



## MICHAELMAS TERM 2009

Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

## SEMINAR SERIES

**Convenors:** Felix Reed-Tsochas, Institute for Science, Innovation and Society, Saïd Business School  
Eduardo López, Saïd Business School

Our meetings intend to provide a forum for rigorous research (in a broad range of disciplines) focusing on complex adaptive systems, using methods and techniques such as agent-based modelling and complex network analysis. Since potential areas of application for such approaches can be located across the social, natural and engineering sciences, our aim is to involve participants from a wide range of departments in Oxford. We welcome talks which focus on particular areas of application and associated technical issues, but also encourage contributions which address more fundamental conceptual or mathematical problems. The CABDyN Seminar Series is one of the activities of the CABDyN Research Cluster.

**Friday 23rd October, 16:00-17:30**

**Seminar Room A, Saïd Business School**

*Oxford Internet Institute lecture in collaboration with CABDyN and the Oxford eSocial Science (OeSS) Project.  
If you would like to attend please email your name and affiliation, if any, to: [events@oii.ox.ac.uk](mailto:events@oii.ox.ac.uk)*

### Prof Duncan Watts

Principal Research Scientist, Yahoo! Research

*'Using the Web to do Social Science.'*

#### ABSTRACT

Social science is often concerned with the emergence of collective behavior out of the interactions of large numbers of individuals; but in this regard it has long suffered from a severe measurement problem - namely that interactions between people are hard to measure, especially at scale, over time, and at the same time as observing behavior.

In this talk, Duncan will argue that the technological revolution of the Internet is beginning to lift this constraint. To illustrate, he will describe four examples of research that would have been extremely difficult, or even impossible, to perform just a decade ago:

- Using email exchange to track social networks evolving in time
- Using a web-based experiment to study the collective consequences of social influence on decision making
- Using a social networking site to study the difference between perceived and actual homogeneity of attitudes among friends
- Using Amazon's Mechanical Turk to study the incentives underlying 'crowd sourcing'

Although internet-based research still faces serious methodological and procedural obstacles, Duncan proposes that the ability to study truly 'social' dynamics at individual-level resolution will have dramatic consequences for social science.

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**followed by a drinks reception**

For further information contact [info.cabdyn@sbs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:info.cabdyn@sbs.ox.ac.uk)

Seminar webpage: [http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/complexity/complexity\\_seminars.asp](http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/complexity/complexity_seminars.asp)

**Please note:** Although the seminar programme detailed above was correct at the time of printing, seminar arrangements are subject to change so, for the latest information please check seminar webpage.