



Research as Storytelling: Taking the Local Global

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Getting the Right Story, and Getting the Story Right

- The most important aspect of any research - or writing in general - is to target the right audience
- The best stories are often hidden in plain site, and sometimes the most influential work comes from methods applied across disciplines, stories told to a new audience or novel ways of thinking about old problems

One Example: Niche Cumulation (Geels, 2002)



Early steamships were inefficient and not perceived as being a threat to traditional shipping, but eventually disrupted the entire industry

Working Across Disciplines on Everyday Problems

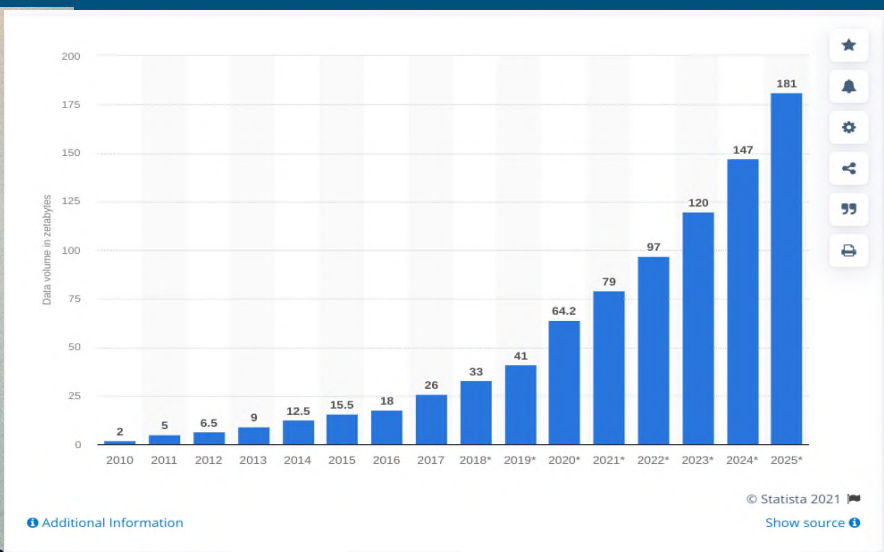
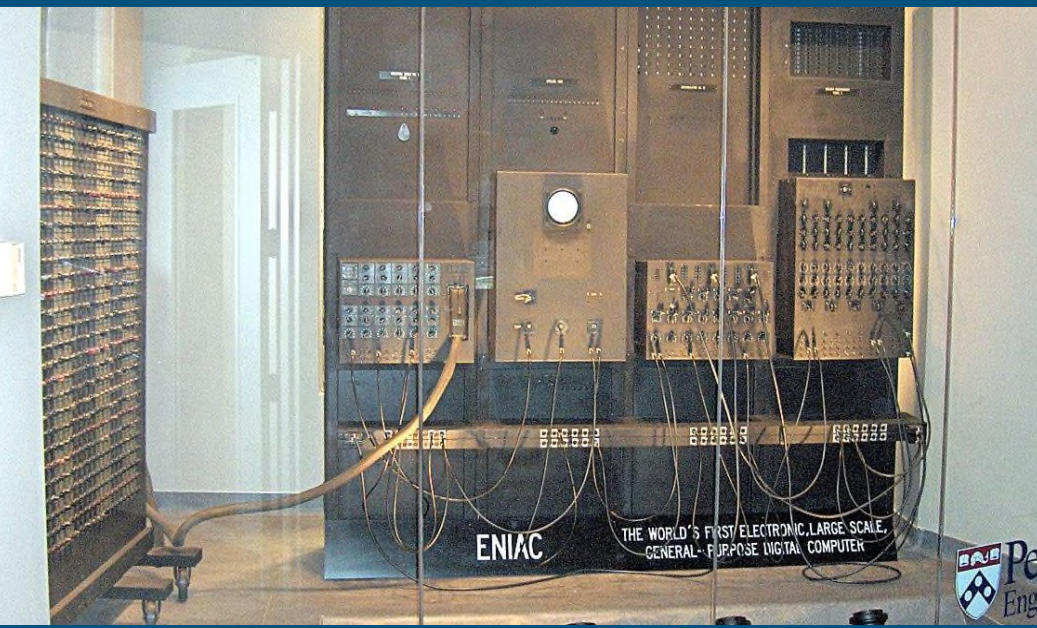
- Applying novel methods can make an impact in new ways (ex. Geertz, 1978)
- Working with co-authors from other fields can improve your work and yield new insights
- Looking closely at commonplace problems generates new insights

Example: Kathy Eisenhardt (1989) showed that fast decision makers use more, not less, information than do slow decision makers. The former also develop more, rather than fewer, alternatives. Fast decisions made on this pattern of behaviors leads to superior performance. (Counterintuitive)

