

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

ETHICS IN SCIENCE

Lecture Series

Atypical Combinations and Scientific Impact

Brian Uzzi, Ph.D., Northwestern University



**Monday, December 8, 2014
11:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
University of Houston
232 Philip G. Hoffman Hall**



It is a popular belief that science is advanced when atypical ideas are united, inspiring fresh thinking to problems. Yet, many scientific ideas and innovations intentionally build in convention. Professor Uzzi analyzed 17.9 million research papers and characterized each paper's conventional and novel combinations of prior work. He found that most scientific work draws on conventional mixtures of knowledge. These empirical regularities are largely universal, appearing across fields and decades. This suggests that creativity in science appears to be a phenomenon of two extremes: conventionality and novelty.



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