in 2013.