Random Networks (ER Model)

Social Networks Analysis and Graph Algorithms

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Contents

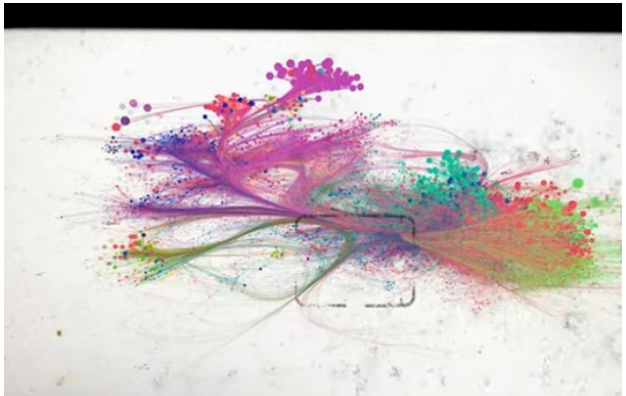
- The ER model
- Degree distribution under the ER model

Sources

- A. L. Barabási (2016). Network Science – Chapter 03
- Data-Driven Social Analytics course by Vicenç Gómez and Andreas Kaltenbrunner
- URLs cited in the footer of specific slides

Network Models

Video (01:20-02:26) by Albert-László Barabási (cont.)



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfgjHoVCZwU
Until "… in a random network, the average dominates."

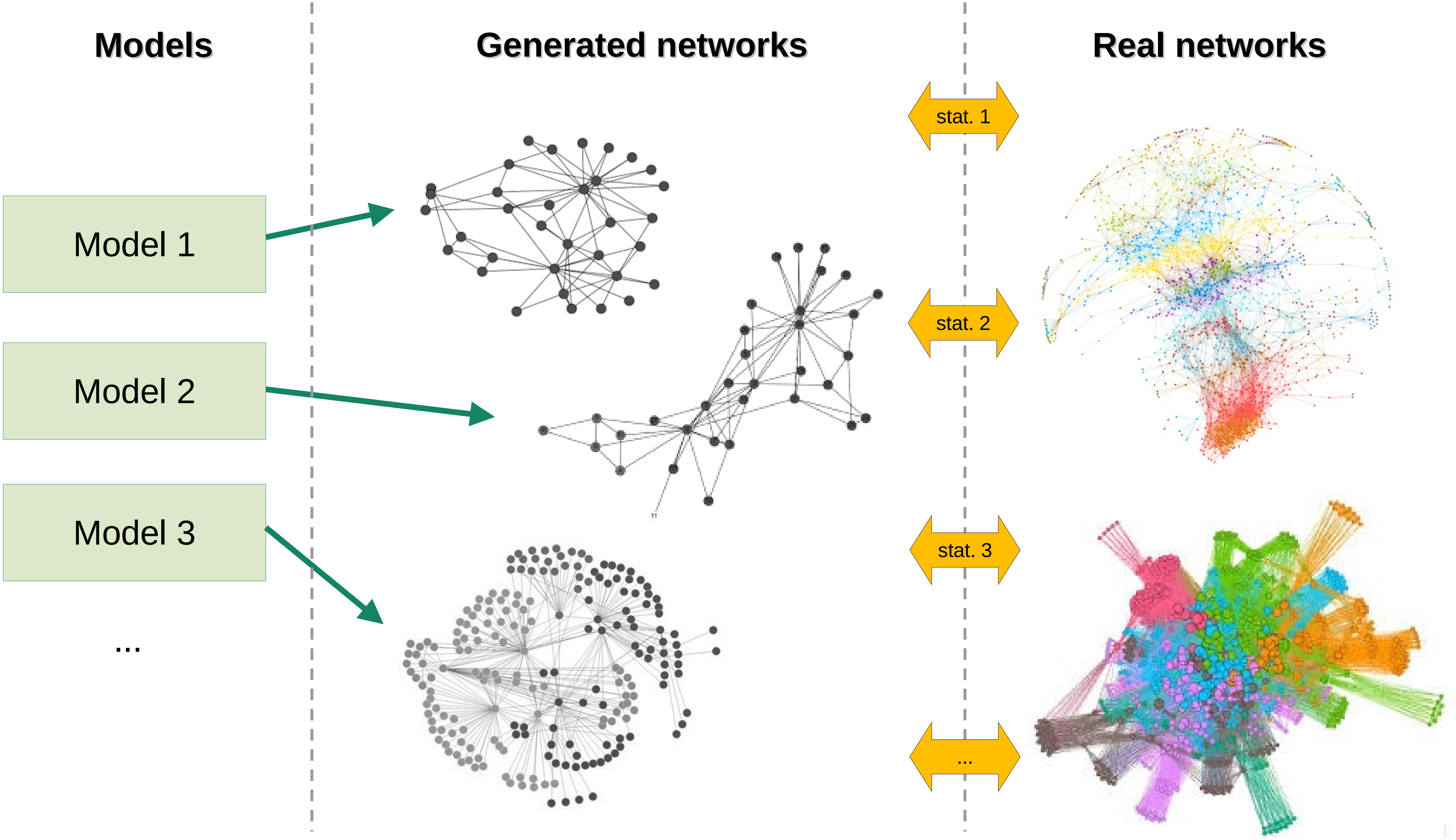
Network models

- Networks of many different types have similar properties:
  - Short paths
  - Many triangles
  - Skewed degree distributions
- Where do such properties come from?
- How do nodes connect to each other? How are triangles formed?
- We will study **network models**, i.e., sets of instructions to create networks

Source: Menczer, Fortunato, Davis: A First Course on Networks Science. Cambridge, 2020.

Why studying network models?

