

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

2014 – 2015

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Thursday, November 20 2014

Where: 741 JMHH

When: 3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

TREASURE HUNT: SOCIAL LEARNING IN THE FIELD

(JOINT WITH ADAM SZEIDL AND TUAN PHAN)

ABSTRACT: We seed individuals in a real-world social network with information about quiz questions to experimentally measure the effectiveness of social learning. Using data on both the pre-existing social network and the actual conversation network, we find strong evidence that people learn from direct and indirect friends, but also that information transmission is imperfect. We then compare two theories of social learning: a DeGroot-style model in which people double-count signals that reach them through multiple paths, and a “Streams” model in which people tag the source of information and hence do not double-count. Structural and reduced-form estimates provide support for the Streams model combined with probabilistic transmission.