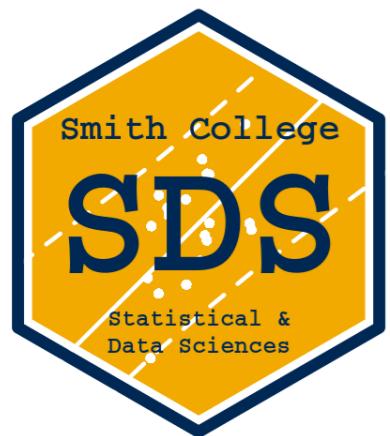


Using Slack for Communication & Collaboration in the Classroom



Albert Y. Kim
[@rudeboybert](https://twitter.com/rudeboybert)

Symposium on Data Science & Statistics
Bellevue WA
Thursday May 30, 2019



What is Slack?
Answer via HBO

Components of Slack

The image shows the Slack application interface. On the left is the sidebar, which includes:

- A sidebar header with icons for file sharing, direct messages, and apps.
- A list of channels:
 - # SDS/MTH 220 I... (selected, highlighted in blue)
 - All Unreads
 - Threads
 - Channels
 - # general
 - # moderndive_typos
 - # polls
 - # problem_sets
 - # questions
 - # random (highlighted in blue)
 - # term_project
- + Add a channel
- Direct Messages
 - Albert Y. Kim (you)
 - Jenny, Guy Incognito
- Apps
 - + Install Google Drive
 - + Add apps

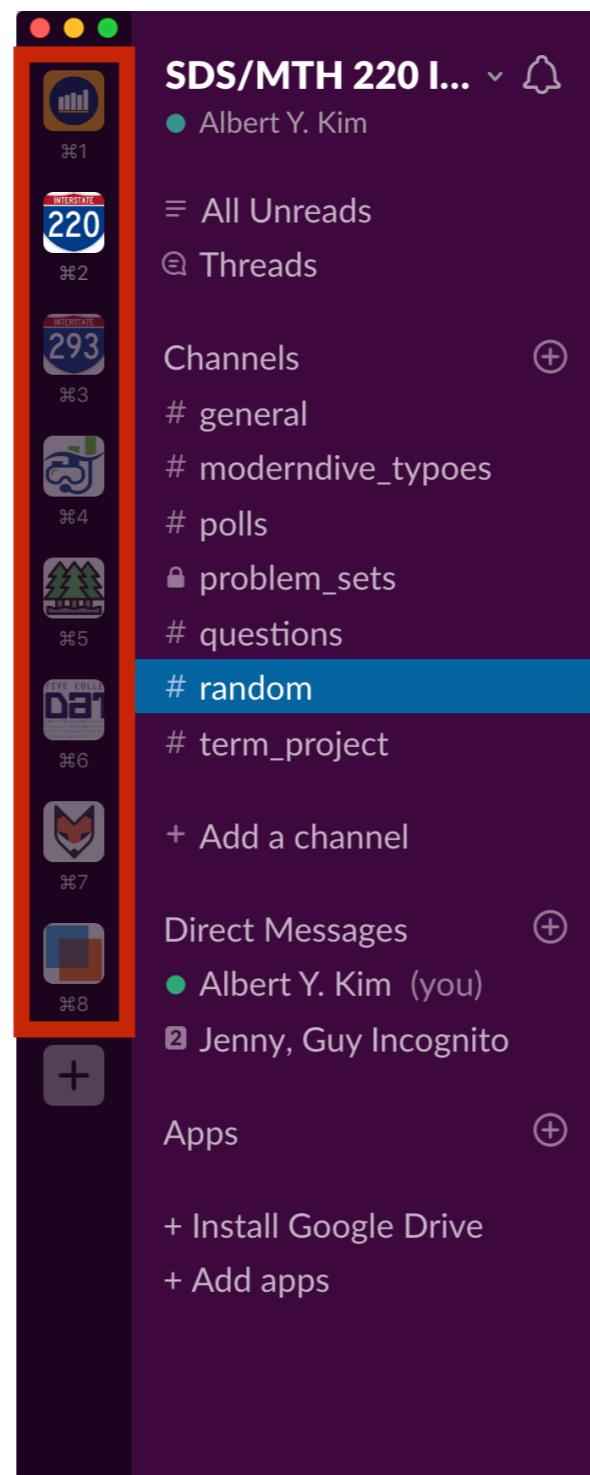
On the right is the main channel view for #random, showing:

- Header: #random, Non-work banter, Thursday, May 2nd
- Message from Albert Y. Kim (@everyone) at 4:52 PM:

Hi Stat Class, Albert has been selected as one of the professors who will get pied tomorrow. The pie'ing is happening from 1-1:30 pm at Chapin Lawn during the wellness carnival. Please stop by and enjoy the event host by the Global Medical Brigade.
- Image: A photo titled "IMG_6932.jpg" showing a graphic for a pie-throwing event at Smith College.
- Text input field: "Message #random" with a send button.