- Our models will be **stochastic,** i.e., randomized
- Running **stochastic network models** can let us check if they generate networks that **look like real ones**
- Almost invariably, the generated networks will be similar to actual networks in some ways, but different in other ways


Models
Generated networks
Real networks
Model 1
Model 2
Model 3
...
stat. 1
stat. 2
stat. 3
...

The “Random Network”
Erdös-Rényi (ER) Model

Sounds like “ERDOSH and REGN”

Paul Erdös
(1913-1996)

Alfred Rényi
(1921-1970)

Meeting people at a party

- You pick a random person
- Talk to that person for a while, if there are good vibes, you are connected
- Then pick another person
  - And repeat
- The result is what we call a **random network**

Formalization (Erdös-Rényi or ER)

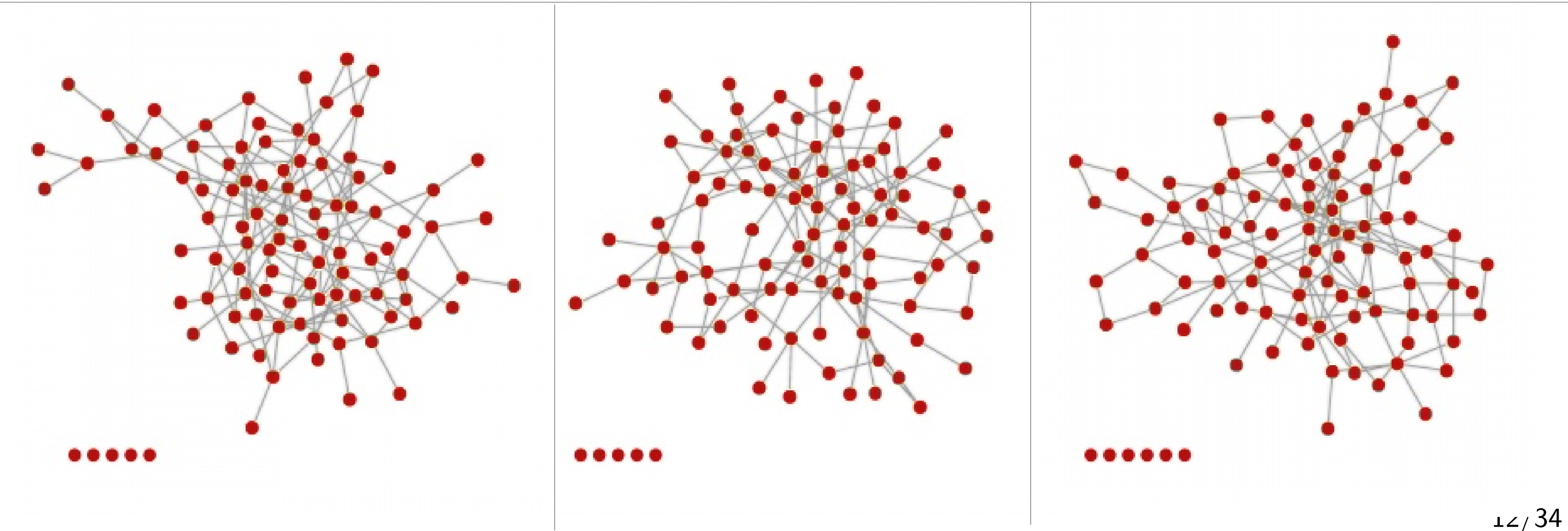
Sounds like "ERDOSH and REGN"

- For each pair of nodes in the graph
  - Perform a Bernoulli trial with probability p
    - **"Toss a biased coin with probability** p of landing heads"
  - If the trial succeeds, connect those nodes
    - "If the coin lands heads, connect those nodes"
- Repeat for all pairs $\dfrac{N(N-1)}{2}$

Example: 3 networks, same parameters

$$N = 100, p = 0.03$$

Nodes at the bottom ended up isolated

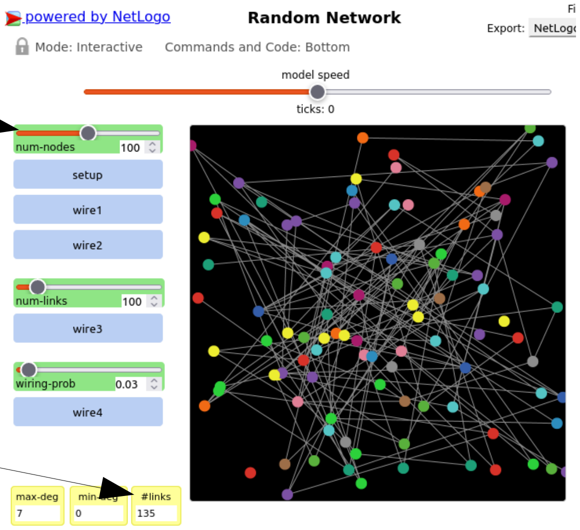


Exercise

Guess formula for ⟨L⟩

Go to netlogoweb.org/launch and select:
"IABM Textbook / chapter 5 / Random Network"

- Execute the "Random Network" program in Netlogo Web
  - Select num-nodes N (e.g., 100)
  - Click "setup"
  - Select wiring-prob p (e.g., 0.03)
  - Click "wire4"
  - Write down "#links" L somewhere
  - Repeat various times



- **Guess a formula for ⟨L⟩ as a function of N and p**

Pin board: https://upfbarcelona.padlet.org/chato/84a1nj59pkqpxvh3

Degree distribution

A key characteristic of a network: its degree distribution

- One of the most evident characteristics of a network is its **degree distribution**
  - Is this distribution very skewed? Or every node is close to some average? Is there a “typical” degree?
  - Does it look like the degree distribution predicted by a network formation model?
- We will spend a fair amount of time studying the degree distribution under various models

