

Brief Bio and (PR)²: Problems & Pitches – Rants & Raves by *David Lazer*

Self Introduction



<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/davidlazer/html/>

I am the Director of the Program on Networked Governance (PNG) at Harvard, and Associate Professor of Public Policy. PNG is an NSF-supported program whose objective is to serve as a focal point for events, training, and research at the intersection of governance, information, technology, and networks (social and hard-wired).

Most of my work is based on the idea that how people and organizations are connected together is critical to understanding the functioning, success and failure of actors and systems. My teaching, research, and institution building have all centered on that theme. I've taken that essential idea and, with a variety of collaborators, examined a wide array of domains.

My research covers everything from very micro (social influence processes within groups), to the very macro (the development of global-wide regulatory regimes). Thus, for example, I have looked at how a network of trade treaties abruptly emerged in the Europe of the 1860s, how attitudes and social structures “co-evolve,” and, in more recent work how the pattern of relationships affects how hard people work on teams, and how small world networks can result in system-wide “group think.”

General Questions

1) What is (are) your main interest(s) in attending the workshop?

The main thing I am interested is brainstorming about how to build a communal infrastructure that facilitates the growth of computational social science.

2) What information/knowledge management expertise do you have?

I have a background in social network analysis, computational modeling, and have been working with some novel relational data.

3) What is the most insightful visualization of static or dynamic phenomena you know?

[Ideally this visualization led to a major discovery/innovation. Examples could come from science, art, or any other field of human endeavor. Note that we plan to use this visualization on your name card.]

I was struck by the winner of the netsci visualization contest last year.

4) What would you like to learn / achieve at the workshop?

I am hoping that we can move forward in thinking about an infrastructure for css. In particular, my hope is to learn of new ways of dealing with some of these infrastructural problems by talking with people from quite diverse fields of study.