

Altruism Squared? The Economics of Statelist Exchanges

Martin Weiss

University of Tuebingen, Germany

Presentation to the Stata Conference,
Washington DC, July 2009

Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Economic Behavior
- 3 Statalist Output
- 4 References

Outline

1 Introduction

2 Economic Behavior

3 Statalist Output

4 References

Short Quote

But all that said, Statalist when it works as intended is free, fast, friendly (modulo marginal grumping), clear and correct, so who's grumbling?

(Famous Statalist member, 7/20/2009)

(Fun) Facts about Statalist

As of June 2009: 3,281 members

▷ 1,667 Statalist proper

▷ 1,614 Digest

May mask huge dynamics

1,080 posts on average per month over period Jan 2007 -
May 2009

Posts first months of 2009:

▷ January: 1,169

▷ February: 1,275

▷ March: 1,624

▷ April: 1,398

▷ May: 923

Monthly averages over years 2005-2009: 947, 1,017,
1,045, 1,275, 1,277

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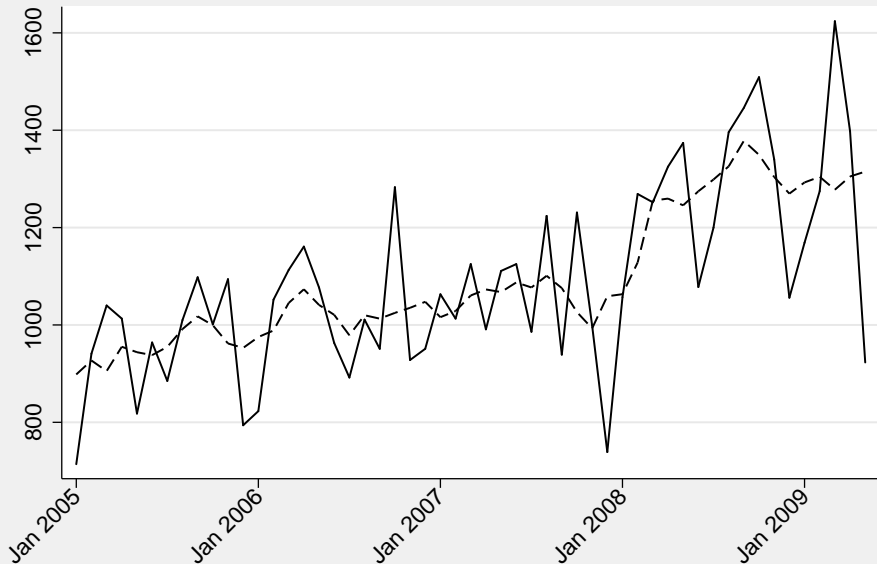
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Number of posts on Statalist



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Economic Behavior

The economics profession can explain a fair chunk of real-world phenomena:

Workers turn up for work in the morning

Students attend university instead of working

Savers queue at a bank

Volume discounts ("Buy one - get one free")

Three-class layout on transatlantic flights

Purchase of lottery tickets

Savers buy IPO shares

Free release of programs on ssc

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▷ Labor supply b/c market wage exceeds reservation wage

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▷ Discounted income over lifetime higher than for immediate labor supply

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▷ Interest rate high enough to induce deferred consumption

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▷ Lowers trading costs per unit, (part of) saving passed on to consumer

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▷ Product differentiation allows better adaption to demand curve

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▷ Utility function not globally concave

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▷ Small risk aversion / prospect of huge gains

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 - ▶ Two teams to beat the required threshold (10.10% vs. 10.09%)

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- Bottom line: Still amenable to economics

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- “Supply side concentration”