The binomial distribution

- The distribution of the probability of obtaining x successes in n independent trials, in which each trial has probability of succeeding p

$$p_x = \binom{n}{x} p^x (1-p)^{n-x}$$

$$\langle x \rangle = \sum_{x=0}^{n} x p_x = np$$

Degree distribution in ER model

- Simply a Binomial distribution
- Note that the maximum number of "successes" (links) of a node is N-1, hence:

$$p_k = \binom{N-1}{k} p^k (1-p)^{N-1-k}$$

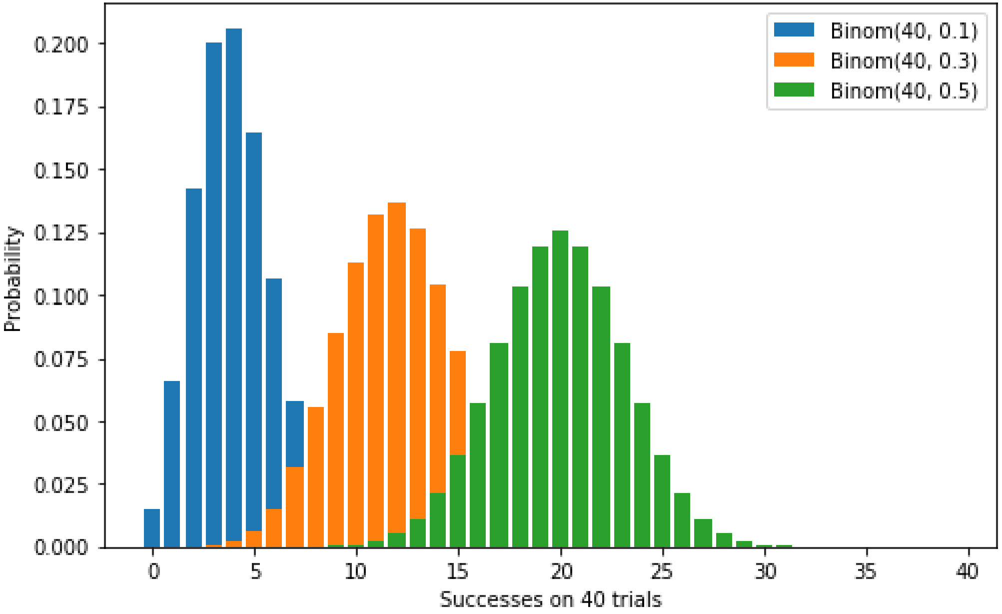
$$\langle k \rangle = p(N-1)$$

Degree distribution examples

- The peak is always at $\langle k \rangle = p(N-1)$

```
import numpy as np
from scipy.stats import binom
from matplotlib import pyplot as plt
```

```
x = np.arange(0, 40)
plt.figure(figsize=(8,5))
plt.bar(x, (binom(40, 0.1)).pmf(x), label='Binom(40, 0.1)')
plt.bar(x, (binom(40, 0.3)).pmf(x), label='Binom(40, 0.3)')
plt.bar(x, (binom(40, 0.5)).pmf(x), label='Binom(40, 0.5)')
plt.gca().legend()
plt.xlabel("Successes on 40 trials")
plt.ylabel("Probability")
plt.show()
```



python™

Expected number of links

- Expected number of links

$$\langle L \rangle = p \cdot L_{\max} = p\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$$

- Average degree

$$\langle k \rangle = \frac{2\langle L \rangle}{N} = p(N-1)$$

Exercise [B. 2016, Ex. 3.11.1]

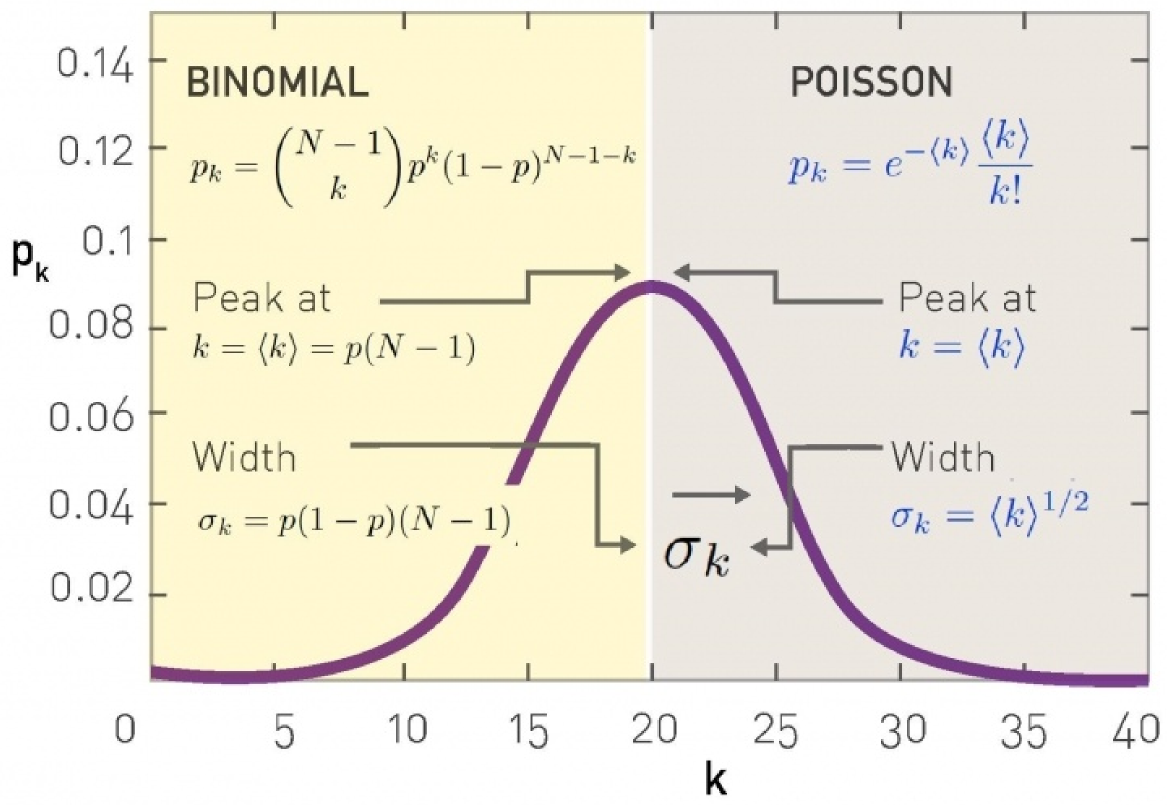
Expected number of links and average degree

