

[What, why, and which experiments?],  
[Moving beyond simple experiments], [Making it happen],  
[Zero variable cost data and MusicLab], [3 Rs]

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# Experimental Study of Informal Rewards in Peer Production

**Michael Restivo\*, Arnout van de Rijt**

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0034358>

Effect  
of



on



awards

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- People who received barnstar edited less afterwards

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- ▶ People who received barnstar edited less afterwards
- ▶ People in control group edited even less

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- ▶ People who received barnstar edited less afterwards
- ▶ People in control group edited even less
- ▶ Not having a control group would lead to exactly the wrong conclusion

What's the same?

- ▶ recruiting participants
- ▶ randomization treatment
- ▶ delivering treatment and control
- ▶ measuring outcomes

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What's different?

- ▶ Fully digital experiment leads to zero variable cost data.
- ▶ Constraint on size is not cost, it is ethics.

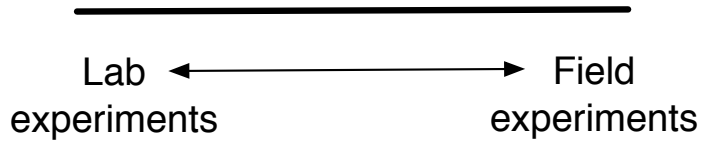
A note on terminology:

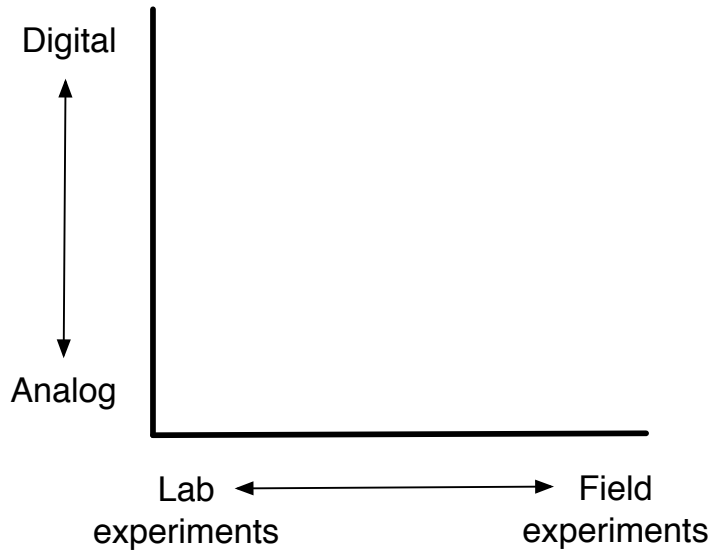
Perturb and observe experiments vs randomized controlled experiments

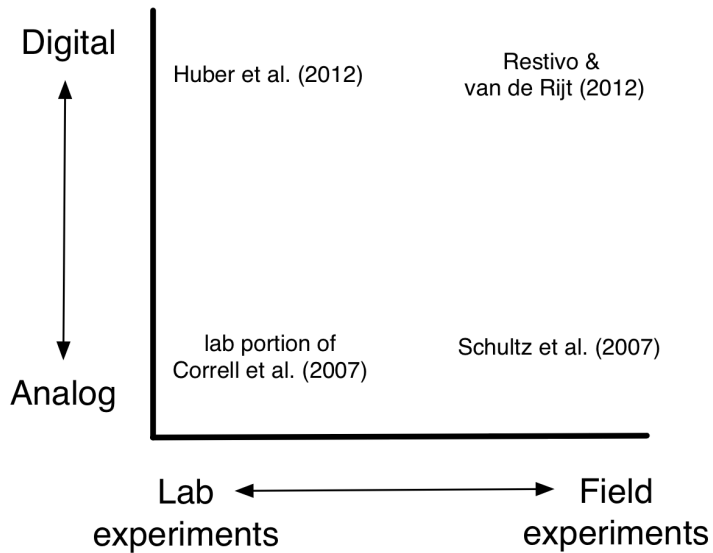
“It’s like you don’t harass women, you don’t steal, and you’ve got to have a control group. This is one of the things that you can lose your job for at Harrah’s not running a control group.” Gary Loveman, CEO Harrah’s

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- ▶ Sometimes we create a randomized controlled experiment by creating a treatment group
- ▶ Sometimes we create a randomized controlled experiment by creating a control group







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