Components of Slack

Workspace: Think projects

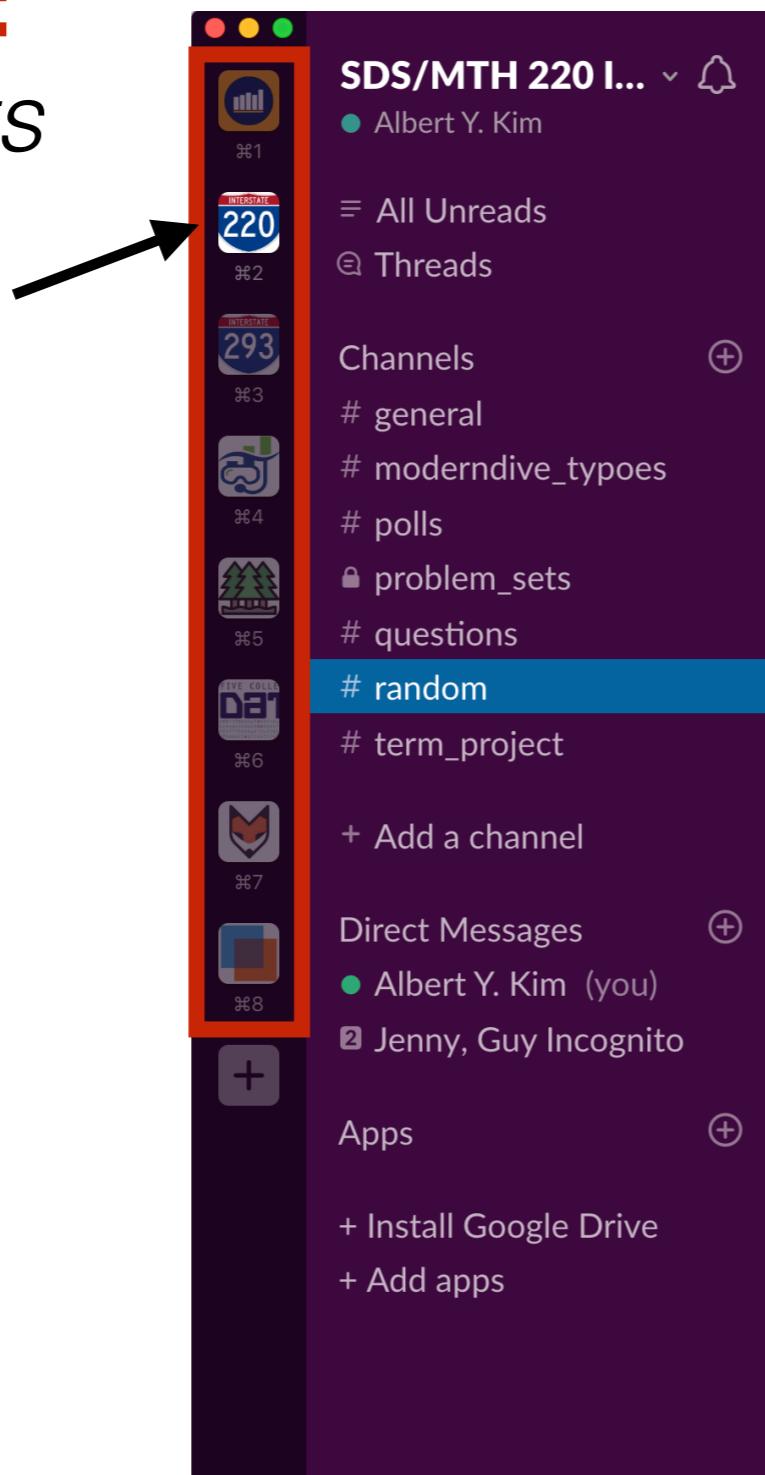


A screenshot of a Slack channel named '#random'. The channel header includes a star icon, a phone icon, an info icon, a gear icon, a search bar with the text 'Search', and a settings menu. The date 'Thursday, May 2nd' is shown. A message from a user at 4:52 PM (@everyone) says: 'Hi Stat Class, Albert has been selected as one of the professors who will get pied tomorrow. The pie'ing is happening from 1-1:30 pm at Chapin Lawn during the wellness carnival. Please stop by and enjoy the event host by the Global Medical Brigade.' Below the message is a file attachment icon showing 'IMG_6932.jpg'. The image is a colorful graphic for a 'Spring Fling Pie Throw' event at Smith College, featuring cartoon faces and text: 'SMITH COLLEGE GB PRESENTS: SPRING FLING PIE THROW You voted for the professors you wanted to see pied, here are your top 3: Steve Williams from 2-2:30 Albert Kim from 1-1:30 Miles Ott from 1-1:30 Come out on May 3rd to see them get pied during the Wellness Carnival!'. At the bottom of the channel screen is a message input field with a '+' button and the placeholder 'Message #random'.

Components of Slack

Workspace:
Think *projects*

Within 220
Workspace:



The screenshot shows a Slack channel named '#random'. The channel header includes a star icon, a phone icon, an info icon, a gear icon, a search bar with 'Search', and icons for '@', '★', and '⋮'. Below the header is a timestamp 'Thursday, May 2nd' and a message from a user at 4:52 PM:

@everyone Hi Stat Class, Albert has been selected as one of the professors who will get pied tomorrow. The pie'ing is happening from 1-1:30 pm at Chapin Lawn during the wellness carnival. Please stop by and enjoy the event host by the Global Medical Brigade.

Below the message is a file attachment icon with the number '1' and the file name 'IMG_6932.jpg'. The image is a graphic for a pie-throwing event at Smith College, featuring cartoon faces and text:

SMITH COLLEGE GB PRESENTS:
SPRING FLING PIE THROW
You voted for the professors
you wanted to see pied, here
are your top 3:
Steve Williams from 2-2:30
Albert Kim from 1-1:30
Miles Ott from 1-1:30
Come out on May 3rd to see
them get pied during the
Wellness Carnival!

At the bottom of the channel is a message input field with a '+' icon, the text 'Message #random', and icons for '@' and a smiley face.