- Consider an ER graph with N=3,000 p=10^{-3}
  1) What is the expected number of links ⟨L⟩?
  2) What is the average degree ⟨k⟩?

$$\langle L \rangle = p \cdot L_{\max} = p\frac{N(N-1)}{2}$$

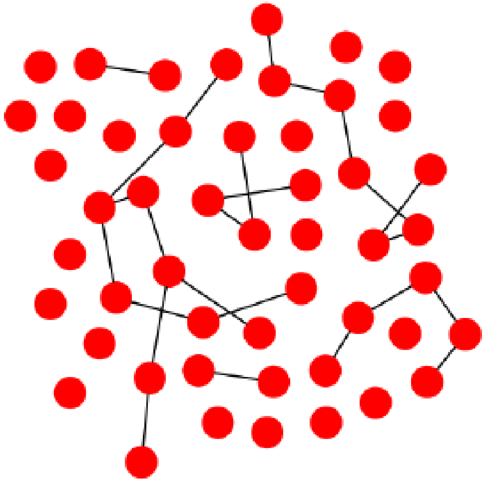
$$\langle k \rangle = \frac{2\langle L \rangle}{N} = p(N-1)$$

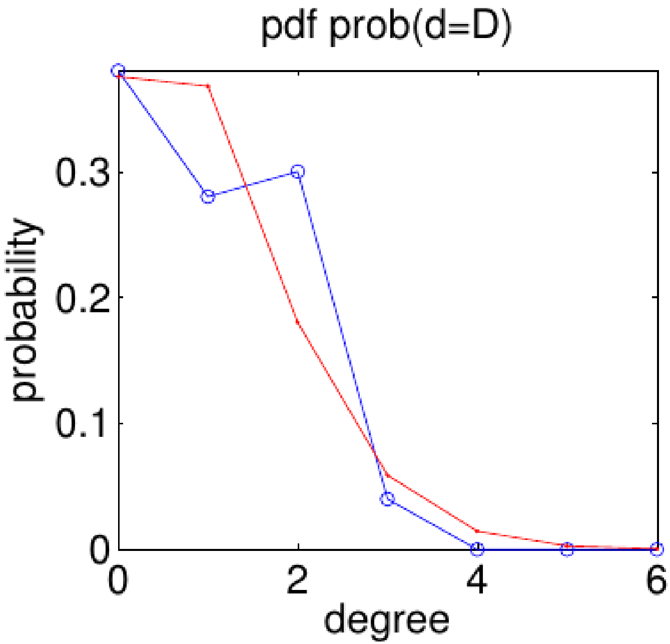
Approximation with a Poisson distribution for $\langle k \rangle \ll N$

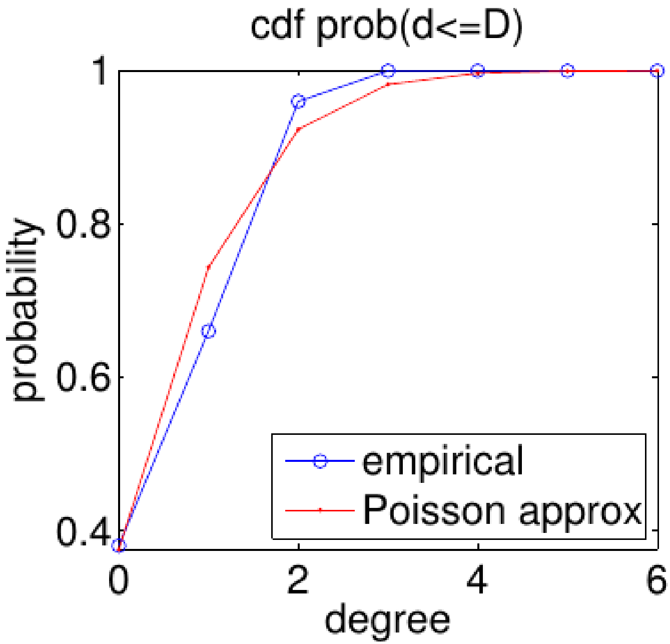


More examples (1/6)