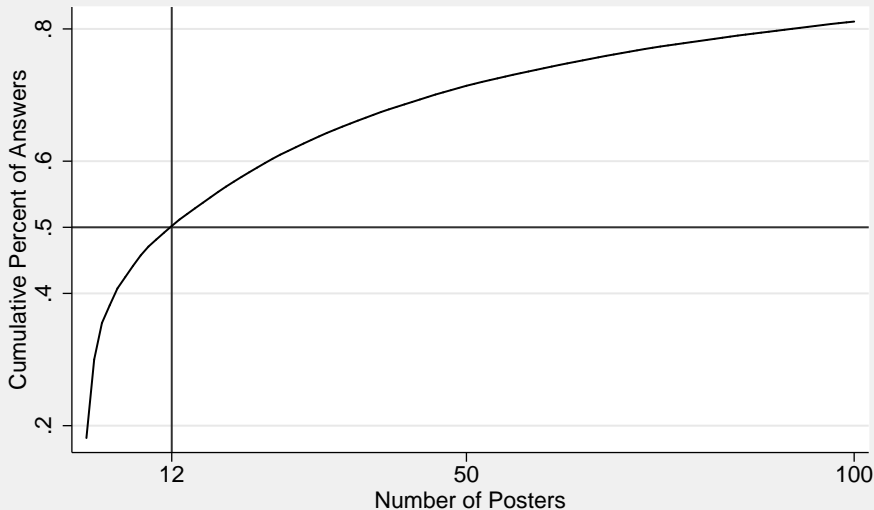
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 - ▶ 12 suppliers give 50% of answers

of replies on Statalist



Observation Period: Jan – May 2009
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X-axis cut off at 100

Existing Research

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 - ▶ Survey of community of ado-file contributors

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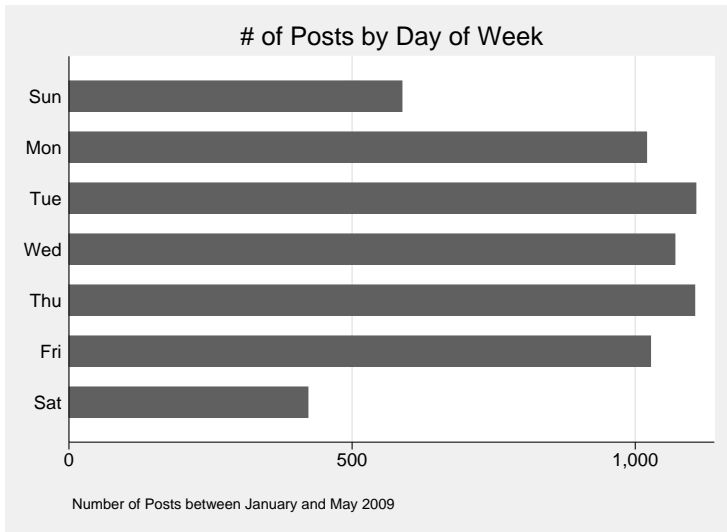
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 - ▶ Search of archive renders most posts redundant
 - ▶ Remaining body of posts is - hopefully - “new” in some important aspect

