



Polinformatics
New data, new methods, new insights

About this Workshop (updated 8/27)

When we first proposed the Polinformatics Research Coordination Network in 2012, it was to capitalize on recent decisions by governments around the world to post all kinds of data on the internet. These data were often essentially dumped with little regard to public accessibility. The stated goal of Polinformatics was to draw attention to these challenging research opportunities and encourage collaborations between social scientists, journalists and computer and information scientists.

Our experience suggests that such collaborations can't be orchestrated. They happen when people discover that they have complementary interests. The schedule includes lots of free time for precisely this reason. Learning from people with different interests and research orientations should be the highlight of this workshop.

And if you do end up collaborating, let us know!

Polinformatics 2017 Workshop Schedule

Monday August 28th

4-6pm: Check-in and Reception

6pm: keynote: [Noah Smith](#)

“What's New in NLP? An Update for Text-As-Data Researchers and Everyone Else”

This talk presents an up-to-date snapshot of some recent work in natural language processing. Lately, NLP is experiencing an episode of deep fascination with representation learning. In this talk, I will describe new ways to use representation learning in models of natural language. Noting that a data-driven model always assumes a theory (not necessarily a good one), I will argue for the benefits of language-appropriate inductive bias for representation-learning-infused models of language. Such bias often comes in the form of assumptions baked into a model, constraints on an inference algorithm, or linguistic analysis applied to data. Important kinds of bias in much of NLP (including what I'll discuss in this talk) have come from linguistic theories, but they might also come from social-scientific theories. I will focus on new models of documents and of sentential semantic structures, and I will emphasize abstract, reusable components and their assumptions rather than applications.

7pm: dinner

Tuesday August 29th

7:30: Breakfast

9:00-9:45:

Lightning talks 1 (Great Hall) Moderator: John Wilkerson

Molly Roberts, "Mass Digitization of Chinese Court Decisions: How to Use Text as Data in the Field of Chinese Law"

Cristan Grant and Michael Crespin, "Understanding Native American Sovereignty"

Bryce Dietrich, Daniel Shultz and Tracy Jacquith, "This Floor Speech Will Be Televised: Understanding the Factors that Influence When Floor Speeches Appear on Cable Television"

(15 minute break)

10:00-10:45:

Lightning talks 2 (Large Conference Room) Moderator: Jennifer Tobin

Patrick Herron and Nathan Sanders, "Integrating Disparate Public Data Sources to Support Water Quality Oversight in New England"

Jennifer Otten and Anne Althaus, "Evidence-based Policymaking: Pathways for improving government-academic partnerships"

Jose Manuel Magallenes, "Government and Congress dynamics: exploring party switching in the Peruvian Congress and its relationship with the political strength of the Executive"

Lightning talks 3 (Learning Studio 102) Moderator: Christan Grant

Nora Webb Williams, "Computer Vision for Political Science Research: A Study of Online Protest Images"

Paul Zachary, "Who Protests? Using Social Media Data to Estimate How Social Context Influences Political Behavior and Participation"

Kelsey Shoub, Shifting Debate to Shift Policy: How Frames Influence Policy

Lightning talks 4 (Private Dining Room) Moderator: Natalie Ahn

Ryan Muther, "Charting the Changes: Modeling Edits in the Lawmaking Process"

Matthew Denny, "Legislative Hitchhikers: Re-envisioning Legislative Productivity and Bill Sponsorship Success"

Miklos Sebok, "The Formal Quality of Legislative Outputs: An Empirical Indicator with Evidence from Hungary"

(45 minute break)

11:30-12:15:

Lightning talks 5 (Large Conference Room) Moderator: Matt Denny

Stan Oklobdzija, "Dark Parties: Dark Money Networks and Negative Advertising"

Mitchell Goist, "Understanding the Structure of the Global Human Trafficking Network using the Trafficking in Persons Report"

Josh Ryan, "Whose Bills are Networked? Legislative Effectiveness and Bill Connections"

Lightning talks 6 (Learning Studio 102) Moderator: Robert Shaffer

Jennifer Tobin, "A bit of regulatory chill? Bilateral Investment Treaties and the Enactment of Environmental Regulations"

Maraam Dwidar, "Interest Group Coalition Building in the Regulatory State"

Nick Or, "How Political Liberalization Slows Down Legislative Speed in Authoritarian Regimes: An Event History Analysis on Hong Kong's Legislative Bills"

Lightning talks 7 (Private Dining Room) Moderator: Nicole Baerg

Zuhaib MahMood, "Babbling or signaling? A research note assessing the informative value of speeches delivered at the UN General Assembly via voting patterns on resolutions"

Christopher Witko, "Using Congressional Speech to Measure Attention to Economic Problems"

Cory Beldon, "In the Deep End of the Echo Chamber: Analyzing Legislative Response to Severe Drought in the US and Australia"

(2.5 hour break – to the beach for lunch?)

2:45-3:30:

Lightning talks 8 (Large Conference Room) Moderator: Noah Smith

Nicole Baerg, “Domain Adaptation for Automatic Detection of Speculative Sentences”

Natalie Ahn, “Comparing NLP Methods for Identifying Policy Decisions in Government Documents”

Robert Shaffer, “Formal Methods of Concept Formation”

Lightning talks 10 (Private Dining Room) Moderator: Molly Roberts

Annemieke van den Dool and Mattias van den Dool Enebjörk, “Measuring post-crisis legal change in China: A computational approach

Joshua Boston, “Language of Lawmaking: Strategic Opinion Complexity and Precedent Treatment on the U.S. Courts of Appeal”

Daniel Mosesson, “A New Approach for Developing Neutral Redistricting Plans”

Lightning talks 9 (Learning Studio 102) Moderator: Michael Crespin

Erinn Lauterbach, “Incentives, Punishments, and Oversight: How Legislators Turn Preference into Policy”

Stefani Langehennig, Ryan Bell† and E. Scott Adler, “Understanding Congress Through the United States Code”

Michael Lynch, “The Changing Roll Call Record and Measures of Congressional Behavior, 1901-2012.”

(2 hour break – trail time?)

5:30-6:30: Government Text as Data Roundtable and consulting (optional)

6:30 Reception

7:00 Dinner

Wednesday August 30th

7:30 Breakfast

9:00-10:30 Grant Writing Roundtable and consulting (optional)

11:00 Lunch/Closing Plenary