Economics conference bingo

Allen, Lindsay and Barkowski, Scott and Harris, Matthew and McLaughlin, Joanne Song and Pohl, R. Vincent and Skira, Meghan and Waldron, James

West Virginia University, Clemson University, University of Tennesse, University at Buffalo, SUNY, University of Georgia, University of Georgia, Balor Electric Company

1 December 2017

ECONOMICS CONFERENCE BINGO[*]

Lindsay Allen[†], Scott Barkowski[‡], Matthew Harris[§],
Joanne Song McLaughlin[¶], R. Vincent Pohl[‖], Meghan Skira[**],
James Waldron[††]

December 1st, 2017

Abstract

We describe a bingo-style game intended to be played at economics conferences. Early results from implementation of the game by economists at conferences suggest that fun increases more than a full standard deviation. Further study of the effects of the game are ongoing.

JEL category: Y90

[†]Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, West Virginia University, PO Box 9190, Morgantown, WV 26506-9190; lindsay.allen@hsc.wvu.edu; 304-293-1247.

[‡]Corresponding Author. Assistant Professor, The John E. Walker Department of Economics, Clemson University, 240 Sirrine Hall, Clemson, SC 29634; sbarkow@clemson.edu; (864) 656-1892.

[§]Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Tennessee, 722A Stokely Management Center, Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0570; mharris@utk.edu; (865) 974-5591.

[¶]Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University at Buffalo, SUNY, 441 Fronczak Hall, Buffalo, NY 14260-1520; jsmclaug@buffalo.edu; (716) 645-8685.

[‖]Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Terry School of Business, University of Georgia, 620 S Lumpkin St, Athens, GA 30602; pohl@uga.edu; (706) 248-7448.

[**]Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Georgia, B461 Amos Hall, 620 South Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30602; skira@uga.edu.

[††]Professional Engineer, Balor Electric Company (a member of ABB), 197 Collins Industrial Blvd., Athens, GA 30601; james.waldron@baldor.abb.com; 706.207.9125.

The goal of this paper is to enhance the sometimes slow going days of economics conferences by turning them into a basis for exciting gambling! You may be sitting in a drab hotel conference room, wearing khakis or sensible pumps, but you will feel as if you were in a raucous back alley throwing dice!

The rules of the game are more or less standard bingo rules. Each player receives one card at the beginning of a conference day. Players cross off words heard during any presentation or question and answer session. (Note that players' questions of presenters do not count, as they could influence presenters' use of words.) Upon crossing off every word for any row, column, or diagonal, the player must jump up in his or her seat and shout "Bingo!", even if (especially if!) a presentation is ongoing, and then bask in the mystified looks of the session participants.[1][2] Losing players must applaud (if they are attending the same session) and buy the winner a drink of his or her choice during dinner at the end of the day's sessions (possibly subject to a previously agreed upon maximum cost).

Bingo cards are created using economics conference buzzwords. We have created a core set of 111 words and 1 event, presented in Table 1, that are chosen to be relevant across fields of economics. Thus, specific words like "RBC", "wage gap", and "BLP" are not included, whereas (relatively) more general words like "market", "equilibrium", and "bias" are. Players are free to adapt the word list to their own specific field if desired. In addition to this core list, we have also included two "expansion packs", which make the game more flexible to various conference scenarios. For conferences that have discussants, we include the "Discussant Expansion Pack" (DEP) in Panel A of Table 2, a list of 18 additional events and words likely to occur in the presence of, or be said by, discussants, such as "I really enjoyed this paper" and "I just got this paper". For conferences where difficulties with projector technologies are likely, we include the "Technical Difficulties Expansion Pack" (TEP). This allows players to cross off boxes for projectors that will not start or when events like Windows laptops shutting down and auto updating happen, or when presenters struggling with conference computers make statements like "I'm used to Macs". The TEP list of 15 words and events can be found in Table 2, Panel B.

Each player card has the word "model" on the center space, making it, effectively, a free space. The other 24 spaces should be filled with randomly chosen words from the word list and the optional expansion packs, as each card should be unique from all others. We have included two example player cards in figures 1 and 2. Since creating cards with randomly

---

[1] For less outgoing players, a substitute method to declare victory could be used, such as sending a group text message reading "Bingo!" to the other players. Substitute methods should be agreed upon by all players ahead of time.

[2] In reality, those probably are not looks of puzzlement, but envy or jealousy, because they see the players having fun while they are... well... listening to economics research presentations.

chosen words is tedious, we have prepared a public-use latex file that will automatically generate player cards using the word lists below. This file can be obtained from author Barkowski's personal website.[3] Players who develop field specific word lists that would like to share them with the profession can contact the authors who will make them available with their original list.