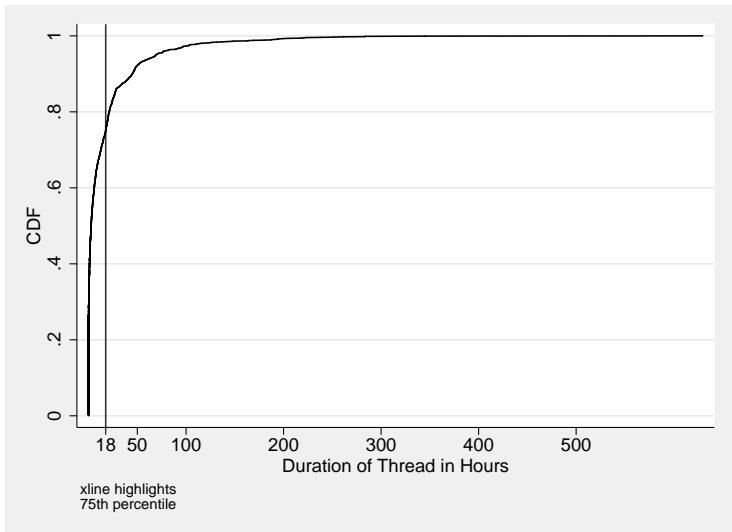
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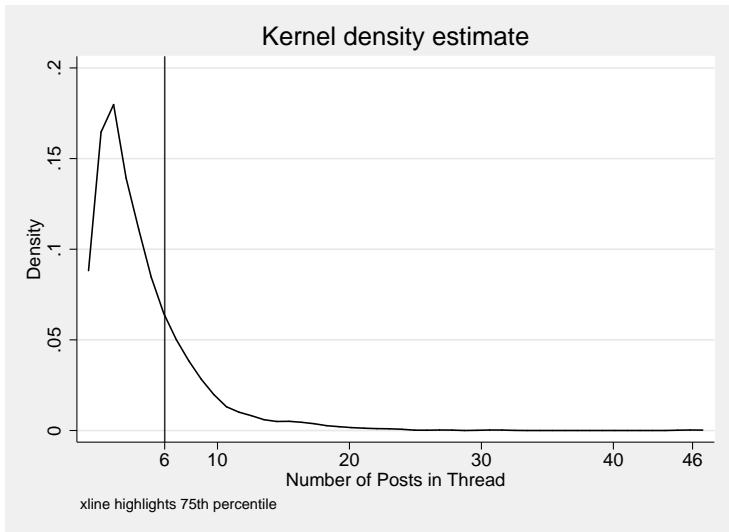
Statalist Output under the Microscope I



Statalist Output under the Microscope II



Statalist Output under the Microscope III



Statalist Output under the Microscope IV: Orphans

	January	February	March	April	May	Total
no orphan	97.96%	99.06%	98.96%	99.25%	99.03%	98.86%
orphan	2.04%	0.94%	1.04%	0.75%	0.97%	1.14%

- Orphan status is assigned to

Statalist Output under the Microscope IV: Orphans

	January	February	March	April	May	Total
no orphan	97.96%	99.06%	98.96%	99.25%	99.03%	98.86%
orphan	2.04%	0.94%	1.04%	0.75%	0.97%	1.14%

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 - ▶ threads with no replies

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	January	February	March	April	May	Total
no orphan	97.96%	99.06%	98.96%	99.25%	99.03%	98.86%
orphan	2.04%	0.94%	1.04%	0.75%	0.97%	1.14%

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orphan	2.04%	0.94%	1.04%	0.75%	0.97%	1.14%

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 - ▶ threads with no replies
 - ▶ which are not: Announcements of
 - ▶ [Stata Net Courses](#)

Statalist Output under the Microscope IV: Orphans

	January	February	March	April	May	Total
no orphan	97.96%	99.06%	98.96%	99.25%	99.03%	98.86%
orphan	2.04%	0.94%	1.04%	0.75%	0.97%	1.14%

- Orphan status is assigned to
 - ▶ threads with no replies
 - ▶ which are not: Announcements of
 - ▶ Stata Net Courses
 - ▶ [Developments at SSC](#)

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 - ▶ Stata Net Courses
 - ▶ Developments at SSC
- i.e. posts that were intended to attract a reply but failed to do so

Thank you for your attention!

Outline

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Economic Behavior
- 3 Statalist Output
- 4 References**

- Jokisch, M. (2006), Active Integration of Users Into the Innovation Process of a Manufacturer - The BMW Customer Innovation Lab, PhD Thesis, Munich.
- Lerner, J. and Tirole, J. (2001), The Open Source Movement: Key Research Questions, *European Economic Review* 45, 819 – 826.
- Lerner, J. and Tirole, J. (2002), Some Simple Economics of Open Source, *Journal of Industrial Economics* 50, 197–234.
- Mayrhofer, P. (2006), Motives and Perception of Fairness in Commercial User Communities, in: Kern, E.M., Hegering, H.G., and Brüggel, B. (eds.), *Managing Development and Application of Digital Technologies*, Springer, Berlin Heidelberg.