Components of Slack

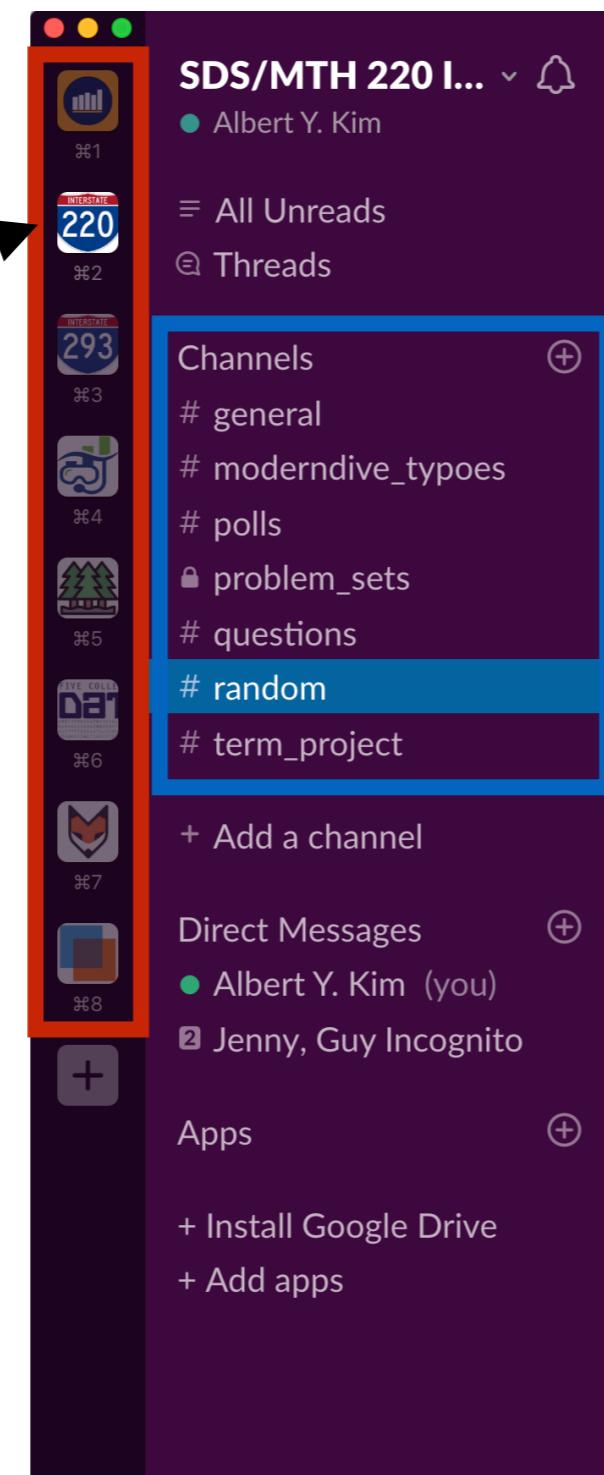
Workspace:

Think *projects*

Within 220
Workspace:

1. Channels:

Think
forums (public
& private)



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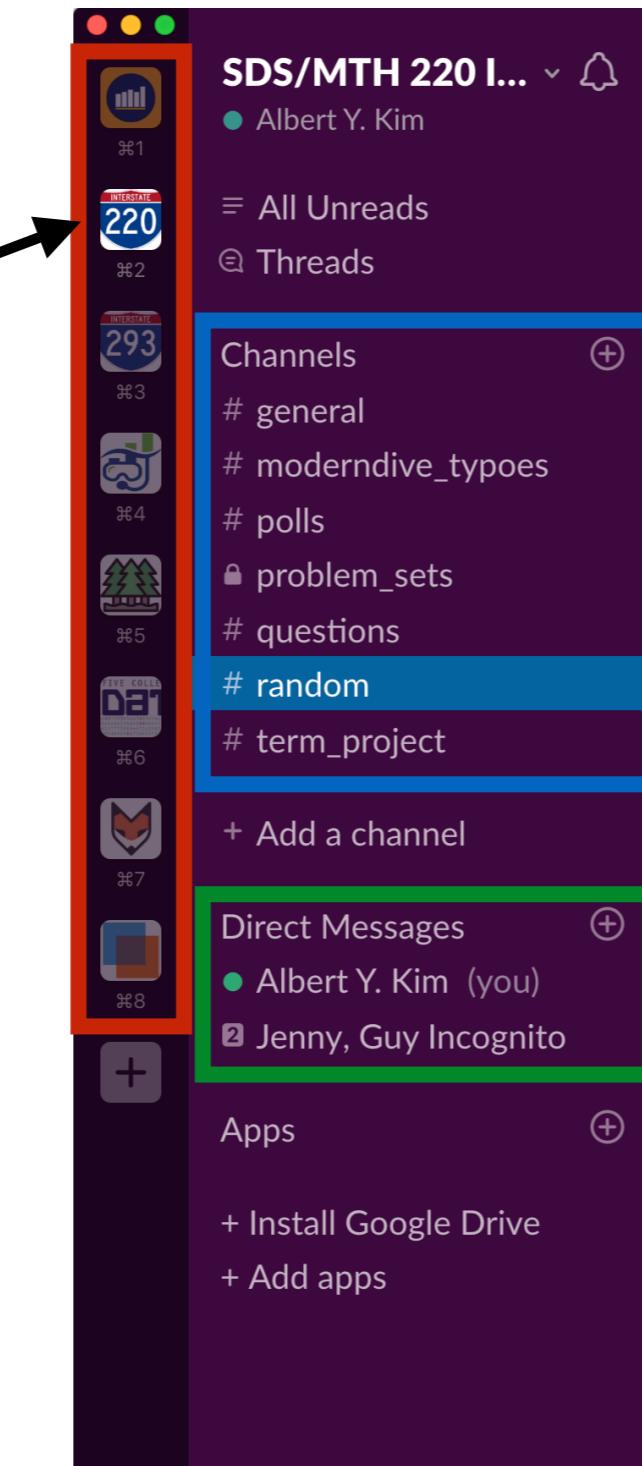
Within 220
Workspace:

