



SEMINAR SERIES /TRINITY 2013

Seminar convenors: Dr Tim Hannigan, Dr Marc Ventresca, Dr Felix Reed-Tsochas

'Some Assembly Required: Organizing in the 21st Century'

Professor Noshir Contractor

Director of the Science of Networks in Communities (SONIC)
Research Group, Northwestern University

Friday 14th June, 15.00-17.00

Seminar Room A, Saïd Business School

Noshir Contractor is the Jane S. & William J. White Professor of Behavioral Sciences in the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science, the School of Communication and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, USA. He is the Director of the Science of Networks in Communities (SONIC) Research Group at Northwestern University.

He is investigating factors that lead to the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of dynamically linked social and knowledge networks in a wide variety of contexts including communities of practice in business, translational science and engineering communities, public health networks and virtual worlds. His research program has been funded continuously for over 15 years by major grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation with additional current funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), Army Research Institute, Army Research Laboratory, Air Force Research Laboratory, and the Gates Foundation.

Professor Contractor has published or presented over 250 research papers dealing with communicating and organizing. His book titled Theories of Communication Networks (co-authored with Professor Peter Monge and published by Oxford University Press) received the 2003 Book of the Year award from the Organizational Communication Division of the National Communication Association and was translated into Simplified Chinese in 2010. He is the lead developer of C-IKNOW (Cyberinfrastructure for Inquiring Knowledge Networks On the Web), a socio-technical environment to understand and enable networks among communities, as well as Blanche, a software environment to simulate the dynamics of social networks.

ABSTRACT:

Recent technological advances provide comprehensive digital traces of social actions, interactions, and transactions. These data provide an unprecedented exploratorium to model the socio-technical motivations for creating, maintaining, dissolving, and reconstituting into teams - for research, business, or social causes. Using examples from research in virtual organizations and massively multiplayer online games, Contractor will argue that Network Science serves as the foundation for the development of social network theories and methods to help advance our ability to understand the emergence of effective teams. More importantly, he will argue that these insights will also enable effective teams by building a new generation of recommender systems that leverage our research insights on the socio-technical motivations for creating teams.

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Seminar webpage:
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