SEMINAR SERIES / Trinity 2012

Convenor: Felix Reed-Tsochas, CABDyN Complexity Centre, Saïd Business School

‘Broadcasters and Hidden Influentials in Online Protest Diffusion’

Dr Sandra Gonzáles-Bailón
Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford

Tuesday 22nd May 2012, 12.30 -14.00
Seminar Room 13, Saïd Business School

Sandra González-Bailón graduated in sociology at the University of Barcelona. She came to Oxford as an MSc student, graduating with distinction at Lady Margaret Hall (2003-2004), and moved on to complete her DPhil in Sociology as a member of Nuffield College (2004-2007). Prior to coming to the OII, she held an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship in the department of Sociology (2007-2008). She is still affiliated to Nuffield College as a Research Fellow, where she co-organises the OII-Nuffield Social Networks Seminar Series.

Sandra is broadly interested in how internet technologies shape the flow of information and how online networks influence exposure to ideas and debates. She is involved in several projects that explore the structure and evolution of political discussion networks, and that use the contents of those discussions to track public opinion. More information about these projects can be found on the projects page of her website.

ABSTRACT:

This paper explores the growth of online mobilizations using data from the ‘indignados’ (the ‘outraged’) movement in Spain, which emerged under the influence of the revolution in Egypt and as a precursor to the global Occupy mobilizations. The data tracks Twitter activity around the protests that took place in May 2011, which led to the formation of camp sites in dozens of cities all over the country and massive daily demonstrations during the week prior to the elections of May 22. We reconstruct the network of tens of thousands of users, and monitor their message activity for a month (25 April 2011 to 25 May 2011). Using both the structure of the network and levels of activity in message exchange, we identify four types of users and we analyze their role in the growth of the protest. The paper draws from theories of online collective action and research on information diffusion in networks.