1. Channels:

Think
forums (public
& private)

2. Direct Messages:

Think *group
texts*



#random

☆ | 44 | 0 | Non-work banter

Thursday, May 2nd

4:52 PM

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1

IMG_6932.jpg

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+ Message #random

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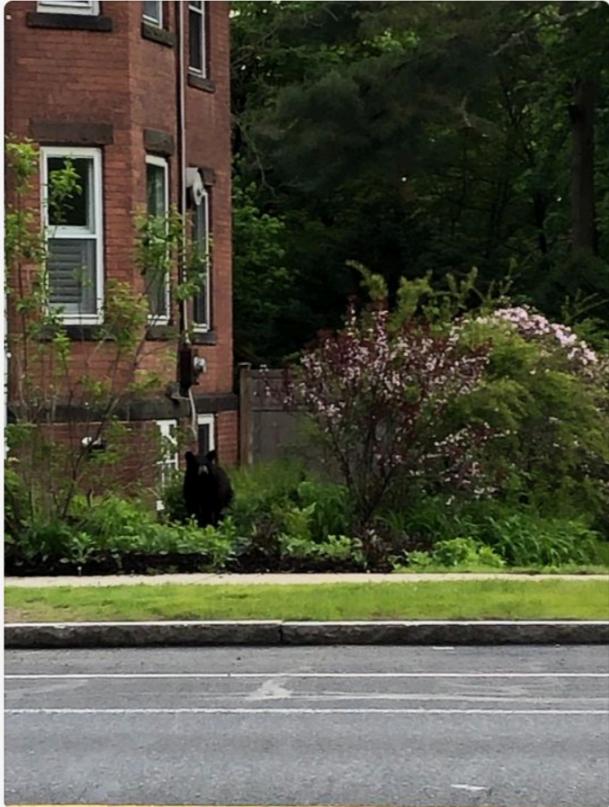
- Baseline for comparison in this talk is email & Moodle-like course management systems
- I have heard of other platforms like Piazza, but haven't use it. I'm open to comments!
- At Smith College Statistical & Data Sciences (SDS) program we're *very* pro-Slack...

Context to keep in mind in this talk

 **miles** 08:56

Hi from this bear that made me realize I needed to stop looking at my phone while walking Porkchop and pay more attention to my surroundings. [picture taken after yelping and running across the street]

Image from iOS ▾



 5  4

Context to keep in mind in this talk



miles 08:56

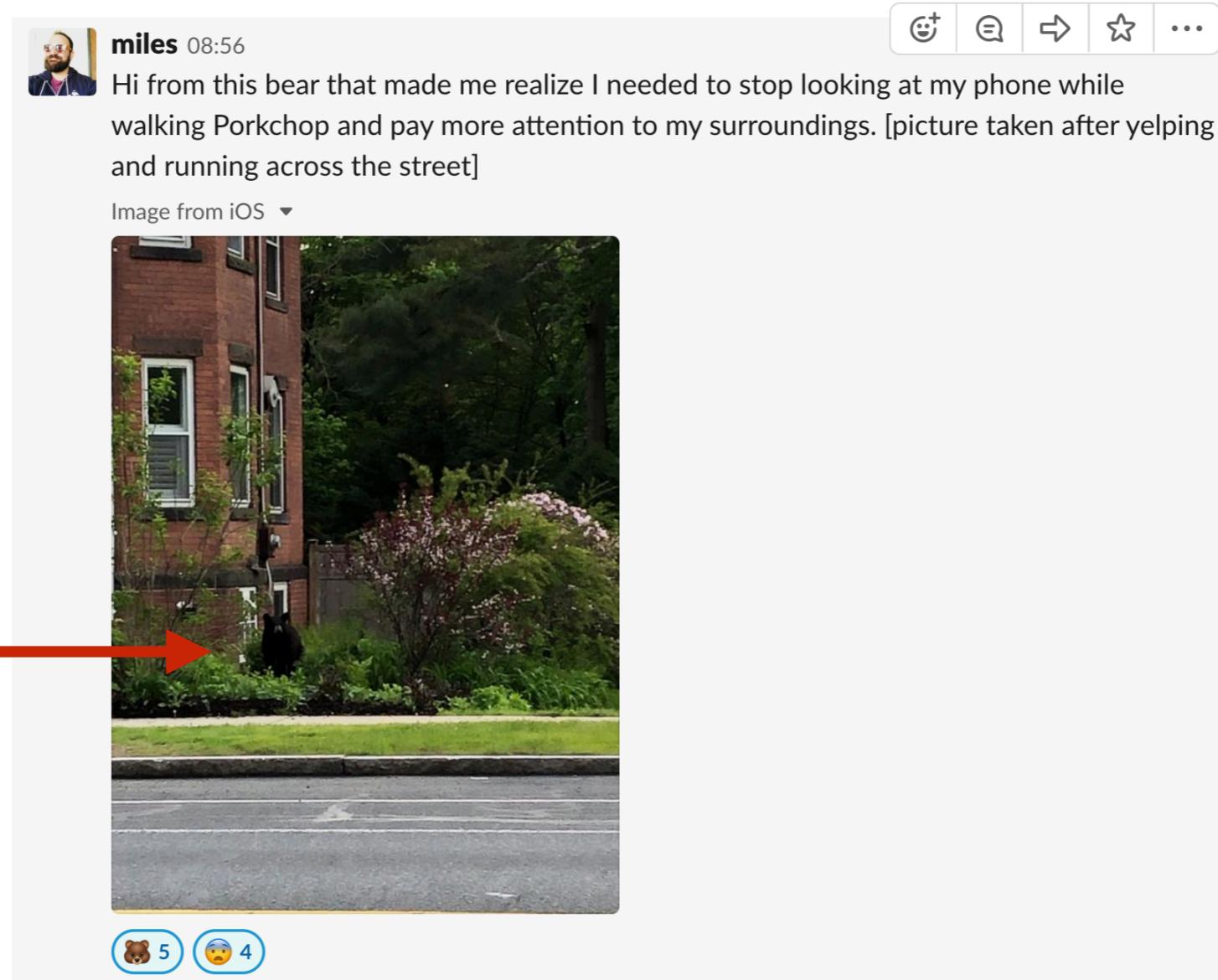
Hi from this bear that made me realize I needed to stop looking at my phone while walking Porkchop and pay more attention to my surroundings. [picture taken after yelping and running across the street]

