

Random walks and diffusion on networks

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Complex Networks | @networksvox
CSYS/MATH 303, Spring, 2019

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Diffusion

Random walks on
networks

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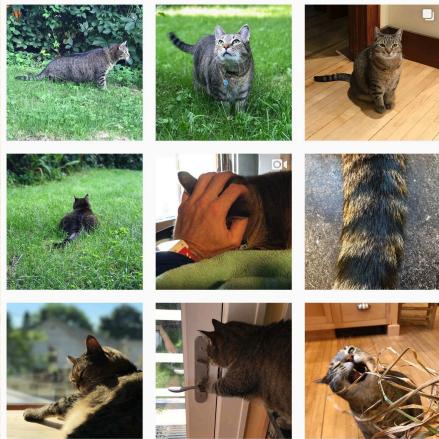
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 On Instagram at [pratchett_the_cat](https://www.instagram.com/pratchett_the_cat) 



Outline

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Diffusion

Random walks on
networks

Random walks on networks



Random walks on networks—basics:

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Diffusion



Imagine a single random walker moving around on a network.


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 At $t = 0$, start walker at node j and take time to be discrete.




Random walks on
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Random walks on networks—basics:

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Diffusion

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Random walks on
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- Unfortunately for Barry, he lives on a high dimensional graph and is far from home.
- Worse still: Barry is **texting**.



Where is Barry?



Consider simple undirected, ergodic (strongly connected) networks.


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$$p_i(t+1) = \sum_{j=1}^n \frac{1}{k_j} a_{ji} p_j(t).$$

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Inebriation and diffusion:

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 **Excellent observation:** The same equation applies for stuff moving around a network, such that at each time step all material at node i is sent to its neighbors.





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 Random walking is equivalent to diffusion .




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 $p_i(t+1) = \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ji} \frac{1}{k_j} p_j(t)$ is more usefully viewed
as

$$\vec{p}(t+1) = A^T K^{-1} \vec{p}(t)$$


where $[K_{ij}] = [\delta_{ij} k_i]$ has node degrees on the main diagonal and zeros everywhere else.

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-  Extra concerns: multiplicity of eigenvalue = 1, and network connectedness.




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-  Beautiful implication: probability of finding Barry travelling along any edge is **uniform**.
-  Diffusion in real space smooths things out.
-  On networks, uniformity occurs on edges.
-  So in fact, diffusion in real space is **about the edges too** but we just don't see that.

Other pieces:

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Can also show that maximum eigenvalue magnitude is indeed 1.

