

Complex Social Networks

The book provides a systematic and self-contained account of the fast-developing theory of complex social networks. Social networks are central to the understanding of most socio-economic phenomena in the modern world. The classical approach to studying them, however, relies on a methodology that abstracts from their size and complexity and is thus hardly suitable for the task. In contrast, the approach taken here keeps complexity at the core but aims at integrating it fruitfully with the incentive considerations that are preeminent in traditional economic analysis. The treatment starts with a detailed discussion of the basic models that act as "benchmarks" for the complex-network literature: random networks, small worlds, and scale-free networks. Then, it separately studies the three different forces that underlie, with varying intensities, almost all interesting network phenomena in social contexts: diffusion, search, and play. Finally, these forces are combined into a unified framework that is brought to bear on the important issue of network formation and the coevolution of agents' behavior and their pattern of interaction.

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