Image from iOS ▾

A screenshot of a social media post by miles. The post shows a photo of a black bear standing in a garden in front of a brick building. A red arrow points from the bear emoji on the left to the bear in the photo. The photo has 5 likes and 4 comments.

5 4

Context to keep in mind in this talk



This Slack post speaks to:

- Large existing buy-in of Slack in our program
- Casual nature of interactions

Why Slack?

Above all else

Above all else



Forced compartmentalization & centralization into Slack Workspaces

Above all else



Forced compartmentalization & centralization into Slack Workspaces

As opposed to 😔 context switching in email

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="arrow"/>	me, Courtney (2)	Crafters	Me	new post
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="arrow"/>	Buffer iDoneThis	idonethis	Buffer digest	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="arrow"/>	Gregory, me, Mustafa (4)	Me	Re: Gregory, scier	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="folder"/>	Rodolphe Dutel	Crafters	Fwd: Gareth -	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="folder"/>	Nicole .. Rodolphe (3)	Champions	Contacting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="folder"/>	Rodolphe .. Rodolphe (3)	Crafters	Fwd: FW: Cha	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="folder"/>	Leonhard, Niel, Rodolphe (3)	Bizdev	Buffer reputatio	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>	<input type="folder"/>	Niel de la Rouviere	Engineers	Product	Poli

Above all else



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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>		me, Courtney (2)		ers	Me	new post
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>		Gregory, me, Mustafa (4)			Re: Gregory, scier	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="star"/>		Rodolphe Dutel		ers	Fwd: Gareth -	
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Why Slack?

- Seamless transition between *slick* interfaces:
browser to  &  to 
- Vast array of [apps](#)
- For instructors in particular:
 - Coordinate between people with many roles:
instructors & TA's & graders & students
 - Getting us one step closer to promised land  ...

SDS/CSC 293 ...



Albert Y. Kim

All Unreads

Threads

Channels



ethics_discussion

general

mp1

mp2

mp3

mp4

mp5

polls

questions

random

+ Add a channel



Direct Messages

Albert Y. Kim 3:18 AM

Here is what I got. Note, I may have still made a mistake and your answers may vary depending on the data wrangling you did and what lambda you chose. but the story is consistent with the themes of yesterday's lecture

Screen Shot 2019-05-02 at 6.15.54 AM.png ▾

Method	RMLSE on training	RMLSE on test (via Kaggle)
Unregularized lm	0.04755788	0.17096
LASSO	0.08869404	0.16130



3

1 reply 28 days ago

10:18 AM

to remove N/A's from a variable

```
test <- test %>%
  mutate(GarageYrBlt = ifelse(is.na(GarageYrBlt), mean(GarageYrBlt, na.rm=TRUE), GarageYrBlt))
```



1

#mp5

☆ | 49 | 0 | Add a topic

```
write_csv("submission.csv")
```

Wednesday, May 1st

(edited)



5 replies Last reply 28 days ago



5:44 PM

On your Kaggle submission? Ours was also really high. I think it's illustrating how poor the model is? Which kind of makes sense since we just threw all the variables at it



6 replies Last reply 28 days ago



6:44 PM

For our lasso model all of the coefficients are coming out as zero, regardless of what we set our lambda to. Is anyone else having this issue?



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From Machine Learning 293 Slack Workspace

SDS/CSC 293 ...  

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SDS/CSC 293 ...  

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Mini-Project 5 Channel

#mp5

☆ | 49 | 0 | Add a topic

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Promised land! Students answering questions!

Why Slack for Students?