$$N = 50, p = 0.02, \langle k \rangle \approx 1$$

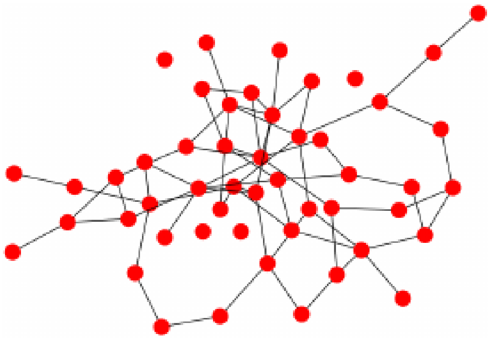


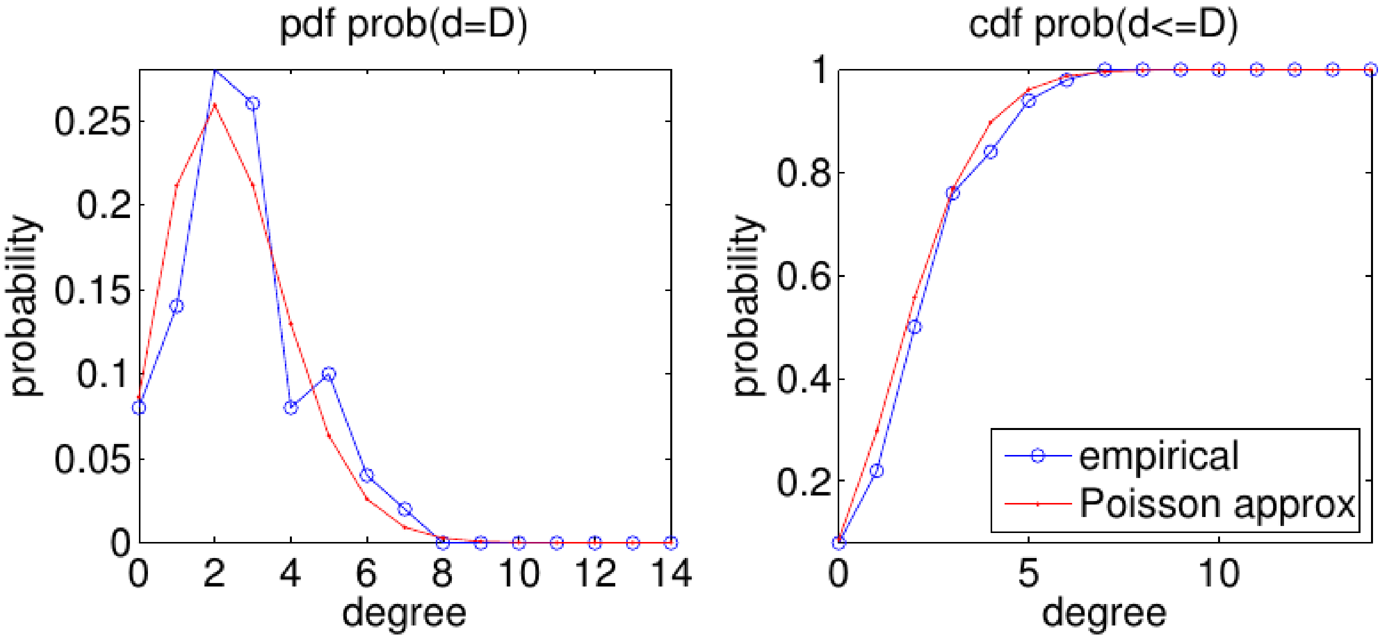




More examples (2/6)

$$N = 50, p = 0.05, \langle k \rangle \approx 2.5$$

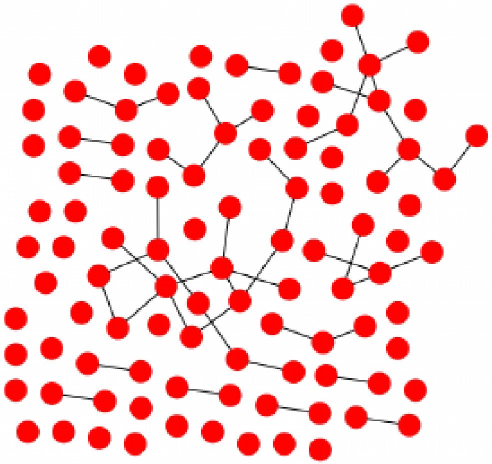


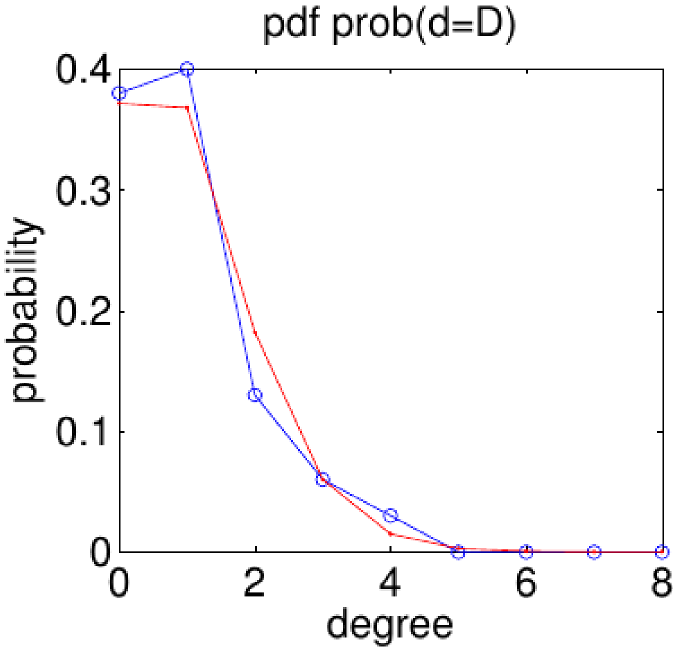


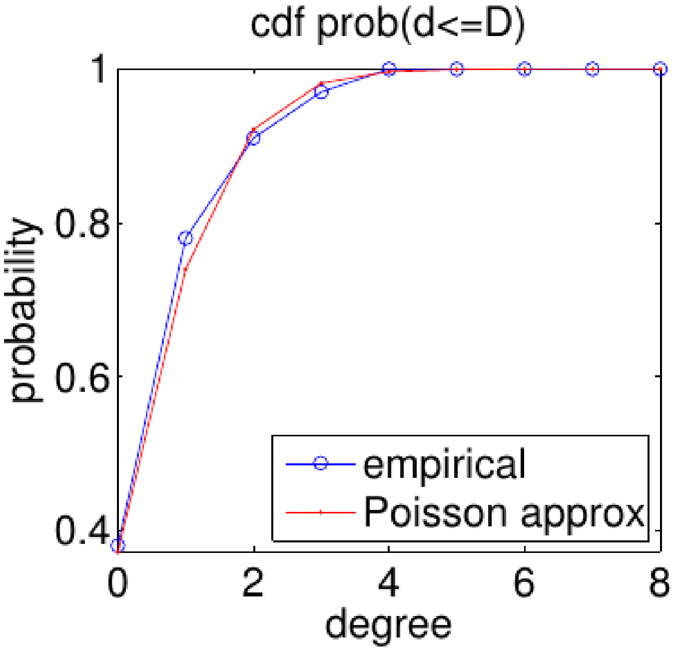
https://www.upf.edu/web/iis/DataDrivenSocialAnalytics

