

NORTHWESTERN INSTITUTE ON COMPLEX SYSTEMS PRESENTS

NICO

Distinguished Speaker Series

Monday, October 13th, 2008 - 5:00 PM - James L. Allen Center, Rm. 140



Mark Newman

“Influence and the Spread of Opinions in Social Networks”

Social networks have attracted plenty of attention in the last few years with the rise of on-line networking services like Facebook and LinkedIn. But social networks, as networks of personal or professional links, of course existed long before the Internet and play an enormous role in our lives, whether we realize it or not. This talk will describe some of the things researchers have learned about the form and function of social networks and their effect on the way the world works, focusing particularly on how influence spreads through networks, how we can spot that spread by experiments on the networks themselves, and how network structure is in turn affected by people's opinions.

Mark Newman is the Paul A. M. Dirac Professor of Physics at the University of Michigan. He received a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Oxford in 1991 and conducted postdoctoral research at Cornell University before joining the staff of the Santa Fe Institute, a think-tank in New Mexico devoted to the study of complex systems. In 2002 he left Santa Fe to move to the University of Michigan, where he currently holds a joint position as a professor in the Department of Physics and in the university's Center for the Study of Complex Systems.

Professor Newman's research is on networks, including computer networks and social networks, and he has worked on topics as diverse as the spread of computer viruses on the Internet, the spread of human diseases over social networks, the pattern of collaborations between scientists in different fields, and the networks formed by committees in the US House of Representatives.



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