

The Most Notorious Users of EJMR

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Abstract

EconJobRumors.com (EJMR) is an anonymous online forum that has become both a central hub for information about the economics job market and a source of significant controversy within the profession. This article explores the concept of notoriety on EJMR, examining the patterns, behaviors, and community dynamics that have led certain users or user archetypes to become infamous. We discuss the structural features of the forum that foster notoriety, present a stylized visualization of user influence, and review the academic and journalistic literature on the impact of EJMR's most notorious contributors.

1 Introduction

EconJobRumors.com (EJMR) was launched in 2008 as a platform for academic economists and job seekers to exchange information about the economics job market. Over time, it has evolved into a broader discussion forum, notorious for its candid, and often toxic, discourse. The forum's anonymous nature has enabled both valuable information sharing and the proliferation of abusive, defamatory, and discriminatory content [1,2]. This duality has led to the emergence of "notorious users" - individuals or archetypes whose posting patterns, tone, or influence have left a significant mark on the community.

2 Defining Notoriety on EJMR

Notoriety on EJMR does not typically attach to persistent usernames, as the forum assigns random four-character handles per thread and encourages anonymity. Instead, notoriety is constructed through recognizable posting styles, repeated themes, and the volume or toxicity of contributions. Academic analyses have shown that toxic content is not limited to fringe users but is widespread, with contributors from elite academic institutions, government, and the private sector [1,2].

3 Patterns of Notorious Behavior

3.1 High-Volume Posters

Some users achieve notoriety through sheer volume, dominating threads with frequent posts. These users often steer discussions, amplify rumors, and set the tone for the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, posting rates on EJMR tripled, with a surge in off-topic and often inflammatory content [3].

3.2 Toxic and Abusive Content

A defining feature of notorious users is the posting of abusive, misogynistic, or defamatory content. Studies have documented systematic patterns of hate speech and personal attacks, particularly targeting women and underrepresented groups in economics [1,4]. This has led to widespread criticism and calls for reform from within the profession.

3.3 Influence and Information Aggregation

Notorious users often act as information aggregators, initiating threads based on external links to academic papers, news articles, or social media posts. Since 2018, there has been a marked shift towards discussions driven by Twitter posts, reflecting the rise of #EconTwitter [2].

4 Visualization: Stylized Influence Network

Below is a stylized vector graphic, created with TikZ, illustrating the influence of notorious users within the EJMR community. The central node represents a high-volume, influential poster, with edges indicating the spread of information and tone to other users.

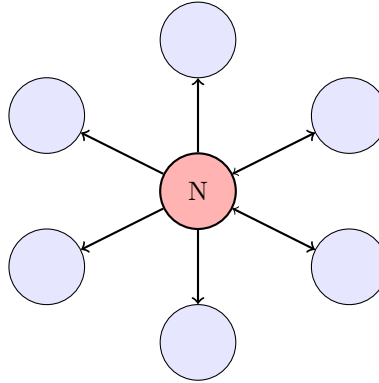


Figure 1: Stylized network of influence for a notorious EJMR user on the EJMR community.

Solid arrows indicate information or tone dissemination; dashed arrows represent feedback or amplification.

5 Discussion

The anonymity and structure of EJMR make it difficult to identify specific notorious users by name. However, academic research has shown that many of the most influential and toxic contributors are affiliated with elite academic institutions, government, and the private sector [2]. The forum’s design encourages the emergence of notorious archetypes rather than persistent identities, with notoriety attached to recognizable posting patterns and behaviors.

The impact of these users is significant: they shape the tone of discourse, influence the spread of rumors, and contribute to the forum’s reputation as both a valuable resource and a source of harm. The prevalence of toxic content has led to calls for reform from professional bodies, including proposals for improved moderation and accountability [4].

6 Conclusion

EJMR’s most notorious users are not defined by persistent identities but by their influence, posting patterns, and the tone they set for the community. While the forum provides valuable information and networking opportunities, its notoriety is inseparable from the toxic behaviors enabled by anonymity. Ongoing debates about reform and accountability reflect broader concerns about inclusivity and ethics in academic online communities.

References

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