Above all else

Above all else

Reducing instructor/student barriers:

Above all else

Reducing instructor/student barriers:



francesca

@franch787

Following



i love slack because its the only acceptable way to communicate via profs in a less formal way than email

1:19 PM - 30 Mar 2019

6 Likes



1



6



Tweet your reply

Student Feedback

Student Feedback

From two Spring 2019 courses:

- Intro stats: 36/40 responded
- Machine learning: 47/50 responded

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1. Interface used: Browser, desktop, mobile
2. Overall feelings about Slack
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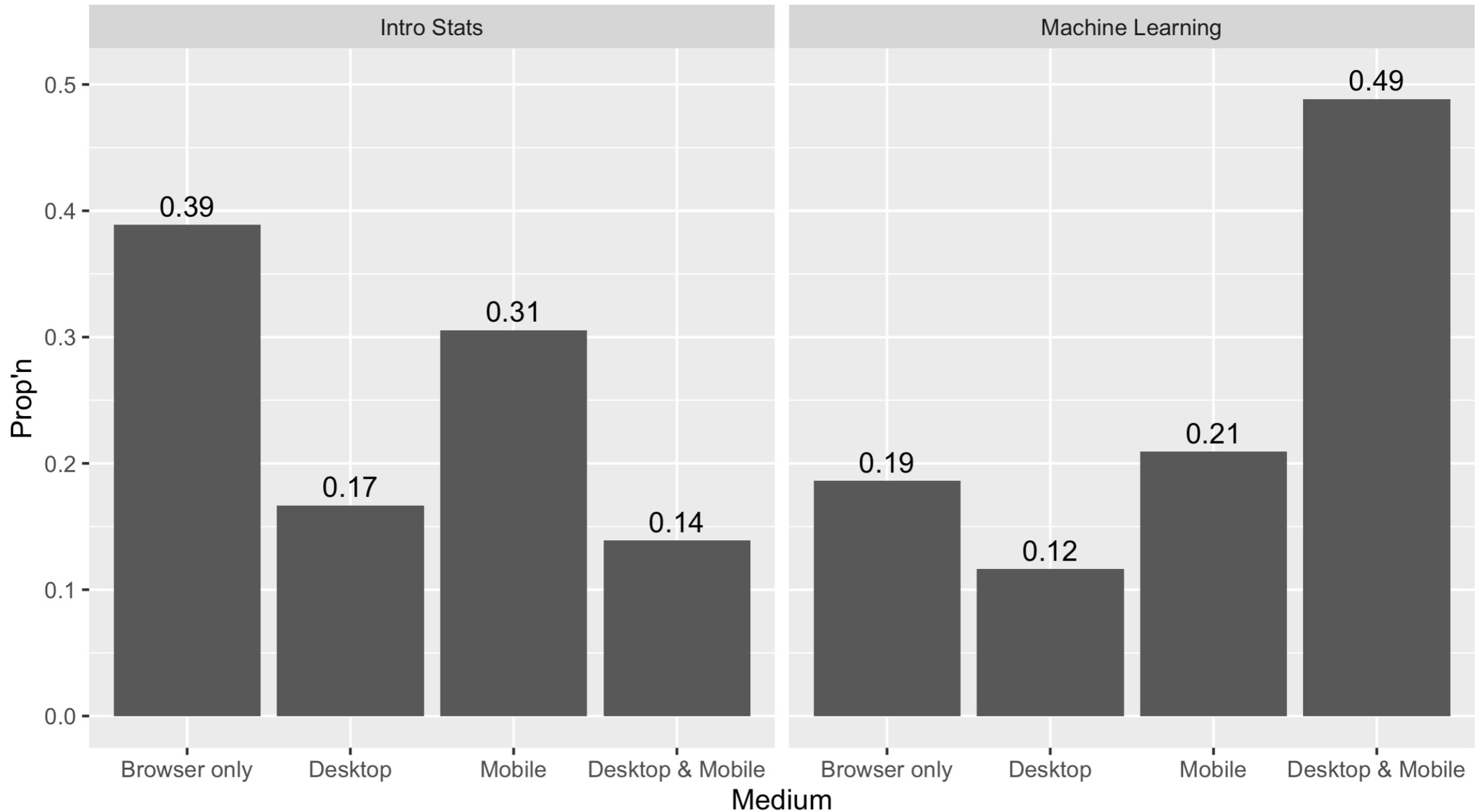
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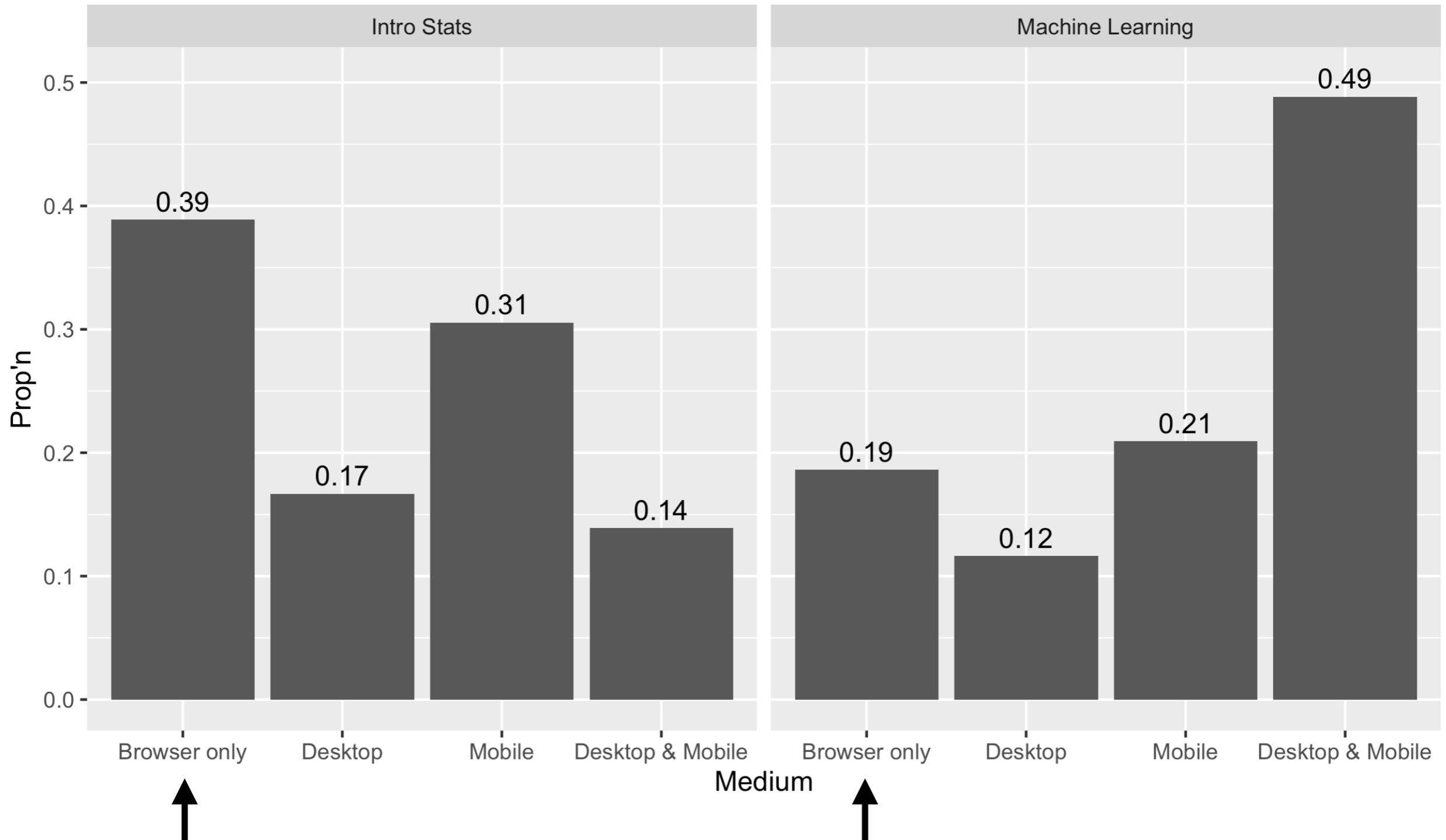
All responses [here](#) (with permission to share).

