

My Setup for Productive Research

Workflow, Apps and Technology, Thoughts on Productivity

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May 21, 2024

Quotes that helped me during the PhD

“**Anxiety** is the dizziness of **freedom**.” - Søren Kierkegaard

“The only normal people are the ones you don’t know very well.”
- Alfred Adler

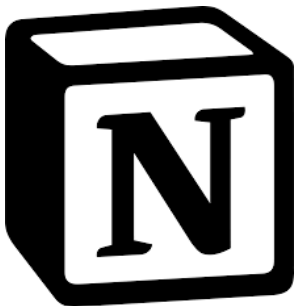
“If you’re going through **hell**, **keep going**.” - Winston Churchill

“We are what we **pretend** to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be.”
- Kurt Vonnegut

“When a man is in **despair**, it means that he still **believes** in something.”
- Dmitri Shostakovich

“***Uncertainty** is an uncomfortable position. But certainty is an absurd one.* - Voltaire”
- Lars Peter Hansen

I will share how I operate; you should choose to your taste
























































































Workflow

Workflow

File Management

- I try to maintain the same file management system (at least for solo projects)















 Code  >	 00 Figure for Website  >
 Comments  >	 00 Simulations  >
 Data  >	 01a Process SNL Rate Filings  >
 Discussions  >	 01b Process SNL Statutory Filings  >
 Figures  >	 01c Process Control Variables  >
 Industry Resources  >	 01d Process VerdictSearch Data  >
 Internal Notes  >	 01e Process Earnings Call Data  >
 Meetings  >	 01f Process AM Best Data  >
 Paper  >	 02a Construct Sample Selection  >
 Presentations  >	 02b Construct Panel Dataset  >























 Code  >	 AMBest  >	 Commercial-2000-Q1.pdf
 Comments  >	 American Pr...ency Project  >	 Commercial-2000-Q2.pdf
 Data  >	 Annual Reports  >	 Commercial-2000-Q3.pdf
 Discussions  >	 ATRI  >	 Commercial-2000-Q4.pdf
 Figures  >	 CCMC  >	 Commercial-2001-Q1.pdf
 Industry Resources  >	 CIAB  >	 Commercial-2001-Q2.pdf
 Internal Notes  >	 FHWA  >	 Commercial-2001-Q3.pdf
 Meetings  >	 Financial Statements  >	 Commercial-2001-Q4.pdf
 Paper  >	 Gallup  >	 Commercial-2002-Q1.pdf

Workflow

File Management

- With a large Dropbox, I keep copies of the file after revisions

	Manuscript 20231027 03 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231027 03 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231031 01 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231031 01 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231101 01 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231101 01 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231102 01 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231102 02 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231102 02 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231102 03 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231102 03 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231103 01 SO.lyx
	Manuscript 20231103 01 SO.pdf
	Manuscript 20231105 01 SO.lyx

	__pycache__	 >
	DD LOB Price 01.do	
	DD LOB Price 02.do	
	DD LOB Price 03.do	
	DD LOB Price 04.do	
	DD LOB Price 05.do	
	DD State Price 01.do	
	DD State Price 02.do	
	df_wildcluster.csv	
	Obsolete	 >
	simon_preliminaries.py	

Workflow

Coding

- Languages: Python + Stata
 - I had to read a lot of Matlab and R code, so don't limit yourself ex ante
- Editor: Visual Studio Code, Sublime Text

Version Control

- I make local copies of the code and documents I write
 - I don't use Github or other version control services
 - Difficult to convince co-authors to use version control

Writing

- Lyx + Local Latex + Overleaf
 - Lyx is heavily underrated!

Flexibility is key!