More examples (3/6)

$$N = 100, p = 0.01, \langle k \rangle \approx 1$$

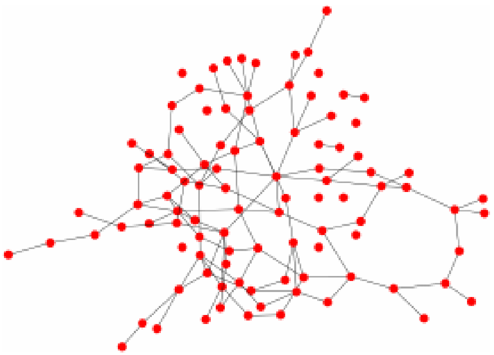


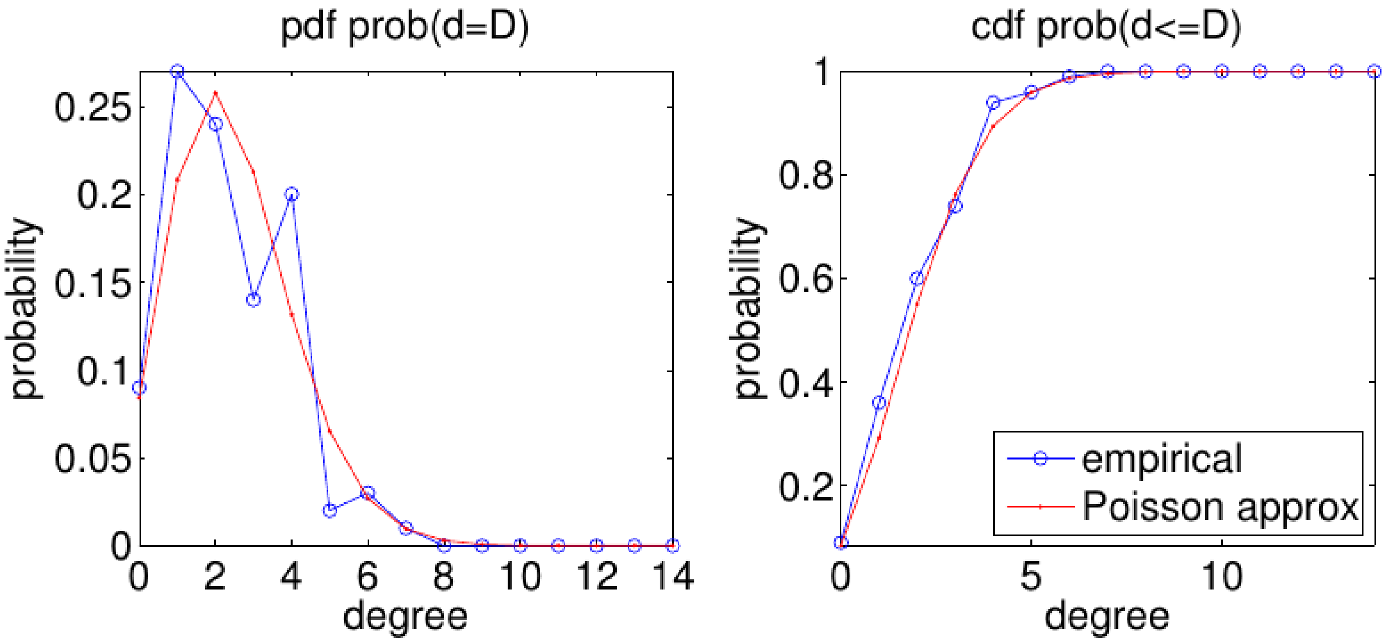




More examples (4/6)

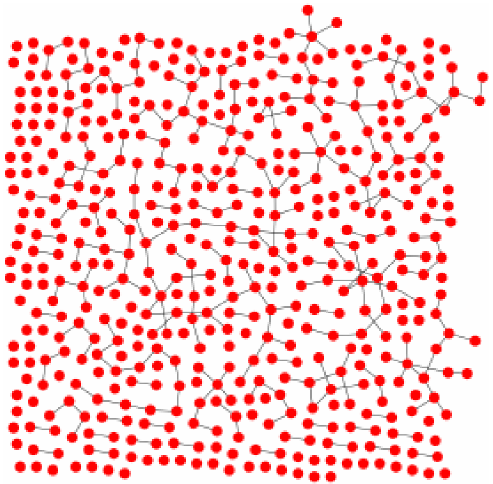
$$N = 100, p = 0.025, \langle k \rangle \approx 2.5$$