The Future Arrives Too Soon

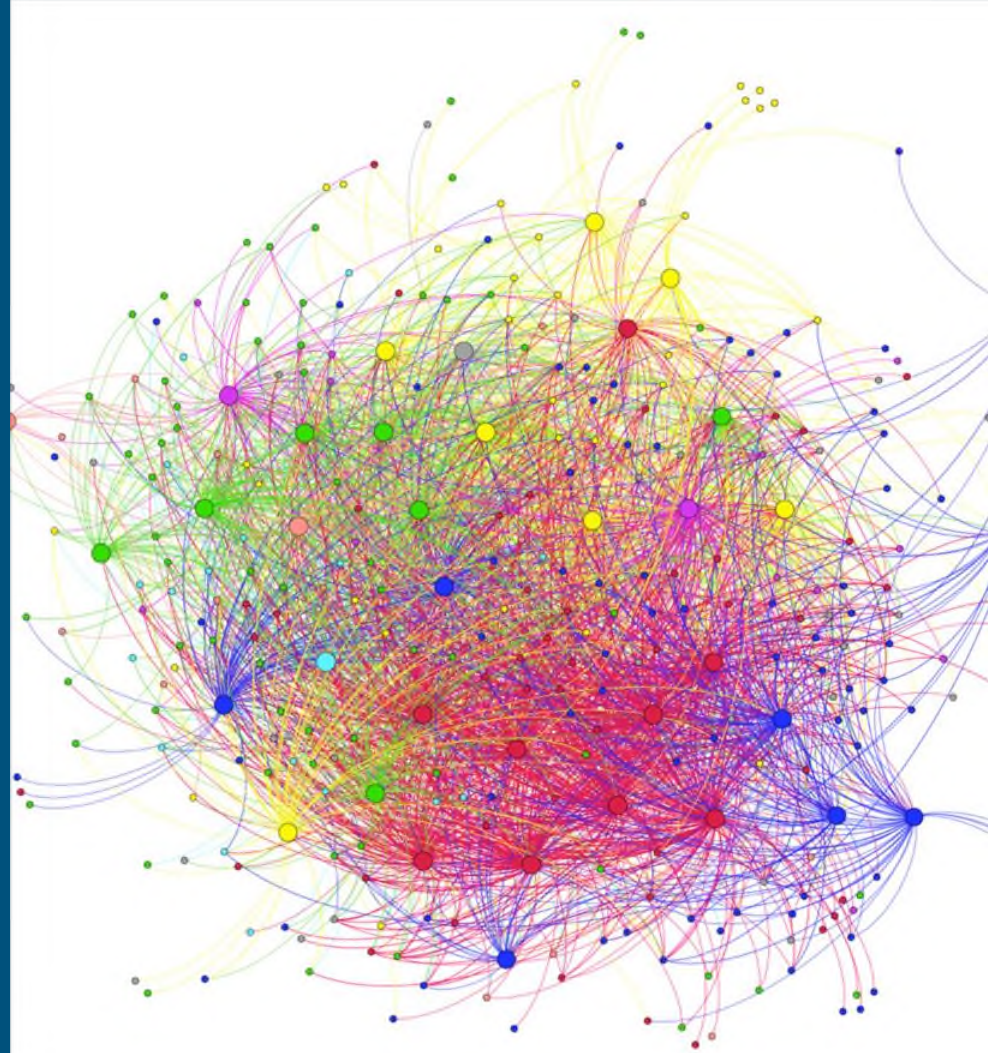
- Alvin Toffler argued there will be as much change in the coming 20-year period as there was in the past century
- Despite a massive increase in raw data, our ability to interpret this lags the transformation of our society
- The nature of research has changed (e.g., digital humanities, social networks, information economy, new voices)

Information Growth is Exponential and Lacks a Clear Upper Bound, but Human Capacity to Understand it Inherently Limited



Amount of data created, consumed, and stored 2010-2025

An economy built on information differs markedly from one built on a foundation of capital and material goods, with very different systemic risks and considerations for governments, organizations and individuals



How to Get Started?

Two major strategies:

1. Identify a gap in the literature, and think about how everyday phenomena around you may help fill it
2. Identify and take a phenomenon unique to an environment to a new audience (i.e., get them to look at the world in a new way)

Either approach involves generating an original research question and proposing a way to investigate and answer that question.

Your End Product: Meaningful Research with Real-World Implications and Global Impact

- Think about extensions (e.g., case studies, policy work, articles for popular outlets, podcasts, etc.) for your work
- Ask the following:
 - 1) Who may gain something useful from these insights?
 - 2) What is the best medium to communicate with this audience?
 - 3) Why might policy makers or lay people care about this research?

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Рахмат!

For additional resources or questions, please feel free to contact me at gdunn@pmu.edu.sa