Apps and Technology

Apps and Technology

Project Management

- Tool: Notion
- Each page corresponds to a project (potential paper) and allows you to nest information



Project Vox

✓ 36 backlinks

📌 [Research Log: Project Vox](#)

Internal Notes

▼ Media Articles

■ [Monetary P...](#)

■ [CB Commun...](#)

▼ Data

■ [CB Commun...](#)

■ [Preliminary](#)



🖼 Add cover

Research Log: Project Vox

✓ 34 backlinks

[Research Question](#)

[Literature Review](#)

[Useful Commentaries](#)

[Useful Data](#)

[Background](#)

[Econometrics](#)

[Text Analysis](#)

[Institutional Background](#)

[Empirical Analysis](#)

Apps and Technology

Project Management

- Tool: Notion
- Each page corresponds to a project (potential paper) and allows you to nest information

Meetings

Aa Name	≡ Participants
📄 Meeting 2020-11-17 T	Brent Neiman
📄 Meeting 2020-11-30 M	Zhiguo He Eric Zwick Ralph Koijen
📄 Meeting 2020-12-11 F	Lars Hansen Yueran Ma Pietro Veronesi
📄 Meeting 2020-12-15 M	Ralph Koijen
📄 Meeting 2021-01-12 M	Ralph Koijen

Meeting 2020-12-11 F

≡ Participants

Lars Hansen Yueran Ma Pietro Veronesi

+ Add a property

🗨 Add a comment...

📎 Slides 2020-12-11 01 SO.pdf 190.0KB

Eurozone






- Leo — Local banks are like regional governors in the US

Apps and Technology

Project Management



- Tool: Notion
- Each page corresponds to a project (potential paper) and allows you to nest information

↗ 📁 논문

Aa Title	≡ Citation
 Channels of US monetary policy spillovers to international bon	Albagli, Ceballos, Claro, and Romero (2019)
⋮  The Joy of Giving or Assisted Living? Using Strategic  OPEN c	Ameriks, Caplin, Laufer, and Van Nieuwerburgh (20.
<u>Spread the Word: International spillovers from central bank comm</u>	Armeliu, Bertsch, Hull, and Zhang (2020)
<u>Central Bank Swap Lines: Evidence on the Effects of the Lender of l</u>	Bahaj and Reis
 Central Bank Communication and Monetary Policy: A Survey o	Blinder, Ehrmann, Fratzscher, De Haan, and Jansen
<u>How Do Central Banks Talk</u>	Blinder, Goodhart, Hildebrand, Wyplosz (2001)
 Monetary Policy with Opinionated Markets	Caballero and Simsek (2020)