Let's take a look!

Interface Used by Students

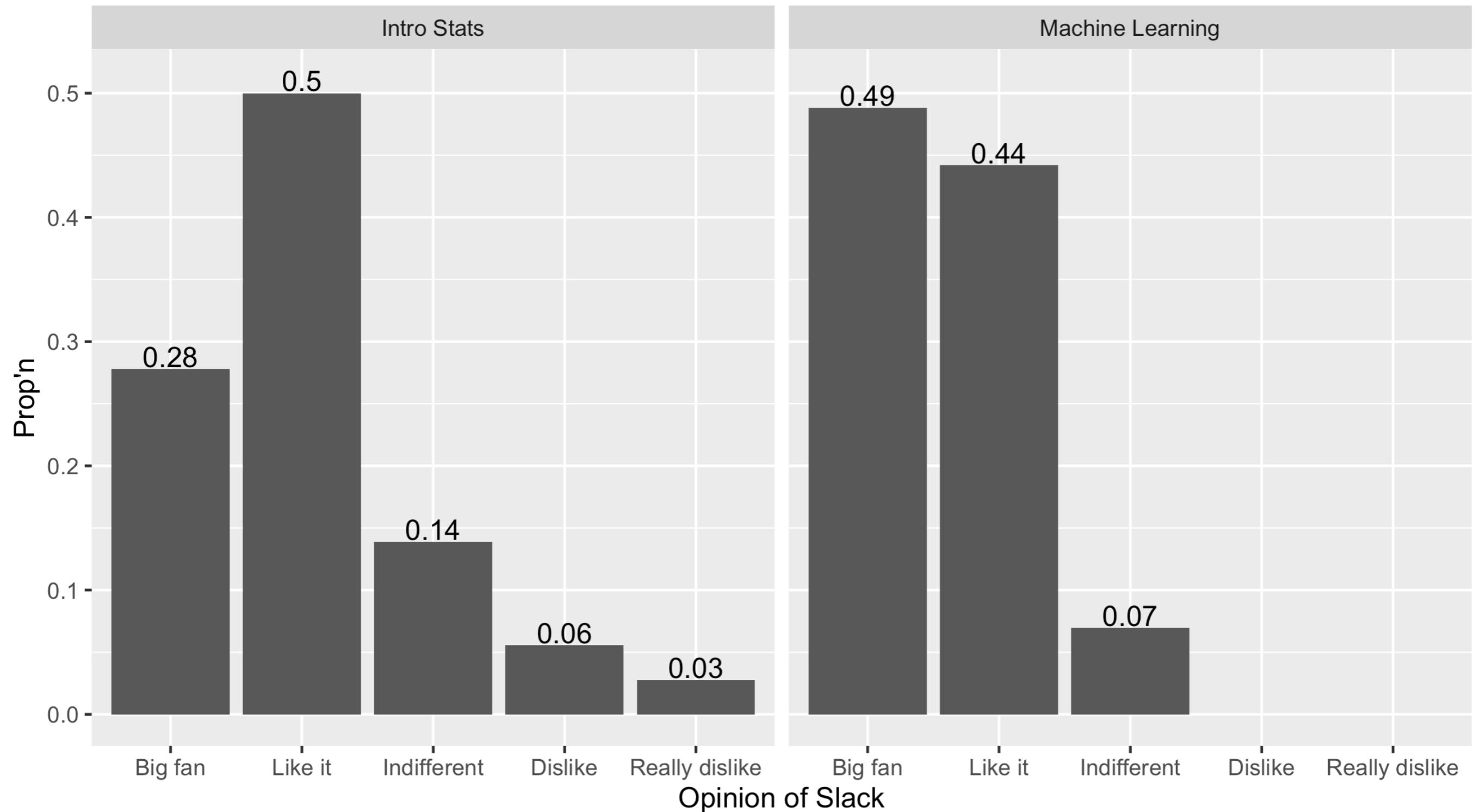


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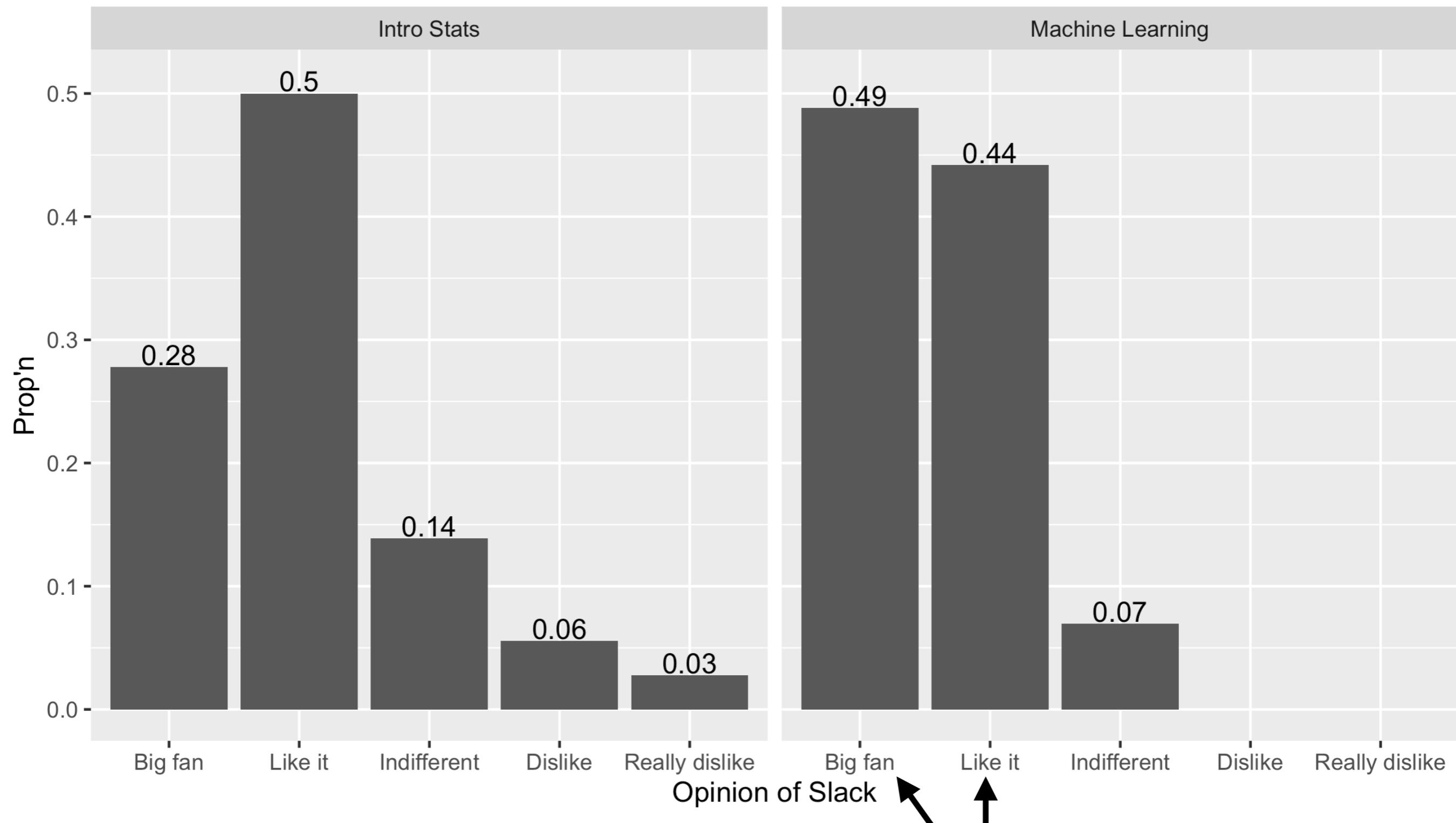


Speaks to issue of notifications. More later...

Opinion of Slack



Opinion of Slack



Speaks to degree of Slack buy-in within SDS

Some 🍒 Picked Comments

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👍 comments:

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All responses [here](#) (with permission to share)

Potential Pitfalls

Above all else

Above all else

Managing notifications:

Above all else

Managing notifications:

 **Alex Engelberg**
@aengelbro

[Follow](#) ▾

1 new message



0:02 | 3M views

11:42 AM - 31 Oct 2018

20,063 Retweets 91,936 Likes

827 20K 92K

My Attempt at Managing Notifications

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- Especially 1st time, create a burner profile (fake student profile) to test. Ex: Guy Incognito

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 - Individual and group DM's will trigger
 - In **#general** channel, using **@everyone** will trigger (can set to only admins)
 - In all other channels, using **@channel** will trigger
- Next time: After a few weeks, I will spend time talking about notifications. Probably a good life lesson anyways...

Live demo with
mystery 🤫 audience
member!

Screencast will be posted in slides afterwards.

Conclusion

Reasons to Use Slack in Class

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In my opinion (IMO):

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- Are there multiple groups to coordinate: instructors & TA's & graders & students? 

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As you accumulate 's, the case for Slack gets stronger!

Thank you!

Slides available on
Twitter @rudeboybert
and
bit.ly/slack_sdss