Assessing the impact of blogs: Some evidence and analysis

Description

Tweet

See

The Impact of Economic Blogs â?? Part I: Dissemination by David McKenzie, Berk Ã?zler, 2011-08-05.

- **Question 1**: â??Do blogs lead to increased dissemination of research papers?â?•â?•
- Answer: â??Blogging about a paper causes a large increase in the number of abstract views and downloads in the same month. These increases are massive compared to the typical abstract views and downloads these papers get. However, only a minority of readers click through the blog to the download.â?• [view paper by McKenzie for more details]

The Impact of Blogs Part II: Blogging enhances the bloggerâ??s reputation. But, does it influence policy? by David McKenzie, Berk Ã?zler, 2011-08-10

- **Question 2**: Does blogging improve reputation?
- Answer: â??Regular blogging is strongly and significantly associated with being more likely to be viewed as a favorite economist.â?•
- **Question 3**: Does blogging influence policy?
- Answer1: This is where we havenâ??t been able to find much evidence to date [see blog for details of some case examples]
- Answer2: In response to a case example provided by a reader: â??my sense is that:
  i) very few posts actually influence policy
  ii) there are very few readers of blogs who are actually in a position to influence policy, but iii) it only takes one post read by the right reader to potentially make a big difference. This poses enormous problems for statistical inference, since these are likely rare events, but I think it is still useful to see whether there are in fact any plausible candidates.â?•

The Impact of Blogs Part III: Results from a new survey and an experiment! by David McKenzie, Berk Ã?zler, COMING ON 2011-08-15

- Including these headings: Survey evidence â?? why donâ??t you just ask blog readers?; The Experiment; Impacts on institutional reputation; Impacts on knowledge and attitudes.
- **The Summary:**â??Using a variety of data sources and empirical techniques, we feel we have provided quantitative evidence that economic blogs are doing more than just providing a new source of procrastination for writers and readers. To our knowledge, these findings are the first quantitative evidence to show that blogs are having some impacts. There are large impacts on dissemination of research; significant benefits in terms of the bloggers becoming better known and more respected within the profession; positive spillover effects for the bloggersâ??

institutions; and some evidence from our experiment that they may influence attitudes and knowledge among their readers. Blogs potentially have many impacts, and we are only measuring some of them, but the evidence we have suggests economics blogs are playing an important role in the profession.â?•

RD Comment: Two comments of note towards the end of the paper:

- â??â?¦Table 6 shows that blog readership has not changed many of these attitudes towards methodology, with no significant experimental changes in the full sample. Amongst the subsamples, the most significant change occurs in the male sample, where there is an increase in the proportion that believe that it is difficult to succeed as a development economist on the job market without having a randomized experiment.â?•
- â??There is also some evidence among the research-focused subsample that more agree with the statement that external validity is no more of a concern in experiments than in most non-experimental studies (something discussed in Davidâ??s favorite rant).â?•

- RD comment: This may be true, but experimental studies are often held up as being of more value than non-experimental studies. So the lack of difference is a problem, not a non-issue

Category

1. Uncategorized

Tags

1. blogs
2. dissemination
3. influence
4. policy

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