Conferences + Add a view

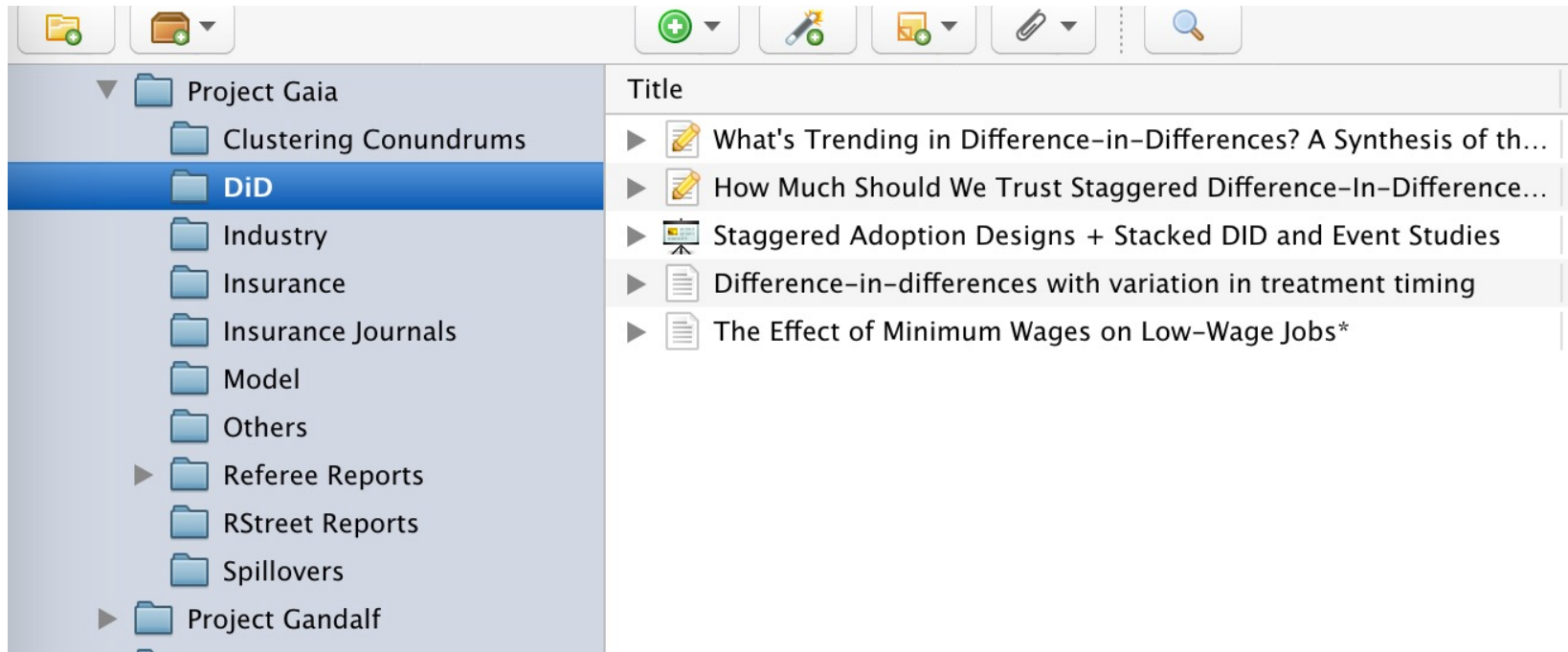
Sort 🔍 Search ↗ ... New ▾

Aa Name	📅 Submission Due	≡ Conference Date
<u>AFA Ph.D Student Poster Session</u>	Jul 31, 2020	January 2021
 <u>The 15th Annual Conference on Asia-Pacific Financial Markets (CAFM)</u>	Aug 21, 2020	December 4-5, 2020
<u>International Risk Management Conference 2020</u>	Aug 24, 2020	October 9-10, 2020
 <u>Economics Graduate Students' Conference of Washington University in St. Louis</u>	Aug 24, 2020	November 7, 2020

Apps and Technology

Reading Papers & Keeping Track

- Tool: Zotero + Notion



The screenshot displays the Zotero application interface. On the left, a sidebar shows a hierarchical folder structure. The 'Project Gaia' folder is expanded, revealing subfolders: 'Clustering Conundrums', 'DiD' (highlighted in blue), 'Industry', 'Insurance', 'Insurance Journals', 'Model', 'Others', 'Referee Reports', 'RStreet Reports', 'Spillovers', and 'Project Gandalf'. On the right, a table lists the titles of papers associated with the 'DiD' folder. The table has a 'Title' header and contains six entries, each preceded by a right-pointing triangle icon.

Title
▶ What's Trending in Difference-in-Differences? A Synthesis of th...
▶ How Much Should We Trust Staggered Difference-In-Difference...
▶ Staggered Adoption Designs + Stacked DID and Event Studies
▶ Difference-in-differences with variation in treatment timing
▶ The Effect of Minimum Wages on Low-Wage Jobs*

Apps and Technology

Reading Papers & Keeping Track

- Tool: Zotero + Notion

jlegewie/**zotfile**

Zotero plugin to manage your attachments:
automatically rename, move, and attach PDFs (or
other files) to Zotero items, sync PDFs...



