SMALL-WORLD NETWORKS PIONEER
DUNCAN WATTS WINS USC ANNEBERG 2014
EVERETT M. ROGERS AWARD

His graduate school research launched the new science of networks

LOS ANGELES (September 29, 2014)– Duncan Watts, principal researcher at Microsoft Research and path-breaking investigator of our connected age, is the recipient of the 2014 Everett M. Rogers Award.

Watts’ first paper, “Collective Dynamics of ‘Small-World’ Networks,” co-authored with his doctoral advisor Steven Strogatz and published in the journal Nature in 1998, just a year after he got his Cornell Ph.D. in theoretical and applied mechanics, quickly became a blueprint for network science, and it has been cited more than 23,000 times – one of the most-cited papers in any field in the past two decades. As he recounts in his book Six Degrees, his research on the Kevin Bacon Game and connectedness ultimately led him to insights about how influences like diseases, rumors, cultural fads, financial crises and social unrest propagate through a human population.

The award honors the late Everett M. Rogers, a professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School who originated diffusion of innovation theory and introduced the term “early adopters.” Presented since 2007 on behalf of USC Annenberg by its Norman Lear Center, the award recognizes outstanding scholars and practitioners whose work has made a fundamental contribution to areas of Rogers's legacy.

In the Forum of the school’s new Wallis Annenberg Hall on Thursday, November 20 at 12 noon, Watts will present Social Influence in Markets and Networks (What’s So Viral About “Going Viral”?). He will describe the surprising difficulty of empirically identifying social influence, which – despite the metaphor of “going viral” – doesn’t necessarily spread in anything like the way that infectious diseases do. The event is free and open to the public, but RSVP is required.
Duncan Watts is a founding member of the Microsoft Research-New York City lab. From 2000 to 2007, he was a professor of sociology at Columbia University, and then, prior to joining Microsoft, a principal research scientist at Yahoo! Research, where he directed the Human Social Dynamics Group. His most recent book is *Everything Is Obvious Once You Know the Answer: How Common Sense Fails Us*.

**The Norman Lear Center** is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center studying and shaping the impact of entertainment and media on society. From its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, the Lear Center builds bridges between faculty who study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. For more information, visit [www.learcenter.org](http://www.learcenter.org).

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the **Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism** ([annenberg.usc.edu](http://annenberg.usc.edu)) is a national leader in education and scholarship in the fields of communication, journalism, public diplomacy and public relations. With an enrollment of more than 2,200 students, USC Annenberg offers doctoral, graduate and undergraduate degree programs, as well as continuing development programs for working professionals across a broad scope of academic inquiry. The school's comprehensive curriculum emphasizes the core skills of leadership, innovation, service and entrepreneurship and draws upon the resources of a networked university located in the media capital of the world.

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