Peter David Smits

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Experience

University of California – Berkeley

Berkeley, CA

Postdoctoral Scholar

Sept 2017 - present

- Executed multiple projects about predicting when rare events (e.g. extinctions) are likely to be clustered
- Developed a discrete-time survival model for predicting extinction from highly structured data
- Used results from this survival model to estimate the accuracy of predicting future extinction events
- Analyzed how sedimentological composition predicts the occurrence of rare events (e.g. fossils) using a time-series mixture model
- Taught graduate level course on applied statistics and Bayesian modeling using R and Stan
- Elected to University of California Postdoctoral Union Joint Council as Recording Secretary for UC Berkeley

University of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Doctoral Researcher

Sept 2012 - June 2017

- Completed dissertation on Bayesian modeling of multi-level variation in species duration with incomplete observation
- Analyzed cohort-structured survival data using a multi-level model accounting for multiple forms of nonindependence in the observations
- Developed a hidden Markov model of species duration and their occurrences over time with incomplete observation probability
- Mentored and taught graduate and undergraduate students in statistics, Stan, R, and pedagogy

Monash University

Melbourne, AUS

Postgraduate Researcher

Sept 2010 - Aug 2012

- Developed thesis on the relationship between tooth shape and jaw movement in carnivorous mammals
- Used three-dimenstional scans of mammal skulls to reconstruct jaw movement
- Used R to analyze relationship among biomechanical measurements
- Demonstrated for undergraduate course on introduction to data analysis and R

Education

University of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Ph.D. in Evolutionary Biology

Sept 2012 – June 2017

Monash University

Melbourne, AUS

M.Sc. in Biological Sciences

Sept 2010 - Aug 2012

- Vice-Chancellor's Commendation for Master's Thesis Excellence

University of Washington

Seattle, WA

B.S. in Biology – Ecology and Evolution

Sept 2006 - June 2010

Technical Skills

Statistical/Analytical: Bayesian data analysis, multilevel/hierarchical/mixed-effects models, generalized linear models, time-series analysis, survival analysis, longitudinal and cross-sectional data analysis, discrete-time hidden Markov models, network analysis/graph theory, exploratory data analysis, clustering, machine learning (e.g. random forests), measurement error/missing data, variable selection, etc.

Technologies: R (caret, devtools, ggplot2, knitr, igraph, parallel, tidyverse, shiny), Stan, JAGS, LATEX, git/github, bash/Linux command line

Other: near-fluency French, dual US-Australian citizen, radio experience