 43
Contributors

274
Issues

☆ 4k Stars

 275
Forks



PaperBank		⋮	↕	☰	▼	📁	🏷️
Name							
📄	ScharfsteinStein_2000_The_Dark_Side_of_Internal.pdf						
📄	Schenone_2010_Lending_Relationships_and.pdf						
📄	Schickinger_etal_2022_Same_same,_but_different_-.pdf						
📄	SchillingUhlig_2019_Currency_Substitution_under.pdf						

Apps and Technology




Attending Seminars

- Tool: Notion

세미나 및 워크샵

Master ▾

Properties Filter Sort

Title	Date	Authors	Type	Topic Category
 New Perspectives on Liquidity	Nov 17, 2020	Ricardo Reis, Monika Piazzesi, Stefan Nagel	Virtual Finance Seminar	Asset Pricing Macro
 Can the Covid Bailouts Save the Econo  OPEN	Nov 5, 2020	Vadim Elenev (Johns Hopkins University), Tim Landvoigt (Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania), and Stijn Van Nieuweburgh (Columbia Business School)	2020 IMF Annual Research Conferenc	International Macro & Finance

논문

Master ▾

Title	Citation	Topic	Journal
A Calculation of the Social Returns to Innovation	Jones and Summers (2020)	Productivity & Innovation Entrepreneurial Finance	Working Paper

Apps and Technology

Reading Papers & Keeping Track

- For each paper, I note: Motivation – Research Question – Methodology – Main Results
- You can embed subset of the table into other pages

Motivation

- University quality is believed to be one of the key drivers for a successful professional career of university graduates.

Research Question

What is the effect of faculty quality on PhD student outcomes?

Methodology

1. Give a brief description of historical details
2. Describe the data sources in more detail
3. Outline the identification strategy
4. Analyze the effect of faculty quality on PhD student outcomes

Overview

Dismissal of mathematics professors in Nazi Germany as a source of exogenous variation in university quality

Identification

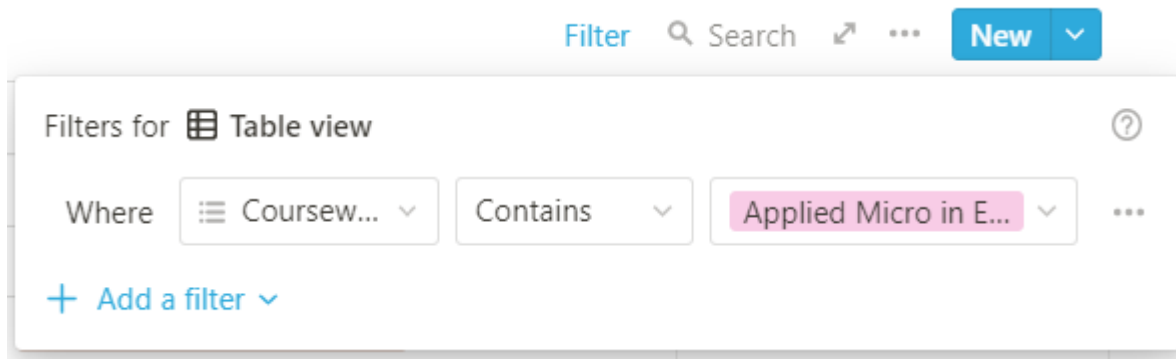
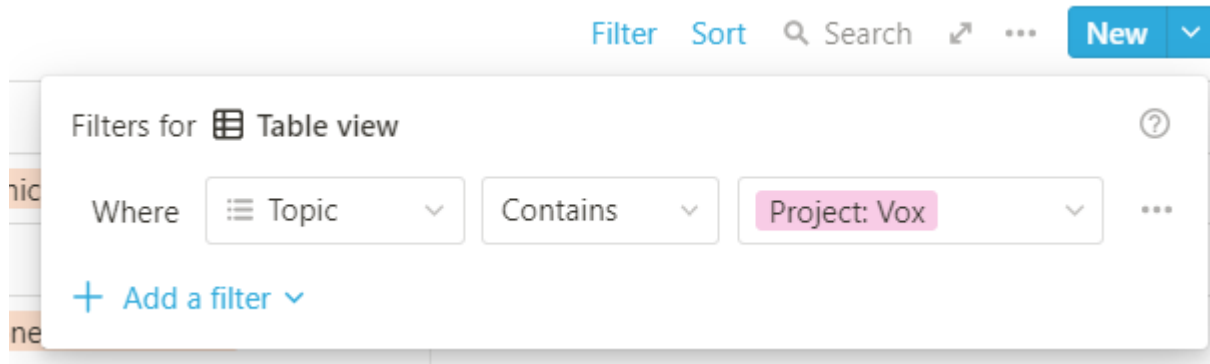
OLS framework:

