### Fame and fate: Why is global success so unpredictable?

Principles of Complex Systems | @pocsvox CSYS/MATH 300, Fall, 2016 | #FallPoCS2016

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### The most famous painting in the world:



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Twelve ...

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### The completely unpredicted fall of Eastern Europe:



Timur Kuran: [2] "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989"

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### Reason 2—"We are all individuals."

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#### Archival footage:

Individual narratives are not enough to





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understand distributed, networked minds.

### We understand bushfire stories:

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Reason 3—We are spectacular imitators.

BBC/David Attenborough.

Mistake 1:

- 1. Sparks start fires.
- 2. System properties control a fire's spread.
- 3. But we make two mistakes about Social Fires...





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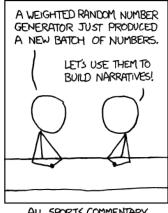
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# Reason 1—We are Homo Narrativus.



ALL SPORTS COMMENTARY

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See "Becoming Mona Lisa" by David Sassoon ☑

Success is due to intrinsic properties





http://xkcd.com/904/2



48 songs 30k participants

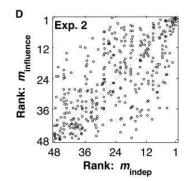
Exp 1— weak social Exp. 2—strong social

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"An experimental study of inequality and unpredictability in an artificial cultural market"

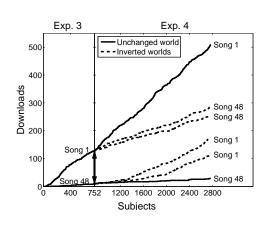
Salganik, Dodds, and Watts, Science, **311**, 854–856, 2006. [3]

### Resolving the paradox:



Increased social awareness leads to Stronger inequality + Less predictability.

## Payola/Deceptive advertising hurts us all:



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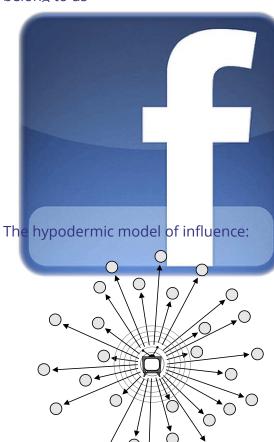
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### Mistake 2:

Seeing success is 'due to social' and wanting to say 'all your interactions are belong to us'



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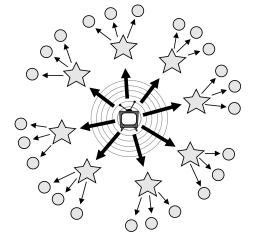
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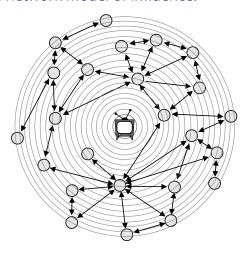




The two step model of influence: [1]



#### The network model of influence:



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#### Etymological clarity:

- Fate—from the Latin fatus: meaning "spoken".
- Fate is talk that has been done. "It is written", fore-tell, pre-dict.
- "There is no such thing as fate, only the story of fate."
- Destiny is probablistic.
- Fame—from the Latin fāma: meaning "to talk."
- Fame is inherently the social discussion about the thing, not the thing itself.
- Renown : Repeatedly named, talked about. Old French renon, from re- + non ("name").
- Réclame ☑. "Clamo"—Proto-Indo-European: "to shout" (again). Connected to "lowing".



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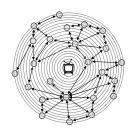
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#### The network model of influence:



#### How superspreading works:

Many interconnected, average, trusting people must benefit from both receiving and sharing a message far from its source.

"Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion

J. Consum. Res., **34**, 441–458, 2007. [4]

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### Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray



"There is only one thing in the world

worse than being talked about,

and that is

not being talked about."

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### Things that spread quickly:

Formation"

Watts and Dodds,













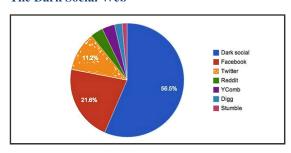
buzzfeed.com <a>C</a>:





### Spreading in the social wild:

#### The Dark Social Web



Dark Social: We Have the Whole History of the Web Wrong ☑ [The Atlantic]

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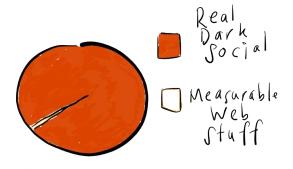






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### A completely made up pie chart:



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[2] T. Kuran.

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[3] M. J. Salganik, P. S. Dodds, and D. J. Watts. An experimental study of inequality and unpredictability in an artificial cultural market. Science, 311:854-856, 2006. pdf



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#### Shareworthy Content is King:

How to make things spread (maybe):

- 1. Build entities/messages/stories that have intrinsic and social value out in the Social Wild.
- 2. Advertise but lay off the social interactions.
- 3. Just keep trying.





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