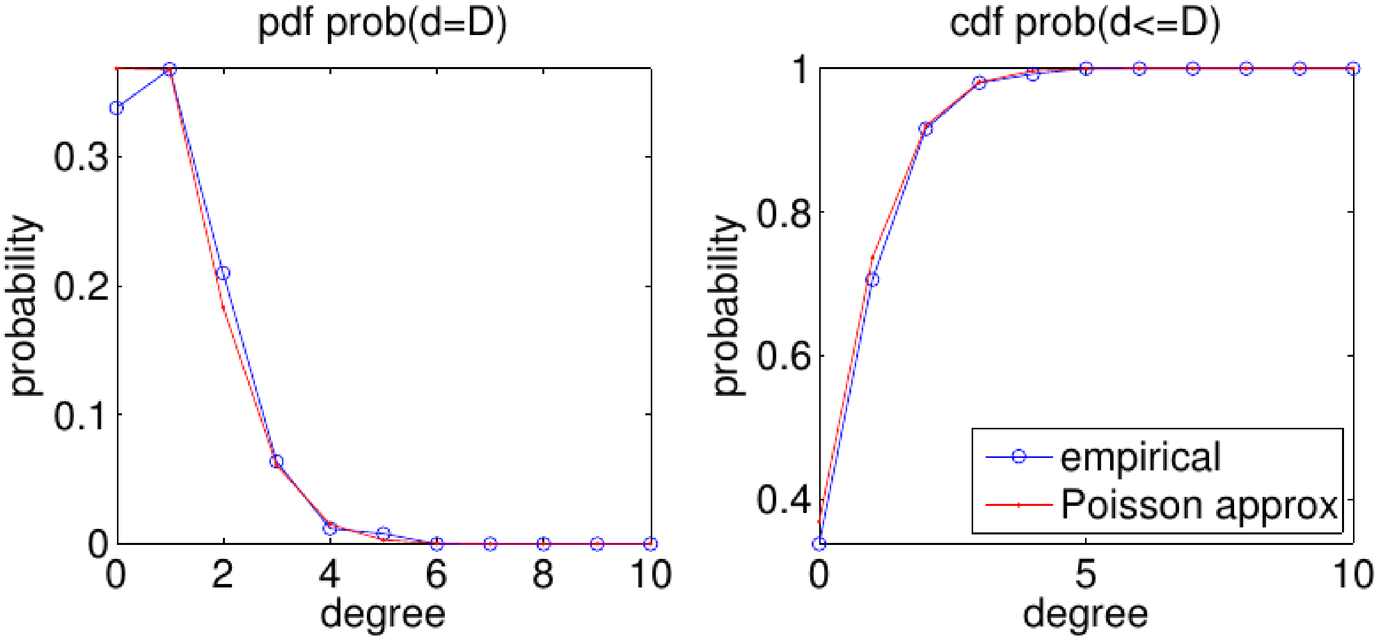




More examples (5/6)

$$N = 500, p = 0.002, \langle k \rangle \approx 1$$

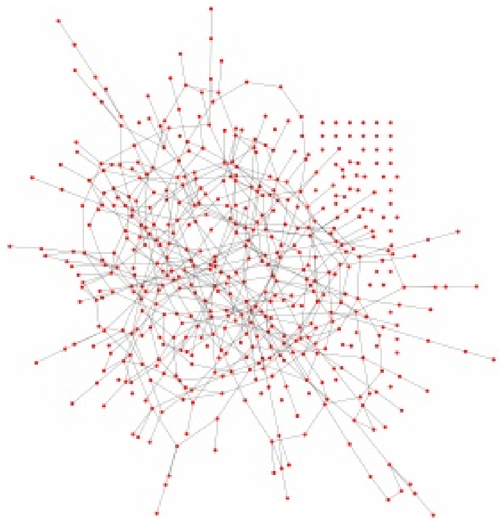


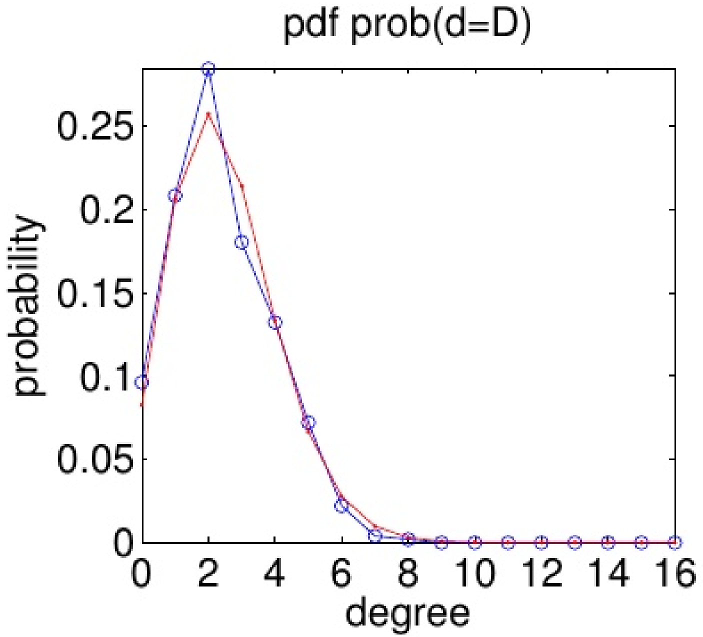


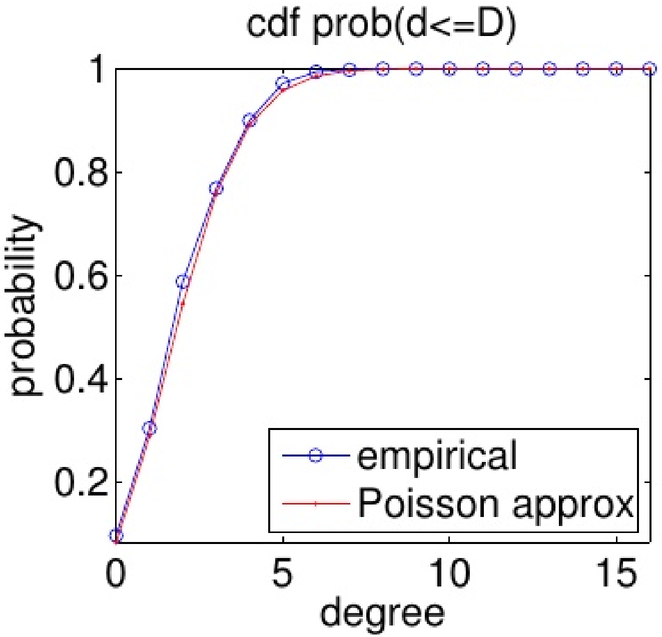
https://www.upf.edu/web/iis/DataDrivenSocialAnalytics

