

## University of Frankfurt Summer PhD Workshop 2011 on Field Experiments

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The summer PhD workshop on field experiments will be spread across two dates. The idea is to expose you to the methodological advantages and logistical challenges in implementing field experiments and to review some of the recent topics and possible avenues for future research.

The idea of this workshop is not to be simply a presentation in lecture format but to give several opportunities for you to get hands on experience, should you want it, with designing field experiments. To achieve this I have the following structure in mind.

(A)

Before our first meeting I would like you to read the short attached paper. The identity of the authors is not important. I would like you to write a short referee report about this paper. In particular I want you

- write a one paragraph summary of the paper,
- write two short bullet points on why this paper is great or interesting
- write two more detailed bullet points on the most important problems you see with this paper.

There is no need to do any additional research to do this assignment. Instead, I had rather you spent a little time thinking about it as I want you to get into the mind of researchers who do such work, the challenges they were facing, and whether they designed the experiment in accordance with the objectives they set for themselves.

(B)

Also before our meeting it would help to brush up on your econometrics a little. As you know, the experimental approach makes most of the econometrics simpler as identification for the most part is handled by the randomization and the auxiliary data collection effort. What I want you to review is OLS, logistic regressions, dummy variables, interaction terms, interpretation of coefficients in log-log and log-linear models, and quantile regressions. As you can see all this is pretty basic stuff except, perhaps, for the last topic. In case you don't have a book I think you just cannot go wrong by purchasing the cheap and great book by Angrist and Pischke "Mostly Harmless Econometrics"

<http://www.mostlyharmlesseconometrics.com/>

(C)

On our first meeting I will take you through various aspects of implementing and using field experiments. If you want to read something beforehand, there is a good review paper coming out this summer at the Journal of Economic Perspectives ;-)

Bandier, Oriana, Iwan Barankay, and Imran Rasul. 2011. "Field Experiments with Firms." IZA DP 5723 [http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/papers/viewAbstract?dp\\_id=5723](http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/papers/viewAbstract?dp_id=5723)

The topics we will cover are:

- (I) A little on statistics of randomization
- (II) A lot on logistics and success stories on how to implement field experiments
- (III) The importance of auxiliary data collection (survey, archival data, matching with other data sets)
- (IV) Current and future topics in field experiment

The topics will be covered by looking at a recent set of projects of mine (this is for purely practical reasons as I am most familiar with the work I do myself so I will be in the best position to answer all your questions), but I will also be drawing on other papers.

At the end of the workshop I then want to discuss with you your referee reports. The pedagogic advantage of doing it at the end of the day is so that you can check whether you learnt something in the lecture by reassessing your referee report in light of the material covered during the workshop and you can try to apply it.

(D) The next step of the summer workshop will be a month later (date TBC but it will be in mid-August).

For that second date I want you to think about a field experiment you would like to run. You can, if you want draw on an idea you are already working on in your PhD or you could think of a new idea altogether.

What I want you to focus on is

- (i) think what the question is you want to find an answer to (i.e. the contribution to the literature);
- (ii) how do you want to design the experiment to shed light on the question (What is the main hypotheses and what additional hypotheses would you like to test to shed light on the underlying mechanism at play?);
- (iii) describe the logistics of implementing the field experiment (where do you want to do it, what is the timeline, what is the cost).

As always in economics, backward-induction is helpful. So start by thinking about the context where you want to do the field experiment (a company you know or a venue you heard about are promising candidates). Then assess what the feasible experiment could be and how it can help to answer the theoretical question you have in mind.

The idea here is that again you apply the lesson from the first workshop, see point (C) above. In the interim I am always available on email and phone If you want to discuss your idea with me in the time between the first and the second meeting.

If you have further questions now or later about this workshop do not hesitate to get in touch with me at [barankay@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:barankay@wharton.upenn.edu)