$$\text{Outcome}_{idt} = \beta_1 + \beta_2(\text{Avg. Faculty Quality})_{dt-1}$$

Apps and Technology

Reading Papers & Keeping Track

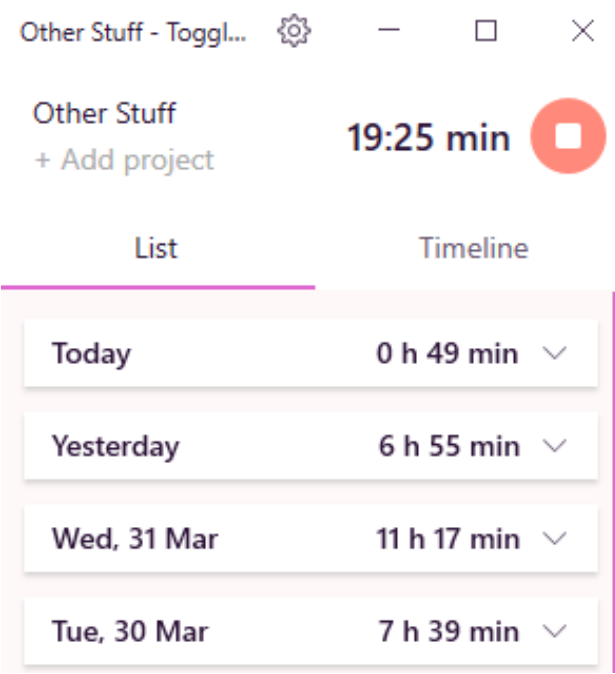
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Apps and Technology

Scheduling and Time Tracking

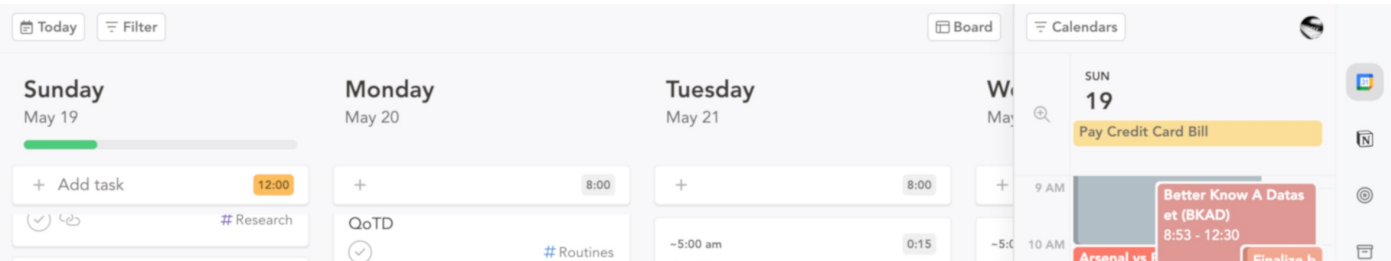
- Daily time tracking: Toggl



Apps and Technology

Scheduling and Time Tracking

- Task-based Calendar: [Sunsama](#)
- Schedule-based Calendar: [Google Calendar](#)



3 PM	QoTD, 3:15pm Plausibly Exogenous, 3:30pm	Asset Pricing, 3:30pm	Money and Banking, 3:30pm	QoTD, 3:30pm Plausibly Exogenous, 3:45pm	QoTD, 4pm Plausibly Exogenous, 4:15pm
4 PM	Daily Exercise 3:45 – 5pm	Daily Exercise 4 – 5pm	Daily Exercise 4 – 5pm	Daily Exercise 4 – 5pm	Daily Exercise 4:30 – 5:30pm
5 PM	Post upennsquirrels, 5pm	Post upennsquirrels, 5pm	Post upennsquirrels, 5pm	Post upennsquirrels, 5pm	Post upennsquirrels, 5pm

Apps and Technology

Getting Ideas

- Read-It-Later App: **Readwise Reader**


Library ▾

INBOX

LATER


ARCHIVE

↓ Date moved ▾




Nothing like a good hook to reel in the reader!

