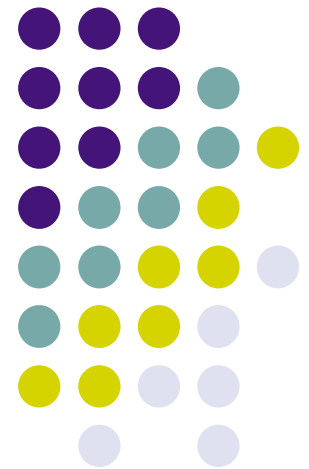# Risks and Rewards of an Interdisciplinary Approach to OSS Research
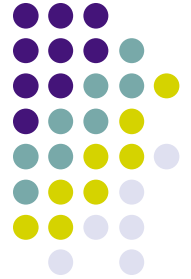
AOM 2006 Atlanta

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Brief Outline

- Questions
- Strategies and examples
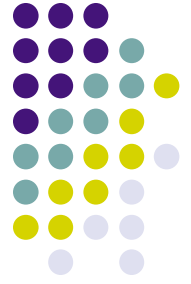- Risks and Rewards

Questions

- How open is your home discipline to interdisciplinary work? (i.e., what gets published in the best journals in your field?)

- What is the attitude toward interdisciplinary/cross-disciplinary work at your institution? (i.e., what counts for tenure & promotion?)
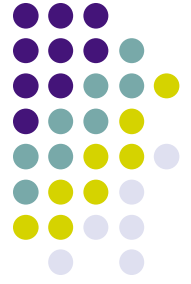
Strategy 1: The Assimilation Approach

- Leverage multiple disciplines, but frame for your "home" discipline
  - MISQ, "Ideology in OSS," leveraged work from management, sociology, psychology, IS
  - ISR, "Licensing and Sponsorship in OSS," leveraged work published by researchers in economics, IS, marketing

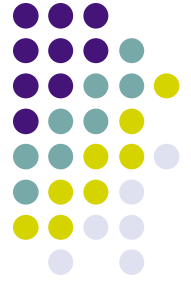# Strategy 2: The Cross Disciplinary Approach

- Choose the literature most relevant to an aspect of the phenomenon and target journals in that discipline
    - Statistical Science, "Modeling OSS Evolution using FDA"
    - IEEE-TSE (to be submitted), "Patterns of Evolution in OSS"

Strategy 3: The Patchwork Approach

- Broadly consider work from multiple disciplines to generate a high level understanding

  - "OSS as a new organizational architecture," considers OSS as an example of market, hierarchy, network etc (org theory), as a social movement or a volunteer organization (sociology), as a virtual team or community (IS, management, sociology)

Risks and Rewards

- Risks:
  - Unclear framing
  - Lack of fit with target journal
  - Unclear positioning in the research community
- Rewards:
  - Holistic understanding of the phenomenon
  - Learn new literatures/methods
  - Follow your interests