More examples (6/6)

$$N = 500, p = 0.005, \langle k \rangle \approx 2.5$$







https://www.upf.edu/web/iis/DataDrivenSocialAnalytics

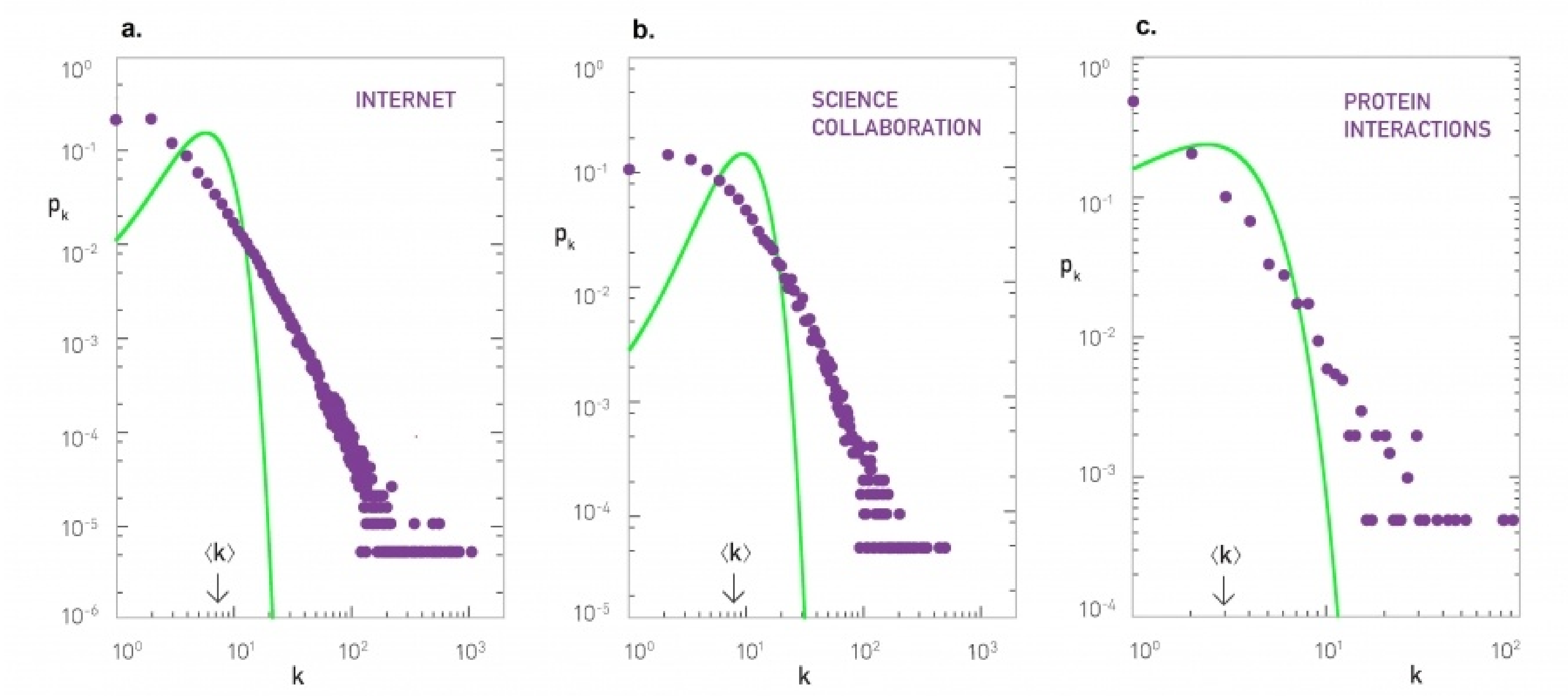
“Back of the envelope” calculations

- Suppose $N = 7 \times 10^9$
- Suppose $<k> = 1{,}000$
  - A person knows the name of approx. 1,000 others
- Then on expectation $k_{max} = 1{,}185$
- $<k> \pm \sigma$ is the range from 968 to 1,032
- Is this realistic?

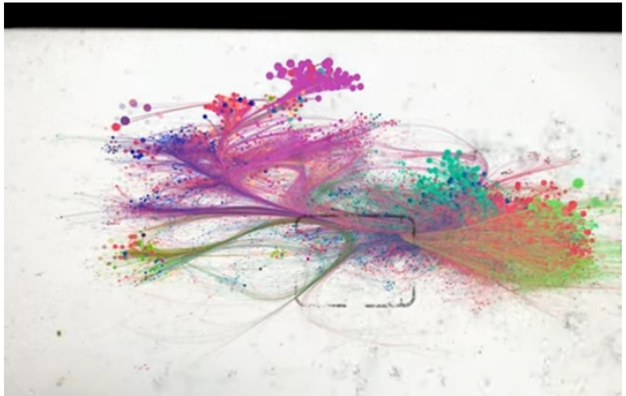
Survey: how many WhatsApp contacts do you have?

https://forms.gle/9xEYhzv2U5NrPQdH8

Real networks (green = $e^{-\langle k \rangle} \frac{\langle k \rangle^k}{k!}$)



Video (02:17-03:15) by Albert-László Barabási (cont.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfgjHoVCZwU
From "… in a random network, the average dominates."
To "… does not capture how networks form"

Summary

Things to remember

- The ER model
- Degree distribution in the ER model

Practice on your own

- Indicate the expected number of edges of a network with N=256, p=0.25; then compare your solution with the one on this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DckiyysQy4