The text lists 50 best opening lines in classic literature to engage readers. It encourages sh...


 x.com • CoffeeWithTheClassics • 4 mins

May 12th




Home and auto insurance is going to turn into a...

Home and auto insurance is going to turn into a mini-crisis at some point Auto insurance is ...


 twitter.com • Ben Carlson • 1 min

Apr 10th




As usual, 3Blue1Brown does a fantastic job stepping through the...


As usual, 3Blue1Brown does a fantastic job stepping through the basics of (parts of) the


 twitter.com • Matt Blackwell • 1 min


Apr 3rd

...











Lose Fat in 14 DAYS!

Lose Fat in 14 DAYS! (Home Workout)


 twitter.com • Goal Loaded • 1 min

Mar 31st




I've been hanging clothes wrong all this time

I've been hanging clothes wrong all this time


 twitter.com • Learn Something • 1 min

Mar 30th



6 Effective Shoulder Workouts:

6 Effective Shoulder Workouts: 1.

 twitter.com • Fitness For Entrepreneurs • 1 min

Mar 22nd

Count: 308

Apps and Technology

My Usage of Generative AI (as of May 2024)

- Writing drafts
 - Feed in table (latex) or figure → Generate description, in-body paragraphs
 - Feed in outline in bullets → Generate paragraphs (subject to certain style constraints)
 - Emails, Letters, Apologies
- Writing code
 - Generating programs in less familiar languages
 - Optimizing my existing code
 - Repeating blocks of code (for better readability)
- Generating ideas
 - Getting feedback on drafts
 - Brainstorming ideas for revision
 - Gift ideas
 - Explaining things to non-academic audience
- Learning
 - Asking questions
 - Creating apps

Thoughts on Productivity

Thoughts on Productivity

1/ It's important to generate high-frequency fluctuations in your life

- Low-frequency fluctuations: college, grad school, marriage, dating, moving, etc
- High-frequency fluctuations affect your happiness significantly!

2/ Find your own pace, and take breaks effectively

- Ask yourself: do you require small frequent breaks or one large break?
- Ask yourself: “will I still be worrying about this problem at Christmas?”

3/ One needs to spend conscious efforts to improve productivity

- Try experimenting with various productivity hacks and see what sticks

Read up on what others have to say!

Sangmin Simon Oh

Incoming Assistant Professor, Finance Division, Columbia Business School

[Home](#)

[CV](#)

[Research](#)

[Teaching](#)

[Discussions](#)

[Notebook](#)

[Public Goods](#)

[Resources](#)

Aggregators

- [General Resources](#) for Macroeconomics and Financial Economics
- [Brendan Price](#) with resources for PhD students
- [Pavel Solfs](#) with a wide array of recommended resources
- [Shanjun Li](#) with resources for PhD students
- [Masayuki Kudamatsu](#) with tips for economists
- [Alex Albright](#) with resources focusing on R and data science
- [Awesome Economics](#) with a collection of links for economists
- [Christine Cai](#) with a collection of links
- [Guillaume Dalle](#) with a collection, mostly in French
- [Chris Blattman](#) with a great collection of personal advice

Evaluating Other Work

Discussions

- [Chris Blattman](#) on the art of discussing
- [James Choi](#) on how to give a good paper discussion

Sample Discussions

Macro & Macro Finance

[Monika Piazzesi](#), [Daniel Greenwald](#), [Itamar Drechsler](#), [Urban Jermann](#), [John Cochrane](#), [Lawrence Schmidt](#), [Jonathan Parker](#), [Nicolas Crouzet](#), [Amir Kermani](#), [Annette Vissing-Jorgensen](#), [Hanno Lustig](#), [Gabriel Chodorow-Reich](#), Princeton MMF Reading Group, [Fabrice Tourre](#), [Eric Swanson](#), [Wenhao Li](#), [Robert Hall](#),