One of the features of *Economics Conference Bingo* that differentiates it from standard bingo is presence of strategy! Whereas the bingo that is played by legions of retirement home residents is nothing more than an exercise in drawing random numbers, players of *Economics Conference Bingo* have to engage in the same thing they are always going on about in their seminars: selection. While the words of the player cards are randomly chosen, the presentations players attend are not,[4] so careful selection of sessions attended could be the difference between a player proudly gloating in victory, and having to pay up for a colleagues' drink in utter disgrace. For example, a player with the words "exclusion restriction" or "endogeneity" would probably want to avoid macro or IO sessions, while players with "novel" should avoid health, and those with "labor" would be best served avoiding labor economics sessions. Beyond making the game more challenging and fun, *Economics Conference Bingo* also has the positive externality of giving economists a reason to actually listen in seminar (for once!). Moreover, it also results in players being exposed to areas of research outside their normal niches. Why else might a health economist, for example, find him- or herself sitting in a Union for Radical Political Economics session other than to cross off the word "Marx"?

Thanks to the introduction of *Economics Conference Bingo*, we look forward to seeing a rare event at the next conferences we attend: economists... having fun!

---

[3]The file uses a lightly modified version of the bingo card generator created by Stackexchange user "Scott H.", posted at https://tex.stackexchange.com/a/63440 (obtained by Barkowski on November 11, 2017). Barkowski's personal website can be found at https://sites.google.com/site/sbarkowski/.

[4]At least at larger conferences.

Table 1: Core Game Bingo Card Word List (* Indicates an Event, Not a Word or Statement)

*Disclosure statement	Endogeneity	Interaction	Profit
Adam Smith	Equilibrium	Intervention	Public good
Agent	Estimator	Investment	Quasi-experiment
Asset	Euler	Keynes	Random assignment
Asymmetric	Event study	Labor	Random effects
Bayesian	Evidence	Laboratory	Rational
Benefit	Exclusion restriction	Least squares	Reduced form
Bias	Exogenous	Log-linear	Regression discontinuity
Budget	Expectations	Marginal	Research design
Calibration	Externalities	Market	Restricted data
Capital	Field experiment	Marx	Robustness check
Causal	Firms	Model fit	Sensitivity analysis
Clustered	First order condition	Myopic	Serial correlation
Comparative statics	First stage	Nash	Simulation
Competition	Fixed effects	Natural experiment	Since I'm short on time
Consistent	Forward-looking	Non-linear	Statistical significance
Constraint	Frictions	Normal good	Stylized fact
Consumers	General equilibrium	Novel	Supply
Contribution	Government	On-the-margin	Tax
Cost	Heterogeneity	Opportunity cost	Theory
Counterfactual	Heteroskedasticity	Optimal	Time series
Demand	Hypothesis	Panel data	Trade-off
Difference-in-differences	Identification	Parameter	Transaction costs
Distribution	I'll skip ahead	Policy	Treatment effect
Dynamic	In the interest of time	Preferences	Triple-difference
Efficient	Incentives	Preferred specification	Unit roots
Elasticity	Inequality	Preliminary results	Unobserved
Empirical	Instrument	Prices	Welfare

Table 2: Expansion Pack Word Lists
(* Indicates an Event, Not a Word or Statement)

Panel A: Discussant	Panel B: Technical Difficiulties
*Comments in MS Word file	*Blue screen of death
*Promises to send comments	*Borrowed laptop
*Reads handwritten comments	*Can't find full screen mode
*Speaks to author, not audience	*Clicker doesn't work
*Suggests alternative ID strategy	*Corrupted file
*Suggests impossible data	*Corrupted usb drive
I just got this paper	*Missing symbol fonts
I really like this paper	*Missing video cable
I'd be interested to see	*No signal to projector
If you could get data on	*Projector won't start
Major concern	*Screensaver interuption
Minor comments	*Trip over cord
One thing I wondered	*Windows auto updates
Pleasure to read	I'm used to Mac/Apple
Summary	I'm used to PC/Windows
This isn't my area	
Timely	
Well-written	

Figure 1: Example Bingo Player Card 1 (Core Word List Only)
(* Indicates an Event, Not a Word or Statement)

Exclusion restriction	Equilibrium	Nash	Causal	Interaction
Simulation	Identification	Triple-difference	Difference-in-differences	Hetero-skedasticity
Normal good	Bias	Model (free space)	Least squares	Budget
Incentives	Stylized fact	Reduced form	Demand	Since I'm short on time
Asymmetric	Tax	Market	Preferences	Empirical

Figure 2: Example Bingo Player Card 2 (Includes Both Expansion Packs)
(* Indicates an Event, Not a Word or Statement; [D] indicates a discussant word/event)

Distribution	I'm used to Mac/Apple	Rational	Demand	*Comments in MS Word file [D]
Hetero-skedasticity	Keynes	*Disclosure statement	Externalities	Regression discontinuity
*Speaks to author, not audience [D]	Timely [D]	Model (free space)	Marx	Endogeneity
First order condition	*Suggests alternative ID strategy [D]	Firms	Inequality	I just got this paper [D]
Prices	Robustness check	Consistent	I'm used to PC